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*In the absence of the President, Mr. Çağlayangil (Turkey),
Vice-President, took the Chair.*

AGENDA ITEM 56

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development:

- (a) Report of the Conference on its fourth session;
- (b) Report of the Trade and Development Board;
- (c) Report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

**REPORT OF THE SECOND COMMITTEE
(PART I) (A/31/231)**

1. Mr. PFANZELTER (Austria), Rapporteur of the Second Committee: My report will be very brief. At the time when the General Assembly decided on the allocation of items it requested the Second Committee to consider the question of the enlargement of the Trade and Development Board and report thereon to the General Assembly as a matter of priority. The Second Committee accordingly discussed this matter at its 2nd meeting, on 27 September. The report thereon is contained in document A/31/231, which I now have the honour to submit to the Assembly. In paragraph 6 of the report, the Second Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the draft resolution entitled "Amendments to General Assembly resolution 1995 (XIX) as amended by Assembly resolution 2904 (XXVII)". This draft resolution has been adopted by the Second Committee without a vote.

Pursuant to rule 66 of the rules of procedure, it was decided not to discuss the report of the Second Committee.

2. The **PRESIDENT** (*interpretation from French*): The positions of delegations with respect to the draft resolution recommended by the Second Committee to the Assembly are reflected in the relevant summary record of that Committee.¹

3. We shall now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Second Committee in paragraph 6 of its report, document A/31/231. May I take it that the General Assembly adopts that draft resolution?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 31/2).

AGENDA ITEM 9

General debate (*continued*)

4. Mr. VAN ELSLANDE (Belgium) (*interpretation from French*): Mr. President, I hope that you will convey to the President of the Assembly that we are extremely honoured at his election to the presidency of this thirty-first session of the General Assembly. His reputation which has been established in this Organization has long since won for him general esteem. Only recently, he presided with distinction over the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea. From the beginning of his presidency of this Assembly, we have been in a position to appreciate his wise and expeditious conduct of our proceedings.

5. It is a pleasure for me to congratulate the Secretary-General on his excellent report on the work of the Organization [A/31/1 and Add.1]. We have read this document with the greatest interest because it reflects the deeply pondered judgements which have been arrived at after five years, years in the course of which our Secretary-General has never ceased to work with patience, diplomacy and discretion and in the course of which he has won our esteem.

6. We are aware of the difficulties encountered by the Secretary-General in his work and of the efforts he is making to resolve them. To be more precise, we share his concern to make more effective the functioning of the United Nations System. We shall continue to seek, particularly through the restructuring of the economic and social sectors, measures to adapt the system to the needs of the international community and to make better use of the human and material resources available.

7. This year, the United Nations has once again taken a step towards universality by admitting to membership

¹ See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-first Session, Second Committee, 2nd meeting (A/C.2/31/SR.2)*.

Seychelles, something which was accomplished as the result of an exemplary peaceful process. We would convey our best wishes to the one hundred and forty-fifth Member of the United Nations.

8. The Europe of the Community is continuing its development towards unity, as was demonstrated by the statement given yesterday [7th meeting] by the Netherlands Foreign Minister in his capacity as the current President of the Council of Ministers of the European Economic Community. He addressed the Assembly on behalf of all the members of the Community in detail with regard to the most delicate problems of the hour, such as the situations in Cyprus and Lebanon, and the efforts which have been made so that the States in the Middle East could live in peace and security, and the rights of the Palestinians to national identity could be recognized.

9. I should also like to place stress in my turn on our growing concern with regard to the tensions which have been developing in southern Africa. Southern Rhodesia—and this is something that we call for each year—must return to legality, and South Africa must give up its illegal occupation of Namibia and cease the practice of *apartheid*. My country, along with its European partners, has always worked to this end, not only taking an unequivocal position in this regard but also undertaking constant diplomatic action.

10. We now have serious grounds for hoping that the mission which has just been concluded in southern Africa by the United States Secretary of State and the positions taken by the leaders of Africa will make it possible to lay the foundations for a solution that will be equitable for all. I am pleased to note the initiative just taken by the United Kingdom Government, which I fully support, of proposing the convening of a conference of all the parties concerned in order to ensure the establishment of a provisional government.

11. I should also like to congratulate my colleague from the Federal Republic of Germany on having presented us yesterday with his draft relating to a convention on international action to be taken against the taking of hostages [A/31/242]. It is in the interest of all States without exception to support this humanitarian draft.

12. All human societies, whether national or international, will be judged by what they have done for the development of man and for the respect of his fundamental rights.

13. The dignity and effectiveness of our Organization also depend on what it does in this area. Thus I have chosen to dwell on this essential subject. Human rights must be examined from three standpoints. First of all, we must guarantee for everyone a true right to existence, according to the old precept: "*primum vivere, deinde philosophari*". The crucial question of food in the world is also something which should be raised—and of course the right to existence must also entail the right to growth and development. This legitimate aspiration should be realized in the new world economic order. Secondly, man must be able to live in peace and security. This implies a security based upon respect for law; only law can prevail over force and control it. Efforts to that end within our own countries should be

developed at the international level. Thirdly, respect for man entails the guaranteeing of his fundamental rights and access to fundamental freedoms. Man will not be truly free, his rights will not be truly exercised or preserved, until an international organization guarantees those rights.

14. Permit me to begin with man's place within the physical context, or, if you like, the economic context.

15. For 20 years or so economic rights have gradually been spelled out and exercised within the framework of improved co-operation between the industrialized and third-world countries. Recently they have been mentioned in many resolutions, particularly at the seventh special session of the General Assembly and at the fourth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development [UNCTAD], while in Paris at the Conference on International Economic Co-operation further progress has been attempted.

16. The formula of limited participation at the Paris Conference represents an attempt to overcome the difficulties and, often, the set-backs resulting from the institutional formulas used so far. Mr. van der Stoep, current President of the Council of Ministers of the European Economic Community, has spoken about our determination to achieve specific results by honouring the obligations to which we have subscribed. We for our part will do everything in our power to see to it that this is done.

17. My country has the same attitude with regard to the other major economic negotiations, where it is determined to make the most of every opportunity to make progress. Therefore I now come to speak of the position that we hold following the fourth session of UNCTAD at Nairobi.

18. The Nairobi session did not result in an unambiguous consensus making it possible to proceed in the best possible conditions to the adjustment of economic relations between industrialized and developing countries; nor did it result in a failure which would have endangered dialogue and re-engendered a spirit of confrontation. UNCTAD at Nairobi took important decisions both with regard to raw materials and the indebtedness of developing countries and in other areas, particularly the transfer of technology to the developing countries.

19. In the area of raw materials, the participants undertook to hold true negotiations. These will relate particularly to action designed to stabilize the prices of certain commodities, while trying to improve them, and on the creation of a common fund. We also undertake to implement all the other resolutions of the Nairobi session.

20. The definition of a new international economic order is a matter of concern not only to developed market-economy countries but indeed to all States represented here. Belgium and the European Community for their part will do everything in their power to support this work. Within this context, I should like to mention that my Government has decided to abide by the time-tables produced in Nairobi.

21. The advent of a new international economic order presupposes that first of all we have succeeded in removing

what seems to me to be a growing threat, namely, that of lack of food—indeed, in certain areas of our world, actual famine. This concern seems to me to be one which has the highest priority.

22. However, I am constrained to note today that, almost two years after the World Food Conference, the International Fund for Agricultural Development has not yet come into being. In the field, in spite of the praiseworthy efforts of certain local governments, national and foreign experts, in spite of specific actions to benefit the rural sector undertaken by organizations such as the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations Development Programme [UNDP] and the World Bank and in spite of certain encouraging local results, we have to acknowledge that the general situation remains a matter of great concern. In many parts of the world we have both under-use of arable land and a food shortage which has to be made up through imports.

23. However, to remedy these situations, however paradoxical they may be, is not an easy thing, particularly because of the high cost of fertilizers, energy and other factors of production; but does the complexity of the problems entitle us to be satisfied with our present efforts? Belgium for its part does not believe so. We are not only in favour of keeping up these efforts; we should like other avenues to be explored with a view to accelerating action.

24. Apart from what has been done at the level of major multilateral organizations and even possibly within the framework of those organizations, we must seek, as my country is ready to do, bilateral agreements to decide what could be done, or even agreement in a regional group, the Community for example, for the same purpose.

25. However, I fear—and in my country more and more people are saying the same thing—that international discussions on ways of establishing a new international economic order do not take sufficiently into account the high-priority efforts which should be made to combat the chief threat to the third world, that of famine, which has assumed alarming proportions for the next few decades.

26. At any cost we must find a remedy to a food situation, which may get entirely out of hand unless adequate measures are taken. The situation is such that we can no longer content ourselves with reasoning and acting in global terms. Each country must, for its own part and with its own resources, do what it can do itself without expecting everything from the results of negotiations at the world level.

27. Within this context, in order to meet the growing food needs, Belgium states its readiness to examine with developing countries that may be interested forms of collaboration in industrial development to be undertaken in those countries, the purpose of which would be both the increase of primary agricultural commodity production and the production of new fertilizers with local ingredients.

28. The second matter of concern about which I should like to say something in this Assembly is that of the right to peace and security.

29. Indeed man aspires to conditions of peace and security which would enable future generations to enjoy harmonious development, free from war and the resort to force.

30. But there is a general consideration that we should bear in mind. That objective can be achieved only to the extent that law comes to prevail over force. So it would seem, then, that action along two lines is called for. First of all there is the development of international law, a particularly difficult task. To appreciate its complexity, it is sufficient to note how many problems have arisen in the Conference on the Law of the Sea, although that subject is a matter of vital concern to all. Secondly, we must create the instruments necessary to guarantee respect for law and its provisions. We are very far from achieving this, hence fear and suspicion still dominate the policies of States. While so many countries are making the tasks of disarmament the centre of their political concerns, we are witnessing a development of military arsenals that sometimes affects areas where the arms race has not yet become established. Such a development causes concern with regard to the real or assumed intentions of Governments. After all, where are we to draw the line between legitimate self-defence and ambition, which seeks to transform military power into an instrument of influence or even of political domination?

31. Of course, the logic of deterrence has taught us that people accumulate arms in the hope, if not with the actual purpose, of not having to use them. But that also entails the risk of a chain reaction that would inexorably culminate in the triumph of violence and mindlessness.

32. In view of this distressing phenomenon and in spite of the praiseworthy efforts of many Governments, Belgium can only be struck by the stagnation in the work with regard to disarmament on the multilateral level. There is no area where negotiation is so slow in getting under way or where, when it does get going, it comes up against so many obstacles, fears and suspicions.

33. Of course effective and efficient arms control can be brought about only at the world level. But there will be no prospects of negotiation until States come to realize that, regardless of the defensive arrangements they are entitled to make, their security can also be strengthened by general arms limitation and control agreements, so long as those agreements do not contain any elements of imbalance or discrimination.

34. We should take initiatives to prevent the development and use of biological and chemical weapons. Belgium will support initiatives in this area to the extent that they lead to concrete measures to eliminate weapons which are a disgrace to man's imagination.

35. One of the reasons for the fact that the work has come to a standstill at a more general level certainly lies in differences of doctrine, but also and above all in the absence of dialogue between the major military Powers, in particular the nuclear Powers.

36. It is impossible even to think of producing international instruments until States give up hardened ideological positions. The Moscow Treaty on the partial cessation

of nuclear tests² and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons [resolution 2373 (XXII), annex] are two remarkable instances of this.

37. There is growing concern with regard to the risks of the proliferation of nuclear weapons. It is essential therefore for us to consolidate and develop the achievements of the non-proliferation Treaty, particularly because the importance of nuclear energy for the development of the international community is now better understood. But we should prevent this constantly growing recourse to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy from increasing the number of countries which possess nuclear weapons.

38. Countries which, like Belgium, have by international treaty renounced the right to acquire nuclear weapons are entitled to call on the nuclear Powers to discharge their particular responsibilities towards the international community because of the crucial monopoly they have granted themselves in this area.

39. The nuclear States parties to the Treaty should make a particular point of working out provisions relating to free access to nuclear technology. The voluntary subordination of civilian activities to the control of the International Atomic Energy Agency [IAEA] would be further proof of goodwill on the part of the nuclear States parties to the Treaty. So far, only two of the three nuclear States have decided to do this. States should also commit themselves further to bringing about the objective laid down in article VI of the Treaty, namely, nuclear disarmament.

40. Belgium is ready to participate in efforts to obtain supplementary guarantees so that nuclear material is not diverted from civilian purposes. We have already joined in many attempts along those lines which have been undertaken by a certain number of exporting countries. In addition to those efforts, at the General Conference of IAEA at Rio de Janeiro Belgium has just proposed provisions to place under the control of IAEA the entire combustible fuel cycle for all the members of the Agency.

41. Belgium has always considered the Treaty as a stage in the process of nuclear disarmament. We have only a rather short time left to conclude this stage and we should do everything in our power to see to it that it is concluded. Above all, the States parties, nuclear Powers in particular, should help to remove the objections that are still being made by several countries with regard to the Treaty.

42. I should like to call on all the nuclear States to turn their back on ideological quarrels and to display a higher degree of pragmatism and mutual understanding and to undertake this work of negotiation, which alone will make it possible to make disarmament a reality. That example will, doubtless, bring in its wake more propitious circumstances and conditions for the examination of a subject which we consider just as important as the nuclear area and which has often been laid aside in international conferences: that of conventional arms which have given rise to a tremendous volume of trade, the flood-waters of which we shall in the end have to control.

43. I should like to stress the urgent importance of universal provisions, but I do not want to underestimate the significance of certain bilateral negotiations for the future of the world. The United States and the USSR in particular, and more recently France and the USSR, have indicated the path of dialogue. Notable treaties have already been concluded, particularly in the field of strategic arms limitation. However, so far that is nothing but a partial and limited process, and efforts aimed at the reduction of that category of weapon should not be allowed to lead to the increase of other categories of arms.

44. Partial approaches must also be undertaken, and in this context we must acknowledge that the requirements of security are more easily perceptible among States in the same region.

45. With regard to Europe, Belgium plays a dynamic role in the preparation of an offer of negotiation made by a certain number of Western countries which has led to the talks now under way in Vienna on the mutual and balanced reduction of forces and arms in central Europe. Our objective is to establish there, thanks to balanced reductions, regional stability, which can only serve to contribute to an improvement of political relations in that part of the world.

46. The talks on mutual and balanced force reduction, of course, offer only a limited answer to the global and planetary problem. But we are convinced that this answer will have the merit of being concrete and immediate. That is why—in spite of the relatively little progress achieved so far—our country is more than ever committed to the success of those negotiations.

47. More generally speaking, each country should act directly in the region in which its responsibilities lie in order to promote the search for disarmament measures or measures which will control armaments.

48. The technical elements of a negotiation would be circumscribed more quickly, whether it is a matter of stabilizing or reducing forces or a matter of nuclear free zones, the arms trade or measures designed to increase confidence and co-operation among States in the region. A very important example of regional negotiation exists in Latin America. During the past sessions of the General Assembly various initiatives demonstrated the increased interest that exists there for drawing up measures at the regional level in the world.

49. The Assembly, for its part, should focus its actions on the global study of subjects which lend themselves to a regional approach, without, of course, attempting to replace States in the region by itself determining the advisability and the arrangements for the measures to be undertaken.

50. Certain regions have hitherto so far escaped the temptations to undertake an arms race.

51. The United Nations could help the States of a region to lay down norms which would ensure their security without, however, forcing them to incur intolerable expenses for development. Agreements brought about in this way would be respected by all other States.

² Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and under Water, signed in Moscow on 5 August 1963.

52. My country would commit itself to authorize only the export of arms which would be in keeping with the ceilings established. Our delegation in the First Committee will be instructed to undertake consultations with a view to a possible initiative in this area.

53. In the determined search for ways of establishing the rule of law, arms control, both universally and regionally, Belgium is pursuing the objective which remains one of the *raison d'être* of our Organization, namely, the guaranteeing of peace to all the inhabitants of our planet.

54. I come now to my third concern: the guaranteeing of fundamental human rights.

55. Human rights have been proclaimed and defined in a number of texts to which the international community has subscribed, but our society is still without the instruments which would guarantee the implementation of those texts and ensure respect for those rights.

56. The year 1976 is an important year. At the beginning of this year, the two International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights and on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights [*resolution 2200 (XXI), annex*] came into force.

57. The Belgian Government is now concluding the process of ratification. We subscribe to the optional machinery provided for in article 41 of the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, whereby a State party to the Covenant recognizes the competence of the Human Rights Committee to receive and examine communications in which another State party claims that it is not fulfilling its obligations under the Covenant. We are therefore observing scrupulously our basic option which places respect for the rights of citizens above the principle of State sovereignty. This principle should be interpreted flexibly so as to prevent fundamental human rights from being violated with impunity.

58. The ratification of these Covenants by all countries would obviously not be a final panacea in human rights problems. Human rights indeed continue to be violated, sometimes on the territory of the very countries which have ratified the Covenants. Torture is still being used—our Assembly solemnly outlawed torture last year [*resolution 3452 (XXX)*]/—and recourse is also being had to exile, the suppression of political rights and the internment of individuals of sound mind in mental institutions.

59. We must continue the struggle and use to the utmost the existing texts and organs and consider whether they are sufficient.

60. The Belgian Government attaches particular importance to the work of the Commission on the Status of Women, which should prepare a convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women. That document should constitute an international juridical instrument of a binding character, not confining itself merely to spelling out rights, but providing the necessary provisions to ensure that they are actually put into effect.

61. What has been done by our Organization with regard to enforcing respect for human rights is not sufficient. My

Government regrets the trend in the Commission on Human Rights to content itself with examining complaints against a few countries, which in most cases have been quite justly accused. The Commission will be carrying out its task only when it receives and hears all complaints, disregarding all arguments based on regional or ideological solidarity which enable certain States to avoid scrutiny.

62. The ideal, of course, would be for us immediately to establish universal jurisdiction. But if we were to pursue this objective alone, would we not be running the risk of neglecting the achievements of partial progress? Historical, spiritual, cultural and social affinities have made possible remarkable results on the regional level. Thus, the coming into force of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms³ was accompanied by the establishment of a court of justice against which State sovereignty can no longer be invoked once the States parties have recognized the competence of the Court.

63. Again, on the regional level, the 35 States which signed the Final Act of the Helsinki Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe have the obligation fully to apply resolutions with regard to human rights and the free circulation of persons and ideas. But that is still far from the case. Indeed, the results which were achieved at the third round of that Conference should in fact over the longer term lead to extending to all the territories of the signatory States what we have already achieved, the scope and importance of which I have just recalled. The meeting to take place in Belgrade in 1977 has the purpose of assessing the results obtained in the light of the texts adopted at Helsinki, and also to stress what has not yet been done, as well as to examine ways of making progress towards a situation which would be more in keeping with the letter and spirit of the resolutions to which the signatory States have subscribed.

64. What has been achieved at the regional level highlights the fact that at the world level violations of human rights have not been noted. What can we do?

65. In my view, we can adopt immediate procedures. Last year I made some suggestions here⁴ with regard to the dispatching of commissions of inquiry to countries which have been the subject of complaints with regard to violations of human rights.

66. This year, I should like to spell out my thinking on this subject. I hope that the Assembly is considering adopting at this session a resolution calling on States voluntarily to renounce the possibility given them under paragraph 6 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1503 (XLVIII) to refuse to receive on their territory an *ad hoc* committee of investigation with regard to human rights situations and, generally speaking, to refuse even to allow that committee to undertake inquiries. States which agree on a voluntary basis to make such a commitment would so inform the Secretary-General.

³ Signed at Rome on 4 November 1950. See United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 213, No. 2889, p. 221.

⁴ See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirtieth Session, Plenary Meetings*, 2361st meeting.

67. If the Commission on Human Rights should deem it necessary to send a committee of investigation to any of those States, all that would remain would be for it to work out, together with the State, the purely technical arrangements for the travel of the committee.

68. The resolution which I have in mind would note that such a decision on the part of States would constitute very marked progress towards the protection of human rights. It should provide for the annual submission by the Secretary-General of a report to the Assembly giving a list of States which had voluntarily made the undertaking I have in mind. This report would be examined by the General Assembly when it came to discuss the study of further means of promoting human rights.

69. This proposal does not aim at the creation of new institutions and presupposes no change in existing texts or resolutions adopted by our Assembly.

70. My delegation has received instructions to make the necessary contacts on this with all the Members of our Organization.

71. The purpose of my proposal is to promote the progress which we could make and to demonstrate that our Organization rejects stagnation and to enable all Member States to give proof, on a voluntary basis, of their devotion to human rights.

72. As in previous years, I have devoted part, if not most, of my statement to problems which directly affect man himself. Respect of his rights, concern for his well-being, the guarantee of his security—these are objectives which are common to us all. In order to make our Organization better able to realize those objectives, I hope that I have made some suggestions which will meet with the Assembly's approval.

Mr. Amerasinghe (Sri Lanka) took the Chair.

73. Mr. AGÜSTSSON (Iceland): Mr. President, permit me first to join my colleagues in congratulating you on your election as President of the thirty-first session of the General Assembly of the United Nations. The respect you have already earned as President of the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea, where you have shown both wisdom and statesmanship, certainly gives good promise for your success as President of the current session of the General Assembly.

74. May I also express our profound thanks and appreciation to our former President, Mr. Gaston Thorn, who discharged his heavy responsibilities as President of the thirtieth session of the General Assembly with his well-known tact and skill.

75. Let me also at the outset express my respect and that of my delegation for the determined and unselfish efforts made by Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim and his staff in order to implement the objectives of the Charter of the United Nations. I suspect that few positions demand as much patience and perseverance. The Secretary-General has amply demonstrated both these qualities during the years he has served in his important post. I hope that he will

make his services available to this Organization for many years to come.

76. We are very happy to welcome the Republic of Seychelles as a new Member of the United Nations and we look forward to its co-operation and contribution to the work of our Organization.

77. A continuous effort is being made by the United Nations to attain its main goal of securing peace in the world. More than three decades have elapsed since the end of the Second World War without a disaster of comparable magnitude. However, peace efforts have in the same period of time met many defeats in almost all parts of the world and in many places uncertainty still reigns. This is of grave concern to us all and shows that the nations of the world must put in greater effort than ever before.

78. At times the blame for this situation is placed on our Organization—the United Nations. Indeed, the United Nations has its limitations, but the fact remains that no organization is greater than the individual members that compose it. Therefore, when in the years to come we continue our efforts to improve the world situation, each must look closely at himself. If no Member of the United Nations neglects to do so, and if chauvinism and suspicion are set aside in international relations, the problems now being dealt with, some of which have been on the agenda for decades, will certainly be solved more easily.

79. The increasing arms race in the world is a matter of concern everywhere. I feel certain that those present here today agree with the opinion which Secretary-General Waldheim recently expressed that the arms race is among the world's most critical problems. The great arsenals of nuclear, chemical and conventional arms are terrifying and increasing every year. I am informed that international arms sales now total about \$20 billion a year, not counting what nations produce for what they consider necessary for their own needs, which amounts to a far greater sum.

80. This international traffic in armaments clearly demonstrates that weapons continue to be spread around the world and that new markets for weapons have opened up in parts of the world where none existed before. The increasing seriousness of these matters should encourage nations to make greater efforts to find means to guarantee their security and at the same time to reduce arsenals. Iceland, as is well known, has no armed forces of its own and Icelanders do not carry weapons. We sincerely hope that those who are not so fortunate will some day be able to share our position. It is essential to reduce the nuclear arms arsenals, to prevent the proliferation of nuclear arms and to stop nuclear testing. The production and use of many other modern weapons, among them biological and chemical weapons, should be halted immediately. This, in my opinion, is the most urgent and important task of the United Nations today.

81. A reduction in arms production would make enormous resources available for nobler goals, for example, to improve the conditions of life in developing countries. Although some progress has been made in this respect in the past few years, greater efforts are still needed.

82. We must work towards economic justice in the world as well as increased social and political freedom. In this connexion it is gratifying to see the progress which has been made by the World Food Programme, and the United Nations deserves praise for the recent Habitat Conference,⁵ which will, it is hoped, benefit developed and developing nations alike.

83. Steady and important progress has been made during the past three decades as far as the solution of colonial and racial issues is concerned. However, the problems that remain are very acute. The situation in southern Africa is more serious than ever and no one can foresee the consequences if white minority governments in the area do not alter their policy. The Government of South Africa still uses brutal methods to deny basic human rights to black Africans. The same is true of Southern Rhodesia, where the actions of the white minority Government day by day make the situation more dangerous. The latest efforts to find a peaceful settlement must succeed, and it is to be hoped that the parties involved will let reason govern. All foreign military intervention would be a serious threat to world peace and should be avoided by all means. In the same sense, the Namibia question will, it is hoped, be settled to the full satisfaction of its people.

84. In that connexion I wish to stress that the United Nations should be constantly vigilant against mistreatment of minorities all over the world.

85. The full attainment of human rights in the world is an ever important issue. The International Covenants on Human Rights are a remarkable accomplishment, but further steps must be taken in the field of human rights, and all proposals which would enhance the efforts of the United Nations should be carefully studied and implemented.

86. International terrorism and the hijacking of innocent men, women and children is a problem which touches all nations of the world. These acts are blatantly contrary to rational human behaviour. All Member nations of the United Nations should join together in condemning international terrorism and hijackings and should obligate themselves to bring to justice all persons who commit such acts.

87. A new war zone has opened up in the Middle East. It is indeed sad to see the peaceful land of Lebanon turn into a battlefield where none is spared. The situation in other areas of that part of the world is still a matter of grave concern. All possible efforts should be made to find a lasting and just peace in that area, and my Government reiterates its position that the basis for accommodation should be Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). The sovereignty of all States must be respected, as well as their right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries, and the national rights of the Palestinians must be given recognition.

88. We have lately been witnessing ominous signs of heightened tension in the Korean peninsula. The Korean

problem continues to pose a serious threat to the maintenance of peace and security in the area. The joint communiqué of 1972 agreed on by the two Korean States⁶ raised hopes for a peaceful reunification of Korea through negotiations. These negotiations were started but now remain suspended. The two Korean Governments should be urged to resume their dialogue. In the view of my Government such direct negotiations are an essential prerequisite for a peaceful settlement and the reunification of Korea. My Government is greatly satisfied that the proposed agenda items on the Korean question have been withdrawn; that raises hopes that some progress is in sight.

89. The Secretary-General has continued his mission to conduct negotiations between the representatives of the two communities in Cyprus. In spite of determined efforts by the Secretary-General and his Special Representative in Cyprus, progress has lately been limited. We are convinced, however, that negotiations between the two communities, under the auspices of the Secretary-General, must continue since they constitute in the present circumstances the only real hope for a just solution. The General Assembly is obliged to work for maintaining the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Cyprus. The presence of the United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus plays a vital role in facilitating a settlement, and again amply proves the value of the peace-keeping forces.

90. Again I wish to declare Iceland's full support of the rule of universality concerning membership of the United Nations. The Icelandic delegation will vote against any draft resolution designed to prevent a nation or nations from participating in the work of the United Nations if they are entitled to do so on the basis of the Charter. Furthermore, we oppose the use of the specialized agencies of the United Nations as a base for political debates and believe that these agencies should be permitted to carry out their professional functions free of political bias.

91. The fifth session of the third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea, over which President Amerasinghe so eminently presided, concluded its work a few days ago. The task of the Conference was not fully accomplished and the sixth session will be convened in New York on 23 May 1977. Whether that session will be successful in concluding its substantive work cannot be predicted at this moment. It is, however, clear that the most important unsolved issues are in the field of the international sea-bed area. It is therefore urgently required that priority should be given to those problems at the next session and also that all possible progress be facilitated through intersessional work. Indeed, that procedure was emphasized by the President at the last meeting of the fifth session, on 17 September. If such a procedure is followed, the next session should be able to make considerable progress towards the completion of the work of the Conference.

92. In the meantime, it is a source of satisfaction that the Conference has succeeded in bringing about substantive agreement in many other areas. Thus, a territorial sea of 12 nautical miles and an exclusive economic zone of up to 200

⁵ Habitat: United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, held at Vancouver from 31 May to 11 June 1976.

⁶ See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 27*, annex I.

nautical miles have the support of the overwhelming majority of the States participating in the Conference. The inclusion of these concepts into an over-all convention on the law of the sea has for some time been more of a formality than a matter of substance. The exclusive economic zone is here to stay and there can be no turning back. That in itself is a tremendous achievement, upon which the Conference is to be congratulated, and I do not hesitate to offer my Government's congratulations in that connexion. We must all realize that the Conference has been entrusted with a formidable task, and even if less progress is made in some areas than in others that does not at all mean that the Conference is a failure. On the contrary, what has already been accomplished is of great value, and we have to show patience with regard to the rest. With an adequate mandate from our Governments the delegations at the next session should be able to proceed along the lines envisaged by the President of the Conference and bring the task to a successful conclusion in the near future.

93. Many of the representatives here assembled may be aware of the fact that from the very beginning of the settlement of Iceland 1100 years ago, the history of the nation was kept in recorded annals. In these old annals many things are found which might apply to those who are present here today. Human nature, after all, has not changed very much through the ages in spite of so-called progress.

94. One of these old sagas relates that once a renowned hero was engaged in a battle against many of his enemies. He was supported only by one other man, who stood behind him and defended him from attacks coming from that direction. When he was later asked how this man had helped him, he replied with the following sentence, which ever since has been preserved in the hearts and language of the Icelandic people: "Bare is the back of him who has no brother".

95. I want to say in conclusion that participation in the work of the United Nations has been the corner-stone of Icelandic foreign policy for the past 30 years. That policy will remain intact, because we should all realize—and in particular those who are small and weak—that "Bare is the back of him who has no brother".

96. Mr. RAJARATNAM (Singapore): Mr. President, your election as President of the thirty-first session of the General Assembly is a reflection of your personal merit and of the honourable place your country, Sri Lanka, occupies in the international community. It is no accident that your Prime Minister, Mrs. S. Bandaranaike, is the current Chair-man of the non-aligned movement. Prior to your entering the foreign service of your country in 1963, you served with distinction in your country's civil service, rising to the rank of Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Finance. At the United Nations, you have acquired an enviable reputation for your acute intelligence, for your mastery of the English language, for your eloquence, your personal charm and your outspokenness. Our two countries, Sri Lanka and Singapore, have very close bonds based on a very long association of history and peoples, some of whom emigrated to Singapore and have become Singaporeans. It therefore gives me great pleasure to congratulate you and to wish you a very successful tenure as our President.

97. The thirtieth session of the General Assembly witnessed some very controversial debates and decisions. We must all be thankful to the Prime Minister of Luxembourg, Mr. Gaston Thorn, who presided over our proceedings with admirable calm and fairness.

98. The Secretary-General's job has often been described as the most impossible job in the world. We are fortunate to have Mr. Kurt Waldheim as our Secretary-General because he has faced the endless stream of problems and challenges posed to him with fortitude and with a judicious mixture of realism and idealism. I would like to single out for special mention the competent manner in which he has managed the United Nations peace-keeping operations in the Middle East and in Cyprus. We should also thank him for his efforts to bring about an accommodation between the two communities in Cyprus and encourage him to persist in his efforts in spite of the disappointing results.

99. I should like to greet our newest Member, the Republic of Seychelles, and to extend to its people and Government our best wishes for peace and prosperity.

100. A global problem which has come increasingly to dominate the work of the General Assembly is disarmament. This is one sixth of the agenda, and no other subject or question has as many items on the agenda. Our Secretary-General has repeatedly called our attention to this problem. The Prime Minister of Luxembourg, Mr. Gaston Thorn, in his farewell address to the Assembly [*1st meeting*] gave prominent place to the question of disarmament, and in your presidential address, Sir, [*ibid*] you also referred to the problem of disarmament and even suggested the possibility of holding either a special session of the General Assembly to consider the question of the convening of a World Disarmament Conference.

101. There is no denying that the relentless arms race in which all of us are participants is alarming. It poses a threat to the very survival of man on this planet and a constant challenge to our rationality. The arsenals of nuclear and conventional weapons which the States Members of this Organization have accumulated are sufficient to annihilate mankind several times over, and yet they are being constantly augmented.

102. The amounts of financial resources expended by countries, rich and poor alike, for the acquisition of arms are astronomical. It has been estimated that in 1974, the last full year for which data are available, actual arms expenditure totalled well over \$300 billion. In the 10-year period 1964 to 1974 the world's arms expenditure doubled. The two super-Powers alone account for 60 per cent of the world's total arms expenditure. The five permanent members of the Security Council together account for 70 per cent.

103. One consequence of this massive accumulation of weapons is the proliferation of armed conflicts, almost all of which are in the third world. In the period 1945 to 1975, it has been estimated that a total of 119 wars of a civil and international character occurred. Those 119 wars were fought by 81 States in the territories of 69 countries—that is, nearly half the membership of this Organization. More people were killed in those wars since 1945 than

during the Second World War. Indeed, since September 1945 there was not a single day in which one or several wars were not being fought. On an average day about 12 wars are under way.

104. It would, however, be factually wrong were we to pretend that the problem of disarmament is a problem primarily of the two super-Powers or of the developed countries. Questions of war and peace should, in our opinion, be of greater concern to third-world countries because they have already become the battlefields of what could be described as the Third World War, for, in our view, a new world war will not be a single dramatic catastrophe but a cumulation of an interlocking series of proxy wars fought in third-world countries.

105. Therefore, I would like to return to a thesis which I propounded in this Assembly five years ago at its twenty-sixth session. At that time the theme was somewhat tentative and, to some, possibly even tendentious. It was an expression more of probabilities than of actualities. But, unfortunately, what I then merely feared has now become real. A new threat confronts the third world.

106. This extract from my statement made at the twenty-sixth session summarizes my theme:

"... conflicts between big Powers are inevitable so long as the drive for power and dominance remains the overriding consideration in international relations. But they will be waged by means other than direct confrontation [*between them*].

"And the means are the small nations. Big wars can be and have been fought through small nations. The idea is not really new. In the past, small nations have been pitted against one another to further the interests of great Powers. But today the technique of wars with small nations as proxies has been more systematically developed. Small wars have in the nuclear age become the only safe method of conducting big-Power conflicts. That is why ... small wars are ... gradually increasing [*in number*]; that is why the third world is the scene of growing violence Textbooks on military strategy refer to this as the strategy of fighting limited wars. ... It also includes the promotion of wars of national liberation, support for guerrilla uprisings, subversion and the engineering of coups in small countries.

".... The small nations are more than ever before necessary instruments for big-Power conflicts—the only available instruments ...".⁷

That was what I said five years ago.

107. Five years ago it could have been said that this was mere hypothesis. It may have been so then, but it is no longer the case today. Violence and wars in third-world countries have increased, while rumbles of new conflicts can be plainly heard. Cities and countrysides are being laid waste at this very moment—not by the invading armies of great Powers, but by contending forces within the third world.

108. There are a number of draft resolutions for consideration in this Assembly which, stripped of their diplomatic phraseology, pertain in one way or another to conflicts between developing countries. Just as once before in years past small nations had to scrutinize carefully draft resolutions by the big Powers to avoid becoming partisans in their conflicts, so today we search draft resolutions to avoid entanglements in disputes between friends. However, benevolent neutrality becomes increasingly difficult as draft resolutions, in response to sharpening bitterness, are worded with a precision and openness that preclude neutrality. Abstention, where it injures one party, is not now accepted as evidence of impartiality and friendliness.

109. And so one consequence of this is the new practice by this Assembly of voting for draft resolutions which are contradictory and irreconcilable because we do not want to offend our friends, and we cannot judge what is right and what is wrong.

110. More alarming evidence of increasing third-world conflicts is the flow of arms from some half-a-dozen wealthy, industrialized countries into the third world. There has been a steady increase in the flow of arms from developed to developing countries over the years. There was nothing disturbing about the initial flow of arms. It was natural that as States became independent they should acquire arms commensurate with their defence requirements. But since 1970 the flow has acquired tidal proportions, and with each passing year the appetite for arms in the third world has grown alarmingly. The quantity and quality of arms exceed normal defence requirements.

111. Reliable statistics on the arms trade are, for obvious reasons, difficult to come by. It is by nature a furtive trade, and both client and arms dealer are prone to give a lot of misinformation about this most profitable business. In fact, only the United States, of the four major arms-exporting countries, provides information about its transactions. So such figures as I will quote about the transfer of deadly weapons to less-developed countries probably err on the side of underestimation. But even with these reservations, such statistics as are available portend, in my view, not only catastrophic dangers for the third world but also a very high probability of a new kind of enslavement of the third world through proliferation of what I called proxy wars. This is not enslavement designed and directed by advanced industrialized countries, but enslavement emerging as a consequence of divisions and conflicts within third-world countries.

112. And there is a close correlation between the level of arms flow into third world countries and increasing contention among them. My primary source of information is the 1976 yearbook on world armaments and disarmament published by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute.⁸

113. According to that Yearbook, the value of major weapons transferred to third-world countries had increased 17-fold between the years 1950 and 1975. The figures were

⁷ *Ibid.*, Twenty-sixth Session, Plenary Meetings, 1960th meeting, paras. 58-60.

⁸ *World Armaments and Disarmament: SIPRI Yearbook 1976* (Stockholm, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 1976).

\$US 294 million in 1950, but it increased to \$US 4,803 million in 1975. The big surge forward in the import of arms was in 1974 and 1975, when the value of weapons transferred from developed to developing countries increased by more than 60 per cent. It is also worth noting that those were the years when the industrialized countries were reeling under the impact of increased oil prices and the third-world countries were making efforts to unite against the industrialized countries for a new international economic order.

114. The 1970s were also the years when détente was arrived at between the great Powers on the sound grounds that direct confrontation between them would be mutually destructive.

115. This was also a period which saw a steady decline in aid from rich to poor countries. A recent study by the United Nations predicts that, on the basis of current flow, aid from rich to poor countries will be reduced to a mere trickle. For example, between 1961 and 1968 the global assistance development programme was valued at \$US 75.2 billion, the bulk of which came from the Western world. The flow of aid between 1974 and 1976 will decline to an annual average of between \$US 14 billion and \$US 12 billion, which, given the present level of inflation, is meagre compared with what was available in the 1960s.

116. Though the flow of aid has declined, the flow of arms to the third world has swelled dangerously. The third world is clearly creeping towards a more equitable share of the arms resources of the world. For example, the consumption of total arms production by the two main power blocs has dropped from 91 per cent in 1955 to a more prudent 78 per cent in 1975.

117. As against this, consumption of arms by the third world has shot up from a modest 3.2 per cent in 1955 to an alarming 12.3 per cent in 1975. Presumably this does not take into account the unofficial flow of weapons sold or given under the counter. In fact, the third world's consumption of the world's arms output now exceeds the combined purchases of China, Western Europe, Australia, New Zealand and Japan; their share of the world's arms output in 1975 was only 9.5 per cent as compared with the third world's 12.3 per cent.

118. Certain disturbing inferences can be drawn from these statistics. One of these is that the level of arms consumption is an indicator of the intensity of tensions in an area and of its prevailing political philosophies, policies and anxieties in an area.

119. The rich industrial nations, largely in the north, have in practice accepted that force is of less importance in their inter-State relations than other forms of power. They rely more and more on economic power, technological superiority and organizational skills for influence and dominance over other nations. It is a fact that the nations of the north have technically been at peace with one another since the end of the Second World War. True, some of them have fought in third-world countries, but even this is being abandoned as counter-productive.

120. Short of some grave miscalculation on the part of the industrialized nations, I see no prospect of serious wars in

the north. The devastation and tragedies brought about by two world wars, coupled with the knowledge that the industrial Powers now have the technology to destroy themselves utterly in another war, act as effective curbs on resort to naked force.

121. But it would appear that in the third world the errors and tragedies of European nationalism are being reproduced. In the absence of economic power or advanced technology, force is used, when necessary, to regulate inter-State relations. Reliance is placed on force and the show of force to gain influence and dominance over other nations.

122. However, it is borrowed force, and therein lies the danger to third-world countries. The accumulation of effective force in this day and age depends on very sophisticated and very expensive weapons produced, at the moment, by less than half a dozen industrial nations in the north. In the past, the sale of arms to third-world countries from the advanced countries was governed by some sort of gentleman's agreement between industrial countries. The flow was always regulated to modest proportions. What was sold, moreover, were hand-me-downs, simple and unsophisticated weapons for which the industrial nations had not much use and which, by current standards, were less destructive.

123. But the current flow of weapons is of a different category altogether. The gentleman's agreement has broken down. Far from there being any inhibition about selling arms to the third world, arms dealers of the industrialized countries are pushing their hardware with great zest and fervour. There is now a growing clamour in industrialized countries—including those who had kept out the arms business out of moral or political considerations—to remove existing restraints on the export of arms. As the Swedish Yearbook quite correctly observes:

"Indeed, so hectic has been the international market for arms over the past two years that all appearances of control, whether supposed or real, have vanished."⁹

124. There are depressingly sound economic and political reasons for this changed attitude in regard to arms sales to developing countries. First let me deal with the economic reasons. The arms industry has for many years been an important and growing industry. The annual output of arms throughout the world is estimated at over \$US 300 billion. It employs some 400,000 scientists and engineers and other experts who spend some \$US 200 billion in research on more deadly weapons. It is a growing industry. The capacity of the rich nations to absorb the products of this industry, especially as war between them is least likely now, has reached saturation point. As research progresses, weapons become obsolete at a more rapid rate. Astronomically expensive weapon systems suddenly become so much junk.

125. The increase in the number of rival States in the third world, or, more generally, the increase in mutual suspicion and fear among third-world countries, offers a neat solution to the junk problem facing the arms producers. These

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 137.

obsolete weapons, generally one or two generations behind the latest model, can be and are being disposed of in third-world countries.

126. It also solves yet another problem for the industrialized countries. It ensures a steady flow from less developed to developed countries of wealth, which was and is in danger of being reduced as a consequence of decolonization and the growing economic self-assertion of the developing countries. Modern arms are spectacularly expensive and more so if they are packaged as a weapons system. Moreover, in contrast to the situation in other industries, the greater the number of arms sold, even greater grows the demand for those arms. There is no such thing as over-production in the arms industry. This has to do with human fear. Once an up-to-date weapons system has been sold to a client, the reassuring feeling the client has can only be temporary. The anxiety returns the moment an even more up-to-date weapons system has been delivered to his rival by the same arms dealer or by his competitor. Having once embarked on the arms race, the participant has no choice but to stay in the race until he concedes defeat or is ruined. If he decides to stay in the race, he must keep on from time to time disposing of his obsolete weapons system and negotiating for one more up to date and decidedly more expensive.

127. If ever arms-producing countries should form a mutual-aid association to regulate and promote their trade, then the third-world countries would certainly become captives of the great Powers. The dealers could decide—either by a gentleman's agreement or otherwise—when a client's weapons system should become obsolete by simply selling a more up-to-date version to his rival or even by hinting, whether justifiably or not, that the other side was negotiating for an improved weapons system. I am not saying that this is being done at the moment, but the possibilities are there, especially if the weapons industry should run into economic difficulties.

128. So much for the economic advantages to industrial countries accruing through weapons sales to developing countries.

129. However, the most dangerous consequences are political. The flow of arms carries with it a measure of dependency on the part of the client on the seller of arms not unlike that prevailing under the old imperial system. The weapons now being imported are not only highly sophisticated but also packaged as parts of a very complex, very comprehensive and very expensive weapons system. When a country buys a weapons system it imports not only weapons but a whole army of experts and advisers. Arms contracts today include provisions for training, technical support and the establishment of facilities to maintain and repair equipment. Often those contracts include provisions for foreign experts to build roads, communication networks and other facilities which come under the term "infrastructure". For without such an infrastructure the performance of the system is likely to be substandard or to fail altogether. There must also be an assurance from the seller of spare parts and replacements when needed, as it is not economic to stock spare parts for the lifetime of the equipment.

130. All this is ideal for the direction and conduct of proxy wars. The client can start wars but he needs the co-operation and goodwill of the dealer to ensure that the operation does not end in total disaster. Once a war is begun or engineered, it is the dealer and not the client who becomes the crucial element. Wars between developing countries can be sustained or halted by the dealer. They can be halted by the dealer's withdrawing his experts and withholding spare parts and replacements; or the dealer can sustain and direct the war if he thinks it is in his interest to do so.

131. Of course, the client can dismiss the dealer, but only by putting himself into possible bondage to another arms supplier.

132. That, then, is the dangerous situation in which the third world finds itself today. I have merely stated the nature of the problem without offering possible solutions to it because that would require an address just as lengthy. My purpose is simply to alert us to this danger; to accept that the danger is real, even though it may not be as stark as I have presented it.

133. The compulsions behind the third-world arms race are many and complex; undoubtedly, manipulation by great Powers contributes to it. Also, confrontation with neighbours is a time-honoured way of distracting attention from the short-comings of a ruling class and of re-establishing the national solidarity once forged when the enemy was the alien imperialist whom we have driven out. To those, add recollections of ancient glories and new broodings over real or imaginary wrongs predating the imperialist era.

134. Further, in some third-world countries a Messianic spirit appears to be emerging. The successful liberation of their own people from imperialism has led some leaders to see themselves as chosen vehicles for the liberation of all mankind and, in particular, their neighbours, whose independence has been recognized by this Organization. It is saddening to hear formerly subjugated countries, like the imperialists of old whom they displaced, proclaiming their right and responsibility to bring "true" liberation and independence to lesser breeds outside their borders.

135. It is the suspicion and fear generated by Messianic proclamations such as those which are driving many third-world countries into the arms of the arms dealers and thereby creating the necessary conditions for proxy wars, for the enslavement of the third world.

136. If that enslavement is to be avoided, it is imperative that third-world countries stop saying and doing things that increase mutual distrust and fear among themselves. If we do not fear one another then there is no need for us to put ourselves in bondage to arms dealers.

137. In my part of the world, the five countries which have grouped themselves into the Association of South-East Asian Nations [ASEAN] have succeeded in dissipating fear and distrust among themselves. There are possibly differences of views and conflicts of interest from time to time, but through ASEAN co-operation we have been able to resolve, or at least to contain, those differences and conflicts. We are discovering that, when nations set greater

store by seeking out areas of agreement than areas of disagreement fear and distrust are likely to fade away.

138. Concepts of co-operation and not concepts of liberating one another should govern relations between third-world countries. Co-operation means the pooling of resources, skills and aspirations to enhance further our independence and bargaining position against the more advanced nations.

139. The liberation of others, on the other hand, can be undertaken only by pawning our resources, our lives and, eventually, our integrity to those on whom we depend for our arms and who will make quite sure that when the slaughter and the battles are over it is they, not we, who emerge victorious.

140. I shall sum up my thesis in the following way. The massive flow of arms to the third world confronts it with a new danger. It is, first of all, a drain on the economies of the third-world countries; but even more important is the fact that it creates a new form of dependence on the great Powers, which can exploit the third world's dependence on them for arms to manipulate them, to engineer conflicts between them, and to use them as their proxies in their competition for influence and dominance. This may partly account for the tremendous acceleration in the arms race, especially among countries of the third world. In order to check the arms race, we must understand why nations arm themselves in the first place. Some nations may arm themselves in order to increase their power, but most nations arm themselves because they feel insecure. Therefore, in order to promote disarmament, we must attack the problem of international insecurity.

141. My thesis is that in the present state of international relations the most effective way to promote international security is to work at the subregional and regional levels. For this reason my country would attach great importance to the efforts by countries in different parts of the world to promote regional economic co-operation and mutual trust. Wars are not made by arms, but they are conceived in the minds of men. To prevent wars we must therefore free the minds of men from the cobwebs of age-old suspicions, fears and mistrust.

142. Mr. FITZGERALD (Ireland): We meet under your genial auspices, Sir, under a President of unique distinction and experience to whom it is my pleasant duty to offer my delegation's sincere congratulations on election to that high office. Your impressive record as President of the Conference on the Law of the Sea is a splendid testimony to your own remarkable abilities as a presiding officer, and the warmth of your personality will ensure that our deliberations will never lose that human touch so essential for peace and understanding between peoples.

143. To my friend and colleague, Premier Gaston Thorn of Luxembourg, President of the thirtieth session, I should also like to express my sincere thanks and appreciation on the completion of his distinguished term of office.

144. To Mr. James R. Mancham, President of the Republic of Seychelles, I offer our sincerest congratulations on his

nation's becoming the one hundred and forty-fifth Member of the United Nations.

145. In welcoming the one hundred and forty-fifth Member of our Organization, might I express the hope that the applications of all other peace-loving States willing to accept the obligations of the United Nations Charter will be accepted in the near future, so that our body may truly reflect the principle of universality to which my country attaches so much importance.

146. The Charter of the United Nations commits us to seek a world order of peace and justice between nation States. Peace, justice and order have always been the broad aims of political action within individual States. It is now vital that they be established on the world level: peace, because war can destroy us; justice for its own sake and because peace without justice is unstable; and, order, because neither peace nor justice will prevail in a world of disorder and conflict.

147. But, as political leaders have always found at the level of the nation, to achieve one of these aims is not necessarily to achieve all, and the question often posed is, Which should come first? Some would say peace at any price—to the extent of allowing a just society to be overturned by greed, ambition or fanaticism; some would give first priority to order—even the unstable order which comes from an unjust settlement or unjust political structures; and some are so intent on justice for all, that they will tolerate neither peace nor order—the conditions for real progress—until the day justice can be achieved.

148. The reality for us is that no one of these three aims can be achieved in isolation at the world level any more than at national level. Specific problems on our agenda may relate in a particular way to one or other aim. But in our approach to all of the concrete issues we face, we need to have constantly in mind that our solutions will not work in the long run, unless they are part of a broader concerted effort to work patiently towards a world where all three—peace, justice and order together—increasingly prevail.

149. This sets us a broad programme for action in various areas of the work of this Organization. We must seek to advance this programme as a whole as best we can and without applying double standards to different situations.

150. First, as a minimum requirement to secure peace, we must do everything in our power to avoid global war and to contain regional wars and bring them to an end.

151. Secondly, to secure greater justice throughout the world we must use this forum so that States of different outlooks and ideologies can gradually establish common agreed norms of behaviour. Those norms should establish just relations between States and their peoples in both political and economic spheres; and beyond this they must also seek to ensure respect on a world-wide basis for individual human rights.

152. Thirdly, we must use the capacities of this universal Organization, and of all the bodies within this United Nations family, to bring order not only to the traditional

areas of human activity with which the United Nations has been concerned but also to areas which have newly come within the control of mankind, such as the seas and oceans of this planet, and the space around it.

153. At this General Assembly session we face a long agenda of specific problems, each of which bears on one or more of these areas of action. At this, our thirty-first such annual session, we can have few illusions as to the capacity of the United Nations to solve all of these problems in three months of debate. But—with a realistic idea of its limitations—it is important that we use all of the possibilities which the United Nations offers to advance as steadily and consistently as we can towards a world which will have a stable peace based on justice and where the political order and political structures of the world community help increasingly to secure both.

154. A very important series of issues bearing directly on our need to maintain peace is that complex of problems which faces us at each Assembly session in the field of disarmament and arms control. We are increasingly pre-occupied with the problems of hunger, of illiteracy, of disease, of economic development and of an equitable sharing of mankind's limited resources. And yet, while we debate these problems, global military expenditure is reaching, as we have been told already today, \$300 billion a year, and technology is steadily working to produce even more efficient, and more costly, means of mass destruction. Nuclear war is of course the greatest danger. To avert it the world has depended for over a generation, for better or worse, on a system of mutual deterrence. It is realistic to recognize that the United Nations cannot hope in the near future to end this kind of confrontation or substitute for it a fully accepted and world-wide peace-keeping procedure. But there is nevertheless a pressing need for our Organization in the interests of peace to seek to avert the dangers inherent in the uncontrolled spread of nuclear technology.

155. That danger has, of course, been with us for years, but it has been accentuated recently by the increasingly irresponsible readiness of suppliers of nuclear technology to equip countries not only with the means of generating nuclear energy but with reprocessing plants which produce plutonium that can be used for nuclear weapons.

156. The hard fact of the matter is that in the field of enrichment and reprocessing, where the basic danger lies, it has begun to seem that the present system of international safeguards, even if applied, may not be adequate to provide protection against the possibility that countries importing advanced nuclear technology will use it for the production of nuclear explosives. If improved safeguards cannot be devised, and devised quickly, then other steps will be required. The Governments of the principal suppliers may have to consider limiting their exports to other types of nuclear materials and refusing to sell either enrichment or reprocessing plants.

157. We hope also that this session of the General Assembly in its debates on disarmament will be able to encourage early progress in the limitation in other ways of weapons of mass destruction. We need a comprehensive treaty banning nuclear weapon tests. We also need to see work continue in an area where progress has already been

made—the working out of a convention on chemical and biological weapons, and we hope that a treaty in this area can soon be concluded.

158. We cannot, however, lose sight of another danger, to which the preceding speaker, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Singapore, just made eloquent reference, in a speech of compelling logic and frankness, namely, the extraordinary growth in recent years of conventional weapons in all areas of the world—often encouraged by commercial competition among supplying countries. I need not say more on this aspect, which Mr. Rajaratnam covered so fully and bluntly. The last decade has seen a remarkable build-up of conventional arms throughout the world.

159. It is against this background of dangerous developments in regard to armaments of all kinds, nuclear and non-nuclear, that proposals have been made for a special session of the General Assembly on disarmament. A special session could perhaps perform a useful function in directing the attention of public opinion in Member States to the dangers of armaments and the urgent need for arms control. But disarmament has always been an area where it is tempting to substitute rhetoric for genuine and carefully worked out actions. If, therefore, such a special session is to be held, it will require careful preparation and the prior adoption of a detailed agreed agenda. It will also be essential if it is to be successful, that all of the nuclear Powers take part and that each of them make a constructive contribution towards its success.

160. The growth and spread of armaments has unfortunately contributed to the duration and intensity of regional conflicts in many areas. The problems of peace, order and justice are directly linked in a number of those areas where the present order is unstable and peace is constantly endangered because a just settlement has not been found to what may admittedly be a complex international problem. The Middle East is clearly a case in point.

161. The Netherlands Foreign Minister, Mr. van der Stoep, as President of the Council of Ministers of the European Community, has recalled for this Assembly [7th meeting] the position of the nine member States on the Middle East problem and the principles which we consider should govern a just settlement that would bring peace and stability to the region. I should like to emphasize that these principles are not partisan or arbitrary ones. They are based on a deep conviction that the Middle East conflict of its very nature cannot be resolved by recourse to war, and on a belief in the urgent need for negotiations.

162. These principles include the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force and, consequently, the need for Israel to end the territorial occupation it has maintained since the conflict of 1967; they include also respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of every State in the area—including Lebanon, I must at this point emphasize—and their right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries. And it includes recognition that in the establishment of a just and lasting peace account must be taken of the legitimate rights of the Palestinians. It should be made clear that the Palestinians, too, have the right to be established within

secure boundaries and the right to give effective expression in appropriate political form to their sense of their national identity. For my own part I believe that this means that they should have the right to decide for themselves whether to establish an independent entity on the territory vacated by Israel.

163. It is on the basis of these general principles that the Middle East crisis will be resolved. We all know this—all of us, including those directly involved in that dispute. There should be no further delay in reaching a solution on this basis. Delay cannot and will not alter the eventual outcome. It can only risk a further major conflict between those neighbouring States, which have already fought so many bloody wars and which must eventually learn to live with each other and with the Palestinian people. It should be our aim to arrive at the framework of such a settlement not in the next decade but within the next year, exerting all our efforts to bring the parties together with this end in view.

164. I should like at this point to echo the hopes expressed by other speakers for a speedy end to the appalling bloodshed and destruction in Lebanon and to associate myself with the good wishes extended to President Sarkis in the urgent and difficult task that he has of restoring harmony and rebuilding his country.

165. In Cyprus, too, a just settlement as a basis for a stable peace is urgently required. The European Community is closely associated with the three countries directly involved with this problem and it has on several occasions manifested its support for the maintenance of the Republic's freedom and unity in conditions of peace. But to achieve these aims it is obviously necessary that substantive negotiations should begin between the representatives of the two communities involved, under the aegis of the United Nations. I believe that I am echoing the feelings of the vast majority of my fellow representatives in calling for an end to the frustrating delays which have dogged the negotiations on Cyprus so far and in expressing our full support for the efforts of our Secretary-General and of his representative in Nicosia, Ambassador Pérez de Cuéllar, to bring the parties together in a forum of genuine negotiation.

166. The problems of southern Africa—Rhodesia, Namibia and South Africa itself—raise perhaps in the clearest way all three of the issues of peace, justice and order, to which I referred. In that area, peace is now very seriously threatened because a minority in each case has for a long time imposed its own version of order with an absolute lack of concern for justice.

167. A situation such as that in southern Africa can create a dilemma for those—both within the area and outside it—who set a high value on peace and non-violence and hope and work for orderly change. The patience and the attachment to peaceful methods shown over the years by movements within the region which represent the legitimate demands of the black majority for elementary justice and basic rights have been notable. But these efforts have hitherto been met with an absolute intransigence which has provoked a war of liberation in Rhodesia and violence in South Africa that has escalated at the cost of the lives of hundreds of innocent Africans whose killing we deplore and condemn.

168. At the present time, however, against all the odds there is hope. The mission undertaken in southern Africa by the American Secretary of State, Mr. Kissinger, has raised the possibility of an agreement which could bring peaceful change and the establishment of a more just order in the region. We appreciate this effort and we have particular sympathy and understanding for the patience of the neighbouring African Governments and the respective African liberation movements which have been willing to accept that peaceful methods should have every possible opportunity of bringing change to the region.

169. It is our hope that the change of attitude demonstrated by the head of the illegal Rhodesian régime last week will provide a basis for agreement on a rapid, peaceful transition to the establishment of an independent State of Zimbabwe. I read with interest the statements of the Presidents of the five neighbouring African States noting the announcement by Mr. Smith and his acceptance of the need to establish immediately a transitional government. I hope that the problems that remain in implementing this can be peacefully resolved.

170. With our partners in the European Community we hope, too, that the independence of Namibia can be rapidly and peaceably secured and that the obstacles that remain in the way of this can be removed with goodwill. There, as in Rhodesia, the outcome is no longer uncertain, nor can it be delayed; only the immediate path to freedom, and the amount of blood to be shed or spared, is at this stage in doubt. In that country—Namibia—more than almost anywhere else the role of the United Nations is crucial and should be given primary importance.

171. Finally, I must refer to South Africa itself. There are those who profess to see in current events some kind of a plan to consolidate rule by the minority there and its evil practices of *apartheid*. I do not believe that this can happen. The example of the rapid transition now taking place in Rhodesia and in Namibia, following similar developments in Mozambique and Angola, has started a process within South Africa itself which cannot now be halted. The only question is whether those in charge there have the wisdom, the courage and the political skill to face that reality, or whether they are going to make the very mistake against which they have been warning Mr. Ian Smith. The ultimate issue is not in doubt there any more than in the Territories to the immediate north. And the firmness of the international community in such matters as the non-recognition of Transkei can leave no doubt in the minds of the rulers of South Africa as to how they must move or that they must move quickly, if they are to prevent a holocaust and to preserve an appropriate role for the white minority in the South Africa of the future.

172. The second major area of action for our Organization is that of establishing norms of behaviour to secure not only peace between the world's peoples but also justice, which alone can be a sound basis for order. This involves two major lines of action for our Organization: first, the working out of a fair and just economic relationship between nations and particularly between industrialized and developing countries; and, secondly, the promotion and advancement by every means open to us within the limits of our Organization of respect within each Member State for basic individual human rights.

173. As regards the reordering of the inequitable economic relationships between rich and poor countries, some limited progress has been made over the past three years. In this period of time we have moved from the near confrontation of the sixth special session to the co-operation involved in launching the Conference on International Economic Co-operation in Paris and in securing a limited—and I stress limited—positive result from the fourth session of UNCTAD in Nairobi.

174. As a small nation which has experienced the economic and social problems arising from the absence of a well-developed industrial base, we in Ireland are in a position to appreciate to some degree the difficulties which the countries of the third world are seeking to overcome; and as a State member of the European Community we are associated with that Community's considerable efforts, of which the Lomé Convention¹⁰ is an important example, to improve economic relationships between developed and developing countries.

175. But this whole issue is one which demands action by the world community as a whole on a very large scale, and the task before us is immense. Pressing as our other problems may now appear to be, it is possible that from now into the next century this may be one of the greatest issues we have to face on this planet.

176. It is easy enough to talk rhetorically of the need for justice in international economic relations but difficult in the extreme to accept the practical consequences of what we advocate. We have to learn to accept that the order which has so long prevailed in economic relations between the developing and the industrialized countries is grossly unjust and, therefore, in the long run also unstable and that direct action on a world scale must now be taken to redress it. This is a difficult message for any country to accept, however developed it may seem by comparison with other States elsewhere in the world. But action is necessary, and I sincerely hope that the General Assembly will at this session do everything open to it to encourage progress in these areas.

177. But despite the fact that this is an Organization of nation-States concerned primarily with inter-State relations we simply cannot be content to limit the effort to establish a just and stable world order to that level. This Organization has long since rejected the idea that it is concerned only with disputes between States. No Member of this Organization today—other than the country immediately involved—accepts the proposition that *apartheid* in South Africa is the concern of none but the Government of that country, or that it is unwarranted interference in the internal affairs of South Africa for the whole world community to condemn *apartheid* as an odious offence against the rights of individuals to equal treatment before the law, regardless of race, religion, sex, or other distinction.

178. Racial discrimination is indeed an odious form of discrimination—the most odious—but this must not blind us to the fact that it is but one of many forms of

discrimination, all of which must be condemned by men and women of honesty and goodwill if we are to avoid double standards and be consistent in the effort to advance towards a world order based on justice.

179. In this effort to promote such a world order, where there will be respect for human rights, including above all the right of freedom from torture, there are a number of steps to be taken: first, the elaboration of principles which should guide the conduct of States and individuals; secondly, the development of a framework within which the application of these principles in a practical manner may be discussed, and procedures for the investigation of allegations of breaches of these principles worked out, particularly when it appears that these form a consistent pattern; and, thirdly, the question of remedies, when, on investigation, it appears that breaches have taken place.

180. I believe that we have made very considerable progress in relation to the first aspect, the elaboration of principles. In the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and in the United Nations Covenants in particular, there has been worked out as never before in human history a universal code accepted in principle by all States as a guide to their behaviour. While we may be tempted from time to time to despair at the seemingly endless reports of serious breaches of fundamental rights, we must never lose sight of the fact that these documents give expression to a broad consensus within the world community as to what constitutes human rights, and that it is this that makes it possible for us to point out those breaches when they occur.

181. As to the second aspect, the Economic and Social Council, through the United Nations Commission on Human Rights and its subsidiary sub-commissions, provides a framework for discussion, and this will now be complemented by a Human Rights Committee set up under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. In my view there should be full and free discussion within this framework.

182. United Nations procedures for the investigation of alleged breaches of human rights are, however, inadequate largely because they depend in each individual case on the consent of the party complained against. I believe that these procedures need to be improved and complemented by a greater willingness by States to co-operate with investigations even if they think the complaint made against them is unjustified. I would therefore strongly support the proposal made earlier this afternoon by my Belgian colleague, Mr. Van Elslande, that States be invited each to make a general voluntary declaration of willingness in the future to permit an on-the-spot investigation by a United Nations committee of inquiry in the case of an allegation of a breach of human rights on its territory. My Government has authorized me to state its willingness to subscribe to such a declaration.

183. The third question, that of remedies, poses the greatest problem. As this Assembly will be aware, the States members of the Council of Europe have agreed on certain procedures not only for the investigation but also for the adjudication of alleged breaches of human rights. There is, for example, a procedure under which a State may initiate action against another State which it believes to have

¹⁰ APC-EEC Convention of Lomé, signed on 28 February 1975 at Lomé. See document A/AC.176/7.

breached human rights—a procedure which my own State has recently successfully employed. Moreover, under an optional procedure some of us have admitted the right of our own citizens to take proceedings in this international forum against our own State, when national remedies have been exhausted. The universal application of these procedures, now available within the European context, is the objective towards which we should strive.

184. Pointing to the example of the European Commission and Court of Human Rights, I have proposed in this Assembly each year since 1973 that an effective world-wide human rights jurisdiction should be created, so that no country should be free from inquiry, from inspection or from condemnatory action by the international community in respect of such breaches of the rights of man. Accordingly, I commend for further study the suggestions made to this Assembly by my friend and colleague Foreign Minister Genscher of the Federal Republic of Germany, who in his speech here [7th meeting] proposed the creation of an international court for human rights.

185. The rights of the individual to freedom and justice are threatened, however, from many quarters other than governments of sovereign States. The right to freedom and to life is now under challenge in the most barbarous manner by many individual groups which in the name of some political or ideological cause claim the right to kidnap and take hostage, and in certain circumstances to kill, people innocent of any connexion with their cause or their country. They claim to act in the name of justice, but the injustice to the innocent victims of their actions belies their claim. Many of our countries have suffered from this scourge in one way or another, and any of us may be exposed to it at any time.

186. It is time the world community joined together to combat and end it. We must reject the spurious claim of such groups to promote justice by their barbarous actions; we must together work out effective means to bring these atrocities to an end, and we must complement the action we take by continuing our own sustained efforts both as individual States and through this world Organization to promote a more just and peaceful world order. As an immediate step all of us—every State Member of this Organization without exception—should join in a convention to combat the taking of hostages, as has been proposed by my colleague from the Federal Republic of Germany, so that the perpetrators are either extradited or brought before a court in the country in which they were seized. This procedure is one which my own country has recently adopted on a reciprocal basis with the United Kingdom to deal with acts of terrorism committed in either of our two States.

187. The third complex of issues which, I have suggested, constitutes a major area of action for the world community at present is that of bringing agreement and order, on a basis of justice, to the control of the oceans and the sea-bed. This vast area of the planet's surface, greater by far than the land surface to which humanity was so long limited, is now at last coming definitively within the control of mankind. It is our task in this generation to see to it that political order rather than anarchy will henceforth prevail in its allocation and use.

188. The responsibility is a heavy one, to be approached with a sense of the limits of our planet's resources and of the limits to their capacity to renew themselves. This is primarily the task of the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea, working as part of the general structure of the United Nations system under your wise chairmanship, Mr. President. The problems that Conference faces are formidable, and although a good deal of progress has been made the relatively limited results of the last session of the Conference were not encouraging.

189. As a result a number of States have taken unilateral action by declaring a 200-mile limit for fishing. This is having the effect of diverting the fishing effort of other States from the waters thus brought within national jurisdictions to waters in the vicinity of my country and its partners in the European Community. These waters close to our coast are already disastrously over-fished because of the total inadequacy of international conservation methods, and the short-sighted and indiscriminate depredations of the fishing fleets of certain countries. We cannot face the extinction of our fishing industry, on which our country is heavily dependent and which accounts for a significant part of the potential resources of our State. Accordingly, my Government, in consultation with its partners in the European Community, has reluctantly concluded that it will be necessary to extend its fishing limits in the near future owing to the delay in reaching world-wide agreement. In doing so we are convinced that a large majority of governments consider that States should be entitled to such limits, and we expect that the convention which we all hope the Conference will adopt will include a provision to that effect. In the meantime we are confident, Mr. President, that you and your collaborators at the Conference will find appropriate procedures for preparing the work of the next session. We look forward to the eventual success of the Conference in adopting a widely accepted comprehensive convention.

190. In the island of Ireland, too, the issues of peace, order and justice, to which I have referred throughout my remarks, are inextricably interconnected. In Northern Ireland the political order which prevailed for almost half a century proved unstable because it did not secure justice in a divided community. In such a community, each section of which has been taught by history to fear the other, the restoration of order and the maintenance of order require not merely the consent but the dedicated support of both sections. This cannot humanly be secured if one section is excluded indefinitely not merely from any share in the government of the area but from any prospect of ever enjoying such a share. Only a just system of government, in which both sections, for so long as they may distrust each other, are sure of participation, can provide a firm basis for the re-establishment of order and the restoration of peace.

191. In Northern Ireland at the present moment the prime need is peace so that a just order may be established. That the will to peace is there among the ordinary people of our island has been dramatically shown in recent weeks, when, led by a courageous band of women, tens of thousands from both sections of a divided community have together marched peacefully and prayerfully throughout Northern Ireland demanding the end of violence from any and every quarter. The barriers that have divided the ordinary people

of Northern Ireland from each other have been weakened by this spontaneous popular movement.

192. As I have made clear from this rostrum on previous occasions, my Government and the people of my State have only one wish in this matter: that the people of Northern Ireland be brought to live together in peace, joining with each other in the common interest of their part of the island of Ireland. We hope that one day they may choose freely to join with us in a political arrangement for the good of the whole island, but we are content to leave that to them to decide freely by majority vote when and if they choose to do so.

193. In the meantime we shall spare no effort in any manner open to us to prevent their lives and their livelihoods from being destroyed by a violence that has become an end in itself for those who practice it. Limited only by our concern for the protection of human rights, which should inhibit every Government from acting arbitrarily or unjustly, we have recently strengthened our laws, lengthened the sentences imposed for violent crimes and initiated a move to extend, with all appropriate safeguards, from two to seven days the period during which a suspect under investigation may be detained without charge.

194. In all these actions we are conscious of the duty to ensure that justice prevails while order is maintained and peace is secured. In this we are fortified by a constitution strongly protective of human rights, by vigilant public opinion, by a vocal opposition in Parliament, and by a free press.

195. The balance between maintaining order and ensuring justice is difficult to ensure under conditions of violence or threats of violence. But only if this balance is maintained evenly and equitably can peace be secured in such conditions, and that we are determined to do in Ireland today.

196. Throughout this statement to the General Assembly I have stressed the need to advance consistently and patiently towards the three aims of peace, justice and order. These are not abstractions. They bear in the most direct way possible on all our people. They are aims which preoccupy us in this Organization as we begin this thirty-first session, and they are aims which occupy us greatly in Ireland at the present time.

197. As we face the work of the session I should like to commend to the General Assembly the declaration which the peace movement of the ordinary people of Northern Ireland, to which I have just referred, has adopted as its motto. If the General Assembly will bear with me I will read out these words since I feel that, while they were devised to meet the needs of that particular small part of the world, they are of such direct relevance to our work here too on behalf of the world community. They are:

"We have a simple message for the world from this movement for peace. We want to live and love and build a just and peaceful society.

"We want for our children, as we want for ourselves, our lives at home, at work and at play, to be lives of joy and peace.

"We recognize that to build such a life demands of all of us dedication, hard work and courage.

"We recognize that there are many problems in our society which are a source of conflict and violence.

"We recognize that every bullet fired and every explosive bomb makes that work more difficult.

"We reject the use of the bomb and the bullet and all the techniques of violence.

"We dedicate ourselves to working with our neighbours, near and far, day in and day out, to building that peaceful society in which the tragedies we have known are a bad memory and a continuing warning."

That is the message which I leave with the General Assembly today on behalf of the people of Ireland.

198. Mr. KEUTCHA (United Republic of Cameroon) (*interpretation from French*): Our session opened a few days ago under the provisional presidency of Mr. Gaston Thorn, the Prime Minister of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, whose qualities of heart and mind we have long appreciated. Once again he placed his talents and dynamism at the service of the world community, presiding with authority over the work of our thirtieth session. It is a pleasant duty for us again to tell him of the high esteem he enjoys in our delegation and in the Government of Cameroon.

199. On behalf of the people of Cameroon, the President of the Republic of Cameroon, His Excellency El Hadj Ahmadou Ahidjo, our Government and our delegation, we rejoice at seeing Ambassador Hamilton Shirley Amerasinghe presiding over our thirty-first session. There is no doubt that his presidency is a tribute to Sri Lanka which, despite centuries of foreign domination, has been able to conserve the best treasures of its culture and history. It is a tribute to one of the founders of our movement of non-aligned countries, the latest meeting of which was held in Colombo. Mr. President, in your opening statement [*1st meeting*] you rightly recalled that that movement is, beyond doubt, the hope of tomorrow because it is in constant emergence, it carries a new vigour in international morality which fights selfishness and it rejects violence in international relations at a time when more than ever force tends to prevail over the rule of law.

200. We are convinced that your well-known qualities as a mature statesman will enable our deliberations to proceed in a positive manner and that you will bring to them the humanism so necessary for dialogue, concerted agreement and mutual understanding.

Mr. Medani (Sudan), Vice-President, took the Chair.

201. And let us not forget the outstanding role played here by Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim. The Government of Cameroon follows with sympathy the ceaseless efforts he makes to gather together the elements for a solution to the numerous and serious problems which the world community faces. We avail ourselves of this opportunity to pay him a well-deserved tribute for his devotion and integrity.

202. We warmly welcome the delegation of Seychelles, which is with us for the first time. We had hoped to be able to do the same for the delegation of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, whose long struggle finally set the seal on the spiritual unity of the people and nation of Viet Nam.

203. Our delegation also profoundly regrets not being able today to extend its warm, brotherly congratulations to the delegation of the People's Republic of Angola. A peaceful State recognized by more than a hundred States, Angola completely fulfils all the conditions laid down in the Charter for admission to the United Nations. We sincerely believe that the People's Republic of Angola has its legitimate place within the United Nations family, where, we are firmly convinced, it will make its contribution to the effort we are all making to build a better world. Its admission will constitute an additional illustration of the trends towards the universality of our Organization.

204. Since the thirtieth session of the General Assembly of the United Nations, the world situation has been characterized both by the crystallization of certain existing situations and by dangerous and explosive developments in certain hotbeds of tension.

205. The state of generalized confusion in international monetary policy, aggravated by inflation, has brought the world economy to a deadlock. The imbalances in international trade, the gaps between developed and developing countries, the somewhat disappointed hopes of the fourth session of UNCTAD, the procrastinations at the Paris Conference, do not particularly arouse optimism for the attainment of our common objectives, in particular the advent of a new international economic order.

206. The political panorama facing the international community is very worrying. Despite the hopes born with the Helsinki Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, the effects of détente felt in Europe have not been felt elsewhere in the world. In the absence of a genuine will for peace and co-operation, weapons have continued to proliferate, creating and thereby sustaining new centres of tension.

207. The most sought-after trade has become that of conventional or sophisticated weapons, as well as nuclear reactors, supposedly for peaceful uses.

208. In this cloudy sky of international relations, there have nevertheless appeared some rays of light.

209. The super-Powers have not broken off their discussions on the prohibition of nuclear weapons.

210. The presence in the United Nations of the People's Republic of China has powerfully contributed to remodeling the geopolitical physiognomy of the world, and the heartfelt tribute paid by our Organization to the memory of the illustrious Chairman Mao Tsetung, the great leader of the Chinese people, bears witness to this.

211. In South-East Asia, the long Vietnamese war is now history, while the weapons have been silenced in Cambodia as well.

212. Let us look for a moment at Africa, a hospitable continent where some people still suffer the cruel fate inflicted on them by greedy and unscrupulous invaders.

213. The disappearance of the Portuguese colonial empire has accelerated the movement for the decolonization of our continent. This is a result which is to the credit of African peoples, their Governments and the friends who support them; it is the culmination of long liberation struggles during which African nationalists have given proof of unparalleled courage and determination, bearing in mind the hostile environment and the conditions in which they were fighting an enemy supported by the imperialist Powers. Many courageous Africans died during those liberation wars, but the cause they were defending—the cause which every African worthy of that name defends—will inevitably triumph, and their memory will live forever in the minds of all. For us, the independence of those countries is a victory cry, the echo of which now resounds in the very heart of the kingdom of *apartheid*, sowing panic among the oppressors and rallying the oppressed for decisive combat in the name of democracy, liberty, justice and equality.

214. That is why the People's Republic of Angola has become a target and a nightmare for the South African racists, who have not accepted the stunning defeat suffered by their troops to the great surprise of those who still believed in the bluff about an invincible South Africa. But it is not only Angola which is at stake.

215. Mozambique, because it decided to apply the sanctions decreed by the United Nations against the white minority régime of Zimbabwe, is the victim of incessant threats and armed incursions by the white racist rebels. The same is true for other independent African countries bordering on South Africa and Rhodesia.

216. As in the past, we are in firm solidarity with them—not only because they are our brothers and because their fight is ours, but also, and above all, because the cause they defend is that of every man who loves justice and peace.

217. Indeed, there is enormous indignation over the scandalous situation that has existed in Zimbabwe for 11 years. Despite the sanctions imposed by the United Nations, despite the goodwill of African States exemplified by the Lusaka Manifesto on Southern Africa¹¹ for a peaceful approach to the problems of southern Africa, the intransigence and arrogance of the arch-rebel, Ian Smith, have become more and more blatant, because he relies on the same Powers which provide him with all sorts of arms. Nevertheless, from the point of view of African nationalists, the will to settle problems peacefully has not been lacking: even defying the suspicions and warnings of their friends, some of them agreed to sit around a table and start negotiations with the rebels who were then at bay. But that was simply to hear conditions for submission imposed on them in arrogant and overbearing language.

218. In Namibia too, the South African white minority racists remain deaf to the appeals for reason, and continue

¹¹ See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-fourth Session, Annexes*, agenda item 106, document A/7754.

to ignore the decisions of our Organization. The white racist régime of Pretoria has simply intensified its repressive measures against the Namibian people and sown hatred, bereavement and misery, which are the corollary of its odious *apartheid* policy.

219. In order to perpetuate its presence in that international Territory, despite the injunctions of the Security Council, the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice¹² and innumerable resolutions of our Assembly calling for its immediate withdrawal, the racist régime has for several months been engaged in manoeuvres which are only too crudely obvious, since their only purpose is to divide the Namibian leaders by means of so-called constitutional conferences which exclude the South West Africa People's Organization [SWAPO], the only movement recognized by the Organization of African Unity [OAU] and the United Nations as being the genuine representative of the legitimate aspirations of the Namibian people.

220. In Azania itself, the policy of *apartheid*, which arouses the reprobation of the entire world because it is recognized as constituting a crime against mankind, has finally proved the extent of its absurdity. The patience of a people is not infinite, even if its martyrdom has lasted for centuries. This is why for months the repressive South African hordes have been on a war footing. The barbarity with which they exterminate hundreds of women and children who peacefully call for a minimum of justice is proof that the white racists are fighting with their backs to the wall. These racists, frightened and condemned to the most painful revisions, imagine that by their diabolical will they can delay the irreversible evolution of Azanian history. The people of Azania, aware of its strength and its rightness, is courageously resisting, and its revolt is becoming a genuine revolution.

221. We know, and our Secretary-General recalled it some weeks ago, that the situation prevailing in Azania and throughout southern Africa constitutes a serious threat to international peace and security.

222. The South African army and police will still kill many children, old people and peaceful and unarmed labourers, but from the blood of these martyrs to liberty, justice and human dignity will be born other children, other labourers and other fighters determined to take over so long as the struggle for liberation lasts. There was Sharpeville, there was Soweto and other names which have been immortalized and which cannot but cause the wheel of history, which is one of anguish, to turn more rapidly for the adherents of the inhuman Pretoria régime.

223. The responsibility for the failure at attempts at dialogue, the complete responsibility, we would say, for the present situation rests on the advocates of *apartheid* as well as on those who have abused the racists by causing them to believe they are fighting on behalf of an ideology against the establishment of another one in that part of the African continent. It would be an insult to consider the South

African régime as the symbol of a society of liberal democracy and a defender of its most sacred values. On the contrary, it personifies obscurantism. Responsibility rests finally with those who, by increasing its military potential and consolidating its economy, gave that racist régime the illusion of invincibility.

224. Speaking of the events at Soweto last June, the Cameroonian Head of State declared:

"By this revolt the people of Azania, in the struggle against racial discrimination, has wished once more and in an indisputable way to show its determination to put an end to the invidiously inhuman régime of *apartheid* to which it is subjected, to conquer by any means liberty, equality, dignity and to establish in Azania a majority Government . . . The Government of the United Republic of Cameroon hopes that these tragic events will be proof to all of the impossibility of a constructive dialogue with the advocates of racial domination and firmly condemns all those who continue to strengthen that régime by maintaining relations with it of which the United Nations and OAU disapprove".

225. It is our firm conviction that tomorrow will be too late if today the international community does not decide to act decisively against South Africa.

226. Cameroon is attentively following the efforts which have been made for some weeks by the United States Secretary of State. But it is not useless to recall that any solution in southern Africa must be based on the principles which have been clearly defined by the United Nations and tend to assure the immediate transfer of power to the authentic representatives of the people, in accordance with majority rule which is that of any genuine democracy.

227. Since nothing in the past has given us the slightest assurance of good faith on the part of those governing at Salisbury and at Pretoria, we could not approve of any procrastinations which they are now manifesting when the sword is plunged within them and which for us are simply subterfuges whereby they hope to win time, intensify their policy of the worst which has been theirs so far and ultimately reaffirm their wavering power.

228. The Government of the Cameroon, which has always given multiform aid to the valiant fighters for freedom, will continue to encourage them to be vigilant. They are duty-bound to pursue and intensify the armed struggle which has proved to be the only language that these racist minorities, avid for domination, understand.

229. As for Namibia, the Security Council will have to draw the consequences of the persistent refusal of South Africa to withdraw from that Territory and to bow to the injunctions contained, in particular, in resolution 385 (1976) of 30 January 1976. It is time for the Council to decide finally to take the measures provided for in Chapter VII of the Charter in order to enable the Organization to assume its responsibility in regard to that international Territory.

230. This last quarter of a century is that of the final liquidation of all colonial domination. So we rejoice at the

¹² Legal Consequences for States of the Continued Presence of South Africa in Namibia (South West Africa) notwithstanding Security Council Resolution 276 (1970), Advisory Opinion, I.C.J. Reports 1971, p. 16.

wisdom of the Government of France in its decision to ensure the accession to independence of the Territory of the Afars and the Issas in the near future.

231. We sincerely hope that the same wisdom will prevail with regard to the Republic of the Comoros in its legitimate claims for the unity of the country and preservation of the territorial integrity under which it was administered in the past.

232. If we have dwelt at some length on the situation in southern Africa because of the extremely alarming nature of the tragic events which are taking place in that part of the world, we are no less concerned with regard to other hotbeds of tension.

233. In the Middle East, since the last session there has been no positive evolution. The situation remains precarious. The Arab territories continue to be occupied in defiance of all the relevant resolutions of our Organization. The Palestinians, driven out everywhere, continue to be ignored or treated as common refugees or simply as terrorists. And yet, they are without doubt one of the major components of an over-all solution of the Middle East problem.

234. The Government of the United Republic of Cameroon wishes to reaffirm here that the Israeli-Arab problem must be dealt with, bearing in mind the positive elements contained in resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) of the Security Council. It is clear and incontestable that Israel must withdraw from the territories which it occupied by an act of war. Israel, whose right to live within secure and recognized boundaries we do not deny, must likewise recognize the fundamental rights of the Palestinian people, and in particular their right to a country, which is the corner-stone for the restoration of a just and lasting peace in that region.

235. The great Powers, and particularly those which have a determining influence on Israel, have a duty to use this influence so that at the peace negotiations at Geneva, which should be resumed quickly, that State will adopt a realistic attitude by entering into a constructive dialogue with all the parties concerned, particularly with the Palestine Liberation Organization, which is the authentic representative of the Palestinian people.

236. The situation in Lebanon is one of extreme anguish. Cameroon feels painfully the events in that country, the land of meetings and of tolerance, the cross-roads of civilization, whose people have for the people of Cameroon feelings of profound friendship based on a long history. We urgently appeal to the international community to assist that country to recover peace and safeguard its unity and integrity. We urge the conflicting parties to find again that spirit of tolerance which has always been characteristic of them and to embark on the negotiating process which is the only means of safeguarding the existence of Lebanon.

237. Foreign interference has done grave damage in Cyprus and introduced in that part of the Mediterranean an element of instability which is likely to lead to a major confrontation among the States concerned. The first steps towards a calming of minds should be the withdrawal of all

foreign forces from the island and the return of the refugees to their homes. In this respect we appreciate the efforts made by our Secretary-General and we warmly encourage him to pursue his actions so as to find a basis for a definite and final agreement within the framework of the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and of the Security Council so as to preserve the independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-alignment of Cyprus.

238. The division of Korea is for us a subject of constant concern. In fact Cameroon maintains friendly relations with the two Korean States, that is to say, actually with the entire Korean people. Therefore our most ardent wish is that, within the framework of brotherly dialogue, incessant efforts will be pursued towards the peaceful reunification of Korea, without any foreign interference. The status quo is far from being a guarantee of peace in that region. Recent incidents have once again reminded us how fragile the present situation is.

239. The Cameroonian Government believes that the senseless proliferation of weapons in the world so as to conquer and enlarge spheres of influence generates hotbeds of tension, of which we have just given a summary indication. It seems laughable to us to speak of détente in a world dominated by the war psychosis which is reflected in stockpiling, which is difficult to control, of weapons of mass destruction. We will not go console ourselves by saying that in the event of a nuclear conflict nobody—not even the happy sellers of today—will find shelter from the holocaust.

240. The question of general disarmament under effective control should not become a series of miscellaneous events in world politics. We are very pleased with the agreements, although very limited, which irregularly occur between the United States and the Soviet Union, but at the same time we wish to state here today before this Assembly that the problem of disarmament is a problem for all mankind. Because the last two world wars spared no continent, all the peoples of the world must have the opportunity, indeed the duty, to shoulder their responsibilities in this matter. We are profoundly convinced that world peace no longer depends today on the will of some Powers alone.

241. That is why the Government of the United Republic of Cameroon ardently supports, with the other non-aligned countries, the principle of convening a special session of the General Assembly on disarmament. Such a conference should advocate measures that will ensure the destruction of war devices, prohibit all nuclear tests and establish strict control by appropriate international bodies of the sale of nuclear devices and reactors.

242. We are aware that this session would have to be preceded by careful preparation, without thereby delaying it unduly. However, it would be desirable at present to multiply the denuclearized zones. Within this perspective, the Cameroonian Government firmly supports any proposal to make the African continent a denuclearized zone.

243. We believe in the idea of general disarmament for several reasons, one of which is that the sums of money devoured in designing and manufacturing weapons of mass destruction could serve to lessen the suffering of mankind in the fields of health, education, food and lodging, to

mention only those. In brief, the financial resources thus released could serve the well-being of peoples, as our Organization has affirmed in resolutions 2602 E (XXIV) and 3470 (XXX).

244. The Disarmament Decade and the Second United Nations Development Decade called for a transfer of a considerable amount of resources from the developed countries to the developing countries; but we see with alarm that enormous human and material resources are diverted from economic and social activities to a senseless arms race. The flow of financial resources to the developing countries was \$20 billion in 1975. During that same year armament expenditures amounted to \$300 billion. Such a situation gravely jeopardizes the attainment of the objectives which the international community has set for itself for development and in particular in the foreseeable future in order to lessen the gap separating the developing countries from the developed countries.

245. With a few rare exceptions, the developed countries, despite many declarations of good intentions, are doing everything to maintain the enormous advantages they have conferred on themselves. We shall never sufficiently denounce such selfish behaviour, because the gap that separates the rich from the poor is a threat to human dignity and to international peace and security, since it can lead three quarters of mankind to desperate actions in order to survive.

246. In fact we note with bitterness that the very principles of the new international economic order, although generally accepted, come up against strong resistance when it comes to reflecting them in deeds. This resistance cannot but dangerously affect the manifestation of the essential component in restructuring international economic relations, namely, the manifestation of a sincere political will on the part of the members of the international community.

247. It is because of the fervour with which the "have" countries cling to their privileges and because of their lack of political will that so many international gatherings have been unable to fulfil the expectations placed in them, whether it be the fourth session of UNCTAD, the Paris Conference on International Economic Co-operation or the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea.

248. UNCTAD at its fourth session was to take up the basic problems of long-term development. It was then to take certain immediate and concrete decisions and adopt specific programmes of action for problems which were ready for operational action. We are thinking in particular of the case of commodities and external debt of the developing countries. Some of the results obtained were satisfactory; others were disappointing.

249. The United Republic of Cameroon is pleased with the consensus regarding the integrated programme for commodities and the objectives and mechanisms which are its essential elements. The provisions of the resolution relating to that programme¹³ contain some innovations and

improvements regarding commodities. We are convinced that that resolution represents an acceptable framework in which the problem of commodities must be discussed in the future.

250. We also consider as a promising indication the decision taken at Nairobi to start negotiations on a number of products which are of particular interest to the developing countries.

251. On the other hand, we were disappointed with the results embodied in the resolution concerning the common fund for financing international buffer stocks. Cameroon, like the other countries of the Group of 77, had requested that the establishment of that fund be decided on at the fourth session of UNCTAD. The negotiations to be started were to be only on the modalities and details, because the in-depth studies prepared by the Committee on Commodities had demonstrated the feasibility of the project. The resolution adopted on the subject contains no declaration reflecting acceptance by all countries of the principle of a common fund. For Cameroon, the decision taken at Nairobi to convene at the latest in March 1977 a conference to negotiate on the common fund for financing is an invitation for negotiation as to substance. It is for that reason that we insist that all other Governments participate in good faith so as to arrive at a generally satisfactory agreement.

252. It is a conference which seems to us to be of major importance for the process of working towards a new international economic order. It would be an opportunity to prove, as President Ahidjo declared, that mankind can, in a deliberate concern for justice and co-operation, organize on a basis of consensus and stability the objective interdependence of peoples so as to ensure their economic development.

253. It is regrettable that at Nairobi there was no constructive reaction to the problem of the external debt of the developing countries. The developing countries have, throughout the years, exhausted their reserves and accumulated large external debts which impose heavy burdens on them of interest payments and amortization. The indebtedness of those countries, which was more than \$100 billion in 1973 will at the end of this year amount to \$200 billion.

254. Nor has any positive solution been found to the problem raised by the payment difficulties of the developing countries in the present inflationary spiral, nor to the problem of the long-term transfer of resources, nor, finally, to the disturbing problem of international monetary reform.

255. The convening of the Paris Conference on International Economic Co-operation had roused hopes in the developing countries. We had expected indeed that, benefiting from all the meetings that have been held since the sixth special session of the General Assembly and from the broad consensus and the new awareness in the international community, that conference would start decisive action for development. Unfortunately, it has not been able to fulfil those hopes because of the refusal of certain developed countries resolutely to embark upon really significant changes as required for the establishment of a new international economic order.

¹³ See *Proceedings of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, Fourth Session*, vol. I, *Report and Annexes* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.76.II.D.10), part one A, resolution 93 (IV).

256. Mr. President, you have already had occasion to deplore the scant progress of the Conference on the Law of the Sea. We know what an eminent role you play as President of the important international negotiations which are to establish the new legal régime for the use of the oceans. We also know that, if for the time being your efforts are ineffectual, it is again because of the selfishness of certain States or groups of States which have been particularly favoured by history and which are striving to accumulate the majority of the resources of the oceans, while ignoring the fate of the small countries and the developing land-locked or geographically disadvantaged countries.

257. We wish to reaffirm here that Cameroon, in keeping with the options defined by OAU and by the Group of 77, does not intend to approve a convention which would create privileges for some in sharing what should remain the common heritage of mankind.

258. We have always declared that there can be no real peace in the world so long as three fourths of mankind live in poverty, hunger, illiteracy, destitution and disease.

259. There will be no real peace in the world so long as the minority continues to exploit for its own benefit exclusively the resources of the majority of the countries of the planet.

260. There will be no real peace, we maintain, so long as the members of the international community do not perceive, without ulterior motives, that it is necessary to have a just and equitable distribution of the resources of our globe for the good of all.

261. We reaffirm that only a total recasting of international economic relations can bring a positive and lasting response to the crisis of civilization which the world is now going through.

262. That recasting of international economic relations, we believe, must of necessity lead to a new international economic order and include the following elements: a fundamental revision of the systems of world trade so as to improve the terms of trade of the developing countries, with the aim of ensuring for them, on the one hand, equitable and remunerative prices for their raw materials and, on the other, protection of the purchasing power of their peoples; a reform of the international monetary system in the direction of greater democratization, so as to establish a link between creating liquidity and financing development; the guarantee of the transfer of resources and technology in a sure, constant and predictable fashion; lastly, as regards debt, the preparation of solutions which will take particularly into account the concerns and proposals of the developing countries.

263. This is the place to recall—and we can never do so often enough—that the world is one. It follows that the prosperity and security of the wealthy countries will not be guaranteed unless the present imbalances between developed and developing countries are progressively reduced by concerted action and consequently by free consent.

264. The United Republic of Cameroon is a non-aligned country; it has always been and will continue to remain

faithful to the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter. As in the past, our country will continue to support this Organization because it represents the hope of the world. We shall continue to support it because it undertakes actions which seek to maintain international peace and security and to the liberation and development of peoples.

265. That is why we attach the utmost importance to the functioning of the United Nations, which will enable it to carry out really effective action and which would thereby most likely ensure for it the support and respect of all. To attain that objective we believe that the time has come to make its working methods more rational and to make some of its organs more democratic.

266. For years now we have been trying to improve the procedures and the organization of the General Assembly. We are very pleased with the recommendations of the Special Committee on the Rationalization of the Procedures and Organization of the General Assembly,¹⁴ which are now being implemented. In fact the agenda of our sessions would stand to gain if it were made lighter. We should avoid including certain questions which could be considered in other forums. Thus, we could concentrate all our attention and all our thinking on questions which are urgent in character or are current. It is only in this way that the United Nations will best be able to fulfil its functions as a centre for negotiating.

267. We also believe that the decision-making bodies of the United Nations, especially the Security Council, should be restructured, taking into account the new world geopolitics.

268. Finally, we persist in believing that a revitalization of the United Nations is required if we wish it fully to play the role incumbent upon it in promoting development and international economic co-operation.

269. The Economic and Social Council should, in this respect, take over the main tasks conferred on it under the Charter and play a decisive role in reconciling positions and in concentrating all efforts towards the establishment among nations of new economic relations which are more orderly and more just.

270. Even though our means of action are so limited, we now have our eyes open, and wide open, on a world in crisis in which we certainly do not intend to assume the role of a martyr. And since in that world we, the poor, are now a conscious majority, nothing can be the way it was, nothing can now easily be done without us, and far less, against us.

271. The order of values must be reconsidered so as to build that universal civilization to which we all aspire and which will make room for the values of a third world whose interests, aspirations and even dignity have been ignored for far too long.

272. Mr. ABDULLAH (Afghanistan): It is a pleasure, on behalf of my delegation and myself, to extend to the

¹⁴ See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 26.*

President our warmest congratulations and best wishes on his election as President of the thirty-first regular session of the General Assembly. We are fortunate indeed to have the benefit of his outstanding ability, wide experience and dynamic leadership in directing our deliberations. His election is also a tribute to his country and its people.

273. I should like to take this opportunity to extend to his predecessor, the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Luxembourg, my delegation's admiration for his able direction of the last session of the General Assembly.

274. We should also like to express our appreciation to the Secretary-General for his dedication to the principles and goals of the United Nations Charter, and his persistent efforts in drawing the attention of the Member States to fundamental problems facing mankind. In extending our continued support, we wish him every success in discharging the heavy responsibilities entrusted to him for preserving international peace and security.

275. When directing our deliberations to issues related to the preservation of international peace and security, and expressing appreciation for efforts made in this direction, we cannot fail to observe that there are manifold problems in our troubled world that constitute grave and serious challenges. It is indeed a source of great disappointment that in view of the bitter experiences of the First, and particularly the Second World War, representatives of Member States who have assembled here every year since the establishment of this world Organization have not been successful in seeking the means of realizing most of the high ideals enshrined in the United Nations Charter.

276. Let us then, as Members of this world body, be united in examining and evaluating the underlying factors of these challenges, and show determination in overcoming them without bias or discrimination and resolve to free both our own and future generations of such threats. This is the cardinal duty of this world Organization and of each of its Members.

277. Contradictions prevailing in our world are contrary to our expectations and most certainly to those of its founding Members.

278. When we examine the tragic situation in southern Africa and observe that the indigenous population of those territories, in no manner different from us in being entitled to basic human rights, is deprived of its individual and political rights by illegal minority régimes under the obnoxious policies of *apartheid* and racial discrimination, it is difficult to believe that this is happening in an epoch that considers respect for human rights and the rights of individuals as primary and essential obligations. Such policies remind us of mediaeval times, and eras of class exploitation when one class or group of individuals claimed superiority over their fellow men. It is even more disappointing that the world Organization has continued to remain helpless in the face of such injustices and has failed to put an end to such acts of discrimination and violation of fundamental human rights. We earnestly hope, however, that such a state of affairs will no longer prevail and that these evils of discrimination will be brought to an end, and people under foreign and alien domination fulfil their hopes and aspirations.

279. On the other hand, crises in the world economic situation give rise to worry and anxiety. If a new economic order is not established, the confrontation between the "haves" and "have-nots" will place our world in two conflicting groups, which in itself constitutes the greatest threat to international peace and security.

280. With these few remarks for a general introduction, I shall now outline the views of my delegation on some specific items on our agenda for this year.

281. Afghanistan feels immense satisfaction whenever the struggle for national freedom gives birth to new sovereign States. It is therefore with joy that we welcome the newly independent Republic of Seychelles as a Member of this world Organization, and we look forward to co-operating with it.

282. We are following with keen interest the recent developments towards the achievement of a just and final solution of the existing problems in southern Africa, to which my country has always attached great importance. As a staunch supporter of the principles of freedom, nationalism and respect for the rights of nations, Afghanistan hopes that these efforts will eventually enable the peoples of southern Africa, who have suffered under the oppression of the privileged classes, to attain their ideals and aspirations.

283. In pursuit of its foreign policy based essentially on non-alignment the Republic of Afghanistan has maintained the best of relations with all the peace-loving nations of the world and with its neighbours. With regard to Pakistan, with which we have had and still have a long-standing political difference, which was brought to the attention of this Assembly last year and in previous years, I am happy to state that a thaw has occurred in our relations and that dialogue between the leaders of the two countries has begun. We hope that, as a result of these contacts and future talks between the two leaders, our political difference will find a just and honourable solution.

284. I was encouraged to hear what the Minister of State for Defence and Foreign Affairs of Pakistan, Mr. Aziz Ahmed, said yesterday [8th meeting] regarding relations between our two countries. I should like to take this opportunity to express the hope that the only political problem existing between us will find a final settlement. My fellow representatives, the only way in which all of us can resolve our differences entirely is through peaceful negotiations. I can assure this world body that we are looking forward to an honourable solution of the political difference between Afghanistan and Pakistan, based on realities and through peaceful negotiations.

285. It is satisfying to note that since the historic Algiers Conference¹⁵ the triumphant victories of liberation movements have given new impetus to the struggle for freedom and justice in Africa and elsewhere. Afghanistan has consistently supported the complete elimination of alien domination, colonialism, *apartheid* and racial discrimi-

¹⁵ Fourth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, held at Algiers from 5 to 9 September 1973.

nation. My delegation reaffirms the inalienable right of the people of Namibia to self-determination and independence. We also support the legitimate cause and inalienable rights of the people of Zimbabwe to self-determination and independence based on majority rule. Similarly, my delegation supports the legitimate struggle of the national liberation movements of Azania for the eradication of *apartheid* and the exercise of their inalienable right to self-determination.

286. The situation prevailing in the Middle East still remains a dangerous focus of conflict, thus posing a great threat to international peace and security. This state of affairs is due to the persistence of Israel in its aggressive, expansionist, racist policy of occupation, its flagrant denial of the national rights of the Palestinian people as recognized by the United Nations and its contempt for the principles of the United Nations Charter, the resolutions of this Organization and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

287. As repeatedly stated by my Government, the question of Palestine constitutes the core of the Middle East problem. There will be no just and lasting peace in the Middle East unless the Palestinian people exercise all their legitimate rights, particularly the right to return to their homeland in accordance with relevant United Nations resolutions, and fully enjoy their right to self-determination, including the right to establish their independent State. In this respect my delegation strongly supports the recommendations of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People [see A/31/35] and regrets that the Security Council was not in a position to endorse them.

288. My delegation is gravely concerned at the tragic situation of human suffering and material loss prevailing in Lebanon and appeals to all the parties concerned to resolve their differences through peaceful measures as soon as possible and to re-establish conditions of peace and security by respecting the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of Lebanon.

289. With regard to the situation in Cyprus, Afghanistan supports the territorial integrity, sovereignty and non-alignment of that Republic and regards the principles set forth in General Assembly resolution 3212 (XXIX) as still valid for the solution of the Cyprus problem. We believe that negotiations between the representatives of the two communities conducted under the auspices of the Secretary-General of the United Nations ought to lead to a mutually satisfactory and freely accepted agreement for arriving at a just and lasting solution that would enable the two communities to coexist in peace and harmony.

290. Much has been said about détente and we are all agreed that much can be done to spread détente to all corners of the world. Distinction must however be made between détente brought about by foreboding and the dark shadows of the forces of fear and détente arising from a respect for the principles of peaceful coexistence. The former is foredoomed; the latter is of a lasting nature and provides more fertile and sound ground for international peace and security. It is being increasingly recognized that, without universal implementation of the principles of active

and peaceful coexistence and a spirit of true co-operation, détente would be an impossibility and the destiny of mankind uncertain.

291. In this context allow me to quote from the statement delivered by the Head of State and Prime Minister of Afghanistan at the recent Fifth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries at Colombo:

"Of late we hear of détente. We have to say that it is good. But we cannot ignore the fact that détente resulting from respect for the principles of coexistence differs from détente brought about by fear. What is more important is that détente must be universal. What can be the most important factor of world peace and security is worldwide coexistence which can emanate from a spirit of sincere co-operation for the balanced improvement of the human race in all parts of the world in the interest of world peace and security."

292. With regard to present issues related to disarmament, my delegation reiterates its policy for general and complete disarmament and, in particular, nuclear disarmament. To this end we fully support the convening of a world disarmament conference or a special session of the General Assembly as soon as possible. Within the context of the current economic crisis, any international agreement for a reduction in the enormous armaments expenditure could make additional resources available for the social and economic development of the international community as a whole and the developing and least developed countries in particular. We also support the peaceful use of nuclear energy for the development of all nations and of the developing countries in particular.

293. My delegation supports the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace, which was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly [resolution 2832 (XXVI)], and calls upon all States to implement its provisions. This would undoubtedly contribute to international peace and security in the area.

294. To this end, and in pursuance of the relevant resolutions of the Colombo Conference [see A/31/197, annex IV] my delegation supports the idea that the necessary consultations should take place to lay the groundwork for the convening of a conference on the Indian Ocean with the participation of all States to adopt measures for the implementation of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace.

295. There is a growing awareness of the inseparable link between economic development and the maintenance of international peace and security; indeed, the struggle for political independence and sovereign equality cannot be separated from the struggle for the attainment of economic emancipation. The historic resolutions of the sixth and seventh special sessions, based on the fundamental principles of full, permanent and unreserved sovereignty over natural resources, a fair price for raw materials and primary commodities and the reform of the international monetary system, including a new and realistic approach to the debt problems of the developing, and especially the least-developed, countries heralded the dawn of a new global system and a new international economic order.

296. In spite of these momentous events and although significant progress has been achieved in certain sectors, an over-all appraisal of achievements in real terms is rather limited.

297. The unique and distinct disadvantages of a geographically land-locked position, compounded with developing problems and geophysically built-in obstacles and impediments to economic development, especially the lack of direct access to and from the sea, is so self-evident that it hardly requires reiteration or further elaboration. The fundamental right of free transit essential to the economic and social development of the land-locked countries has been reiterated and reaffirmed at various international forums, and more recently at the Fifth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries.

298. My delegation earnestly hopes that in view of the inseparable link between the right of free access to and from the sea and development, necessary measures will be adopted by the world community towards the expeditious and practical implementation of this vital right.

299. The sixth special session of the General Assembly, under its Programme of Action [*resolution 3202 (S-VI)*], accorded full recognition to the various problems confronting the land-locked least-developed countries, including measures to be taken to compensate them for their additional transportation and transit costs, through the creation of a Special Fund. It was only during the seventh special session and the thirtieth session of the General Assembly that finally, on the initiative of the delegation of Afghanistan, a Special Fund was established under resolution 3504 (XXX) to compensate the land-locked countries for their additional transportation and transit costs. Based on this mandate and the relevant provisions of the Manila Declaration,¹⁶ and on the decisions of the fourth session of UNCTAD, necessary steps must be taken towards making the Fund operational as soon as possible.

300. Similarly, my delegation fully supports all special measures in favour of the least-developed and land-locked developing countries. Taking into account the urgent needs of those countries and the fact that their enormous difficulties constitute a heavy burden and, directly and indirectly, have far-reaching negative ramifications on their development efforts, we hope that this session of the General Assembly will energetically pursue the translation into action of the various recommendations and resolutions adopted in this field.

301. The prevailing monetary system needs a radical overhaul and reform to ensure an increase in the role of special drawing rights in international reserves and parity in decision-making between developed and developing countries. Moreover, the International Monetary Fund should not restrict itself to purely monetary problems, but should be ready to extend balance-of-payments support and developmental assistance to the developing and least-developed countries.

302. In the field of transfer of technology and know-how, my delegation fully endorses the proposals and recommendations contained in the Manila Declaration, and we hope that appropriate measures will be taken by the responsible United Nations organs, especially UNCTAD and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, towards adopting comprehensive and effective measures to enable developing and least-developed countries to have access, on favourable terms, to technological know-how and expertise at a cost commensurate with their financial ability and in accordance with their respective national goals and available resources.

303. It has been only a few weeks since most of us gathered in your beautiful country, Mr. President, to deliberate on pressing social, political and economic issues. The economic resolutions adopted at the Colombo Conference laid sound ground for international co-operation in offering tangible solutions to these problems. It is our earnest hope that the decisions adopted at that Conference will receive the strong support of this great Assembly.

304. We have sighted our common challenges and common destiny in a determined effort to seek solutions to present conflicts and to find better prospects for the peace and progress desperately required in our troubled world. We must take a realistic approach to bridge the great disparity between the affluent and the developing nations through the establishment of a new economic order, deploy ceaseless efforts to eliminate the last remnants and vestiges of colonialism, and ensure respect for human rights and the right to self-determination and independence for all peoples of the world. Let us live in peace and harmony and give expression to our resolutions to achieve our common destiny and purpose by striving harder to translate these objectives into realities and, in doing so, to give greater meaning and significance to the principles of our Charter by achieving a better and more durable atmosphere of peace conducive to the progress and development of our ailing and trouble-stricken planet.

305. Mr. ALLADAYE (Benin) (*interpretation from French*): I should like to extend to the President the warm and sincere congratulations of the delegation of Benin on his election to the presidency of the thirty-first session of the General Assembly of our Organization. His election is a tribute to him for his eminent talents as a well-informed diplomat and for his personal qualifications—qualities that we have already noted and admired in him during the difficult negotiations that he has been conducting among various groups of countries as President of the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea. His election is also a tribute to his country, Sri Lanka, which has just acted as host, with so much success, to the Fifth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, and all the countries of the third world. I should like to express to him the deep satisfaction felt by the People's Republic of Benin at seeing him guiding our work this year. My delegation is convinced that under his wise and clear-sighted direction the work of the thirty-first session will be crowned with success.

306. The President succeeds Mr. Thorn, an outstanding statesman from Luxembourg who, in an exceptional and praiseworthy manner, guided the work of the thirtieth

¹⁶ See *Proceedings of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, Fourth Session*, vol. I, *Report and Annexes* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.76.II.D.10), annex V.

session. I should like to express here the deep satisfaction of my delegation as well as our great appreciation of the able way in which this experienced parliamentarian guided the work of the thirtieth session and found solutions to the very delicate problems with which we were faced.

307. I should also like to take this opportunity to express from this rostrum my Government's sincere appreciation of the effective, positive and sustained work accomplished by our Secretary-General, Mr. Kurt Waldheim, for the triumph of our noble humanitarian ideals proclaimed in the Charter of the United Nations to safeguard and preserve international peace and security.

308. In rapidly taking stock of the activities of our Secretary-General my delegation is firmly convinced that he could do even better and find for the acute problems of the moment reasonable, just and acceptable solutions for all parties were he to benefit from the confidence and disinterested co-operation of all and more particularly of the major Powers.

309. The People's Republic of Benin would finally like to extend a very warm welcome to the delegation of our brother State of Seychelles, which has just entered the United Nations. My delegation would like to assure the representatives of that country of its active solidarity and its brotherly, frank and militant co-operation.

310. The thirty-first session of the General Assembly of our Organization is initiating its work in an international situation which is still tense, uncertain and fraught with threats to the security of mankind. Indeed, despite the many recommendations and resolutions of our Organization, wars continue to rage in several parts of the world. Arms continue to cause destruction and irreparable suffering for the working populations of those areas, which aspire only to peace, freedom and justice.

311. Despite unanimous condemnation by the international community, vast populations of our earth continue against their will to be arbitrarily maintained in repugnant and intolerable slavery.

312. Despite the many recommendations and resolutions of our Organization, dark clouds heavy with hatred continue to accumulate dangerously between the developed countries and the countries of the third world. The gap between the industrialized countries and the developing countries continues to widen, and yet UNCTAD and the many other conferences on development succeed each other without managing to promote a real policy of economic interdependence between the countries of the world.

313. Despite all the wise and relevant resolutions of our Organization, the great Powers continue to spend fabulous sums to acquire the most perfect means of warfare available and to accumulate weapons of mass destruction, overshadowing mankind with the threat of a nuclear cataclysm.

314. Since its birth our Organization has been constantly concerned with the problem of decolonization and the liberation of peoples. In accordance with the very principles of its Charter, the United Nations could not fail to deal

with a problem so crucial to contemporary humanity, one so repugnant to human conscience. Patiently surmounting all the subterfuges and obstacles placed in its path by those belonging to this odious group, our Organization has forged a complete philosophy for the liberation of peoples still colonized. Its main instrument is General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV), on the granting of independence to colonial countries and peoples. In addition, our Organization has always dealt seriously with all the problems of decolonization with which it has been seized and has made wise recommendations for their solution.

315. The painful problem of the decolonization of Viet Nam has been a subject of discussion in this hall for more than 30 years. Our Organization has adopted many resolutions recommending to the conscience of the nations of the world just solutions to put an end to the sufferings imposed upon that people. For more than a quarter-century the problem of the decolonization of Viet Nam was before this Assembly, and just and relevant resolutions were adopted in order to resolve it. But we are duty-bound bitterly to recognize that it was only through the sacrifice of its sons and daughters that Viet Nam managed to disentangle itself from the clutches of its colonizer and international imperialism. Only by accepting the gravest sacrifices that can be imposed upon a people was the people of Viet Nam able to regain its independence and freedom. Only through an armed victory was it able to grasp its freedom and independence.

316. And yet the problem of Viet Nam remains on our agenda at this session. The problem of a free and independent Viet Nam is still before us because the Government of the United States of America vetoed the admission of that country as a full Member of our Organization. Thus the problem of Viet Nam is still with us, and my country, the People's Republic of Benin, wonders how the United States Government's attitude can be explained to the conscience of the world.

317. Moreover, we must note with bitterness that, despite all the relevant recommendations and resolutions of our Assembly, it was only following a long and painful liberation struggle and an armed victory that the former Portuguese colonies of Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde, Sao Tome and Principe, Angola and Mozambique seized their right to independence and freedom.

318. And yet the problem of Angola remains on the agenda of this present session because the Government of the United States of America has vetoed the accession of this brother State as a Member of the United Nations. Here also the problem remains, and my country, the People's Republic of Benin, would like to know how we can explain this attitude of the United States Government to the conscience of mankind.

319. Today, the problem of the decolonization of southern Africa is disturbing the world and filling the international press. Suddenly the most ingenious initiatives have proliferated. Plans have been devised, and these are even more ingenious. But must we believe that these are deliberately willed and undertaken by the country in question to restore peace to this region in full ferment? The problem of the decolonization of the southern part of

the African continent has been with the United Nations for almost 30 years. In connexion with the Namibian problem alone, the General Assembly has adopted 103 resolutions. The Security Council has adopted 16 resolutions, the International Court of Justice has given four advisory opinions and passed a Judgement. And yet the situation of Namibia appears to have changed somewhat thanks only to the ever increasing military pressure being exercised today by the Namibian people under the leadership of SWAPO.

320. The panic we are witnessing today in the imperialist circles of the capitalist West is nothing but a reflection of the impending collapse and the total and definitive eradication of their interests in Namibia, Zimbabwe and Azania, a collapse which patiently and courageously African martyrs have written with their blood on the walls of those ghettos which serve as their dwellings and in the countryside in which they live in slavery.

321. Also on our agenda we have the distressing problem of a Korea divided in two, of the Comoros severed from the island of Mayotte, of the Western Sahara, of Puerto Rico, of Palestine and of Cyprus. Similarly, we are confronted today with the problems of the decolonization of the territories of East Timor, of Papua New Guinea, the Southern Moluccas and Panama, which, although not on the agenda of this session, exist nevertheless.

322. Despite the sessions of UNCTAD, despite the special sessions of the United Nations devoted to the problems of development, despite various international negotiations, the gap between the industrialized countries and the poor countries of the third world is still widening. Despite the adoption by our Organization of the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States [*resolution 3281 (XXIX)*], no marked progress has been achieved thus far in putting an end to the shameful system of exploitation and economic oppression, or to the unequal relations prevailing in international economic transactions. At the present moment, the exports of 12 main commodities, excluding petroleum, representing about 80 per cent of all the export earnings of the developing countries, earn the latter only approximately \$US 30 billion, whereas, through unequal trading relations, these same products, after minimal processing, are resold for more than \$US 200 billion. The deficit in the balance of payments of developing countries only increases: from \$US 12.2 billion in 1973 to \$US 33.5 billion in 1974, and to more than \$US 40 billion in 1975. According to estimates, this deficit will reach the impressive figure of \$US 112 billion in 1980. The external debt of the countries of the third world, which was \$US 100 billion in 1973, will be more than \$US 200 billion at the end of 1976. Development assistance, as conceived by the international community within the context of the two international Development Decades, has not attained its target. The flow of financial resources to the developing countries has reached only some \$20 billion out of the \$57 billion provided for in 1975; whereas for the same period expenditure for arms reached the phenomenal figure of \$300 billion. The food deficit of the third-world countries also continues to increase. This deficit is currently 20 million tons in food-grain products, and it will reach 100 million tons in a few years. The absence of an equitable international monetary system continues to aggravate these economic difficulties which the developing countries are experiencing.

323. Thus all these problems, which are of capital importance for the third-world countries, are passed on from conference to conference, without the developed countries ever finding a really satisfactory and just solution to them. If at times certain partial solutions have been found, they have very often been much less the result of friendly and concerted concessions than that of victories achieved by resolute struggle on the part of the third-world countries. And, in our view, there is no reason for surprise, because all these problems which we have just mentioned, and which continue to come before our Organization—most of them for almost 30 years—are, in point of fact, all connected and, in the view of my delegation, they all stem from a single, concerted and perfectly coherent plan of international imperialism.

324. All these problems, whether of a political nature like decolonization and attempts at colonial reconquest, or of an economic nature, like the constant impoverishment of the third-world countries and the lack of progress at development conferences, all, I say, are connected and can only be understood and appreciated if placed in their proper context.

325. The main obstacle obstinately obstructing a just solution to the numerous problems facing the international community today is nothing but the stubborn determination of the imperialist Powers to hold on to all the numerous and base advantages which they have usurped to the detriment of the peoples of the third world. Thus international imperialism, which has built its prosperity on the wanton and systematic depredation of the resources of the third world, will not agree today—and this is understandable—to the just claims of those countries for greater prosperity. How can the imperialist West today agree willingly to give up the super-profits which it makes in the direct exploitation, and without reciprocity, of the natural wealth and resources of the colonial Territories which it maintains in its grip?

326. How can the imperialist West today agree willingly to give up the super-profits which it derives from unequal trading relations and consent to pay a fair and remunerative price for the raw materials which it takes from the countries of the third world for its industries?

327. How can the imperialist West today renounce the super-profits which it is making and agree willingly to sell at a fair and honest price its manufactured products to countries of the third world?

328. How, finally, can the imperialist West today willingly give up the super-profits which it makes in its financial dealings to the detriment of the countries of the third world?

329. The constant concern of imperialism to maintain an economic system which is devised entirely to satisfy its gluttonous appetites is today the basic reason for the lack of solution to the numerous problems which continue to be paraded before our Organization.

330. What, furthermore, is the reason for the continual failure of all the wise and pertinent attempts of our Organization to resolve the problems of decolonization, if

not the constant and permanent concern of Western imperialism to maintain under its direct or indirect control those vast Territories the raw materials of which are necessary for its industries and which are markets for its manufactured products, and to maintain bases from which it can exercise its direct or indirect control over the shipping routes which are absolutely essential for its trade?

331. This is a true and honest picture of the situation in southern Africa, where Western imperialism has from the outset been bent on building in South Africa an unassailable base surrounded by puppet States in its pay, from which it can continue to maintain its domination over independent African States and the route around the Cape.

332. That is a true and honest picture of the situation in Palestine and in Cyprus, where international imperialism is attempting to create and establish bases in order to continue to exercise its control over the immense oil resources of that region and over the eastern Mediterranean.

333. That is a true and honest picture of the situation in divided Korea, where imperialism is attempting to create in the southern part of that territory a base from which to continue exercising its control over the countries of the region and the surrounding shipping routes.

334. That is a true and honest picture of the situation in Panama and in Puerto Rico, from which international imperialism wants to continue to monitor and control the independent States of the Caribbean, Latin America and the surrounding shipping routes.

335. It is also a true and honest picture of the inhuman repression which is being perpetrated against the forces of freedom in Chile, in Lebanon and in other countries of the third world.

336. Why are we powerlessly standing by and watching the failure of all international conferences on development and the continued deterioration of the international economic system? Quite simply because imperialist Powers obstinately refuse to make any concession on the numerous and base advantages which they have usurped to the detriment of the peoples of the third world. This is why sessions of UNCTAD succeed each other and make no progress. This is why the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States, solemnly adopted by our Organization at its twenty-ninth session, has remained a dead letter. This is why the Paris Conference is marking time. Thus, while the economic situation of the countries of the third world continues to deteriorate dangerously, the major Powers of international capitalism are actively colluding to empty of their real content the scant advantages which the countries of the third world have managed to obtain through the surprise effect following the Fourth Conference of Non-Aligned Countries held at Algiers.

337. Basing ourselves on these elements, we are obliged to recognize that the interests of the developing countries of the third world and those of international imperialism are diametrically opposed. It is, moreover, what is proved by the experience of the peoples of the third world who have not been able to obtain anything except by struggle. Thus, my delegation believes that it would be a dangerous illusion

for the developing countries to await gifts from the imperialist countries for their freedom and economic progress.

338. This is why my country believes that it is absolutely crucial for the third-world countries to remain united and even better to continue to make untiring efforts to strengthen their unity and to wage a resolute and consistent struggle for the total eradication of the numerous humiliations and injustices of which they are the victim.

339. My delegation would like to address a solemn word of warning to the fraternal States of the third world which, knowingly or unknowingly, are playing the game of international imperialism, thus becoming a real danger to the liberation and emancipation of the peoples of the third world. The course of history shows that victory is on the side of just causes, on the side of those who fight for freedom and independence.

340. My delegation notes with great satisfaction the numerous victories which are being carried off by the peoples of the world in their struggle to free themselves completely, once and for all, from political oppression and economic exploitation.

341. I should now like to regress somewhat and give the point of view of my delegation on certain problems whose specific nature and gravity merit their being given special mention. These problems are the following: the problem of the decolonization of the Western Sahara; the problem of the decolonization of East Timor; the problem of the decolonization of Papua New Guinea, and the problem of the decolonization of South Moluccas.

342. Although these problems are not vitally different from those of the countries we have also mentioned, we nevertheless wish to make a special mention of these cases because the aggression perpetrated by imperialism against these States is of a much subtler nature than in the other cases, because it is through other States of the third world, some of which have only just acceded to full independence, that the peoples of Western Sahara, of East Timor, of Papua New Guinea and of South Moluccas have been treacherously deprived of their right to self-determination and independence.

343. These cases are, moreover, too well known by this Assembly to warrant any major exposition. The problem of Western Sahara is one of a people which is fighting and dying because it has been treacherously deprived of the most precious thing that exists for an individual and for a people—its freedom. The people of Western Sahara, at the end of a long and painful liberation war, have succeeded in putting an end to political domination and economic exploitation which was exercised over its territory by the reactionary Spanish régime. This courageous and historic action has been saluted by all peace- and justice-loving peoples of the world. Therefore, what was our surprise and our grief at seeing the Saharan territory invaded militarily and cynically divided up by two fraternal and neighbouring States in contempt of all resolutions of international organizations and counter to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice. Since then, the Saharwi people has been fighting with even greater vigour and

determination, since this unholy act was perpetrated by two brother countries whose mission in history was to protect and help the young, independent State.

344. The problem of Western Sahara is not one of a border dispute among Algeria, Morocco and Mauritania. The problem of Western Sahara is a problem of decolonization, and our Organization must treat it as such.

345. Also, the totally incomprehensible colonialist and expansionist policy of Indonesia has led the peoples of South Moluccas, of Papua New Guinea and of East Timor to take up arms to defend their right to self-determination and independence. My delegation would solemnly address a word of warning to these States of the third world against such regrettable and tragic historical errors. My delegation maintains that the problem of nationalities be resolved not by a policy of military annexation but in the context of their recognition of the right to self-determination and independence of these national minorities within larger communities where friendship, justice, harmony and co-operation prevail.

346. The time has come to conclude. Any watchful observer of international relations such as they are today cannot fail to feel sad and disheartened by so much waste and political short-sightedness. While our Organization and all peace- and justice-loving States of the world make praiseworthy efforts to bring just solutions to the grave problems which afflict the international community, problems which are not only shameful in the world of today but are also a constant threat to international peace and security, the advocates of the monopolistic, imperialist capitalism are obstinately bent on devising subtle plans to doom all these solutions to failure.

347. Thus and in spite of all the wise and pertinent resolutions of the United Nations and the efforts made by peace- and justice-loving nations, three fourths of all mankind have been reduced to the utmost destitution. Vast populations of the world continue to live in colonial and neo-colonialist slavery quite simply because their territories have major resources or else are of strategic interest. Constant threats of "destabilization" hover over the countries of the third world. To some extent in all quarters of the world, a war is being waged and immense stockpiles of nuclear weapons are endangering humanity with total destruction.

348. More than 145 sovereign States are represented at this forum, where for more than 100 days their plenipotentiaries will review these urgent problems which threaten world peace.

349. The dearest wish of my country, the People's Republic of Benin, is that these discussions will make everyone face his responsibilities before history. The all-powerful imperialist West and its supporters should look at history, which is the cemetery of great empires, in order that they may act with the wisdom and clear-sightedness indispensable for the just solution of the grave problems of today.

350. The Countries seek independence; nations want liberation; and the peoples want revolution. We are ready for revolution. The fight continues.

351. The PRESIDENT: Some representatives have asked to be allowed to speak in exercise of the right of reply and I shall now call on them. However, members will recall that the General Assembly decided, at its 4th plenary meeting, that statements in exercise of the right of reply should be limited to 10 minutes.

352. Mr. ABDALLAH (Comoros) (*interpretation from French*): While making my first statement in the general debate, I should first like to fulfil the pleasant duty of addressing to Mr. Amerasinghe the sincere congratulations of my entire delegation on his election to lead the work of this Assembly.

353. For the time being, in accordance with the rules of procedure, I shall confine myself to exercising my right of reply.

354. The representative of France, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, in his statement this morning [*9th meeting*] saw fit to explain before all representatives gathered here the intentions of his country regarding the future and the plans it has for that part of our territory which it occupies—the Comorian island of Mayotte in this particular case. This prompts me to lay before the Assembly the following reflections. How long will the French Government and Parliament continue to indulge in this absurd activity of legislating over an independent territory recognized by the international community? For what reasons will France, after having for 130 years recognized the legal existence of the Comoros, proceed today to dismember it? For what more important reasons has France, which is reputed to be the great friend of Africa, chosen to risk the capital of prestige and friendship which it has earned from world public opinion, in particular African public opinion? Why, at a time when the liberation struggle of all peoples under colonial tutelage has reached a decisive phase, does France intend to undertake a colonial war in the Comoros?

355. Gentlemen, I leave it to you to mull over those questions. At any rate, on 6 July, as a result of the referendum on self-determination of 22 December 1974, and in response to the wishes expressed by a large majority of the populations of the four islands, independence was proclaimed. It was proclaimed within the frontiers inherited from the colonial administration, which undeniably reflect ethnic unity, Islamic cultural unity and unity of language. It was in that spirit that the Security Council on 17 October 1975 and the General Assembly of the United Nations on 12 November 1975 decided to admit the Comoros as a whole to membership in the United Nations.

356. It was pursuant to that just and equitable decision on the part of the international community, that the League of Arab States in Cairo, the Seventh Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers in Istanbul, and the non-aligned movement at Lima and Colombo, having reaffirmed the unity and integrity of the national territory of the Comoros, energetically denounced the illegal occupation of the Comorian island of Mayotte and demanded the withdrawal of French forces from that island.

357. Whatever the delaying tactics, history will confirm for us, I am sure, that there is only one Comorian people, the people that with determination chose freedom on 22 December 1974.

358. What would be the reaction of the French if a foreign Power were to embark upon an action the purpose of which was the self-determination of the Corsicans, the Bretons, the Basques, the people of the South-west of France and—why not? —those who vote for Mr. Mitterand?

359. Other arguments as erroneous as they are absurd have been put forward by those who are protagonists of the occupation of Mayotte. For example, those who state that France has the duty of protecting the political minority which favours its presence in the Comoros. What political minority are they speaking about? In fact, it is just a handful of citizens of French origin, inhabitants of the Comoros, who number hardly more than 250 of the 40,000 inhabitants of Mayotte.

360. Auxiliaries as they are *de facto* and *de jure* of the colonial administration of Mayotte, it is among them that we find the most qualified people in Mayotte: engineers, doctors, technicians, teachers, businessmen, importers and exporters, major land-owners, entrepreneurs, large-scale traders. It is among them that we find the people who are best prepared to suppress without any pity all nationalism in Mayotte.

361. Does international public opinion know that the protagonists of the independence and unity of the Comoros, after having been despoiled of their goods and ill-treated, were packed into sailboats and sent to the coasts of the liberated islands? Do people know that the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, when called on to take note of those facts, to prevent worse trouble, released emergency funds to enable my Government to ensure the survival of those populations?

362. What is the protection of the minority that is being referred to here, and who is protecting the 37 per cent of the Comorian electorate in Mayotte who unanimously voted "yes" for independence on 22 December 1974?

363. Neither the Foreign Legion, nor the French gendarmerie, neither the marines nor the illegal French administration in Mayotte took action with regard to the exactions and the maltreatment of Comorians whose only crime was their desire to belong to a single free State.

364. In view of the intransigence of international public opinion, in view of the need to create the necessary conditions to re-establish a dialogue between France and the Comoros, the French Government and Parliament are in duty bound purely and simply to ratify the independence of the Comoros within their natural and legal boundaries. That is the only attitude that would be worthy of France.

365. Mr. IDRIS (Indonesia): My delegation has listened carefully to the statement made in this Assembly by the Foreign Minister of Benin. We regret that he made a number of unfounded allegations against Indonesia in the course of his statement. I do not wish at this stage of the debate to reply to those allegations.

366. On East Timor, I should like to point out that the people of East Timor have exercised their right to self-determination and that that action has resulted in the integration of their territory into the Republic of Indonesia. The United Nations was kept fully informed of developments during that process and those reports are available to the delegations of all Member States in the form of official United Nations documents.

367. With regard to West Irian and the southern Moluccas, which he views in the context of decolonization, I should like to remind the Foreign Minister of Benin that those territories have been integral parts of the national territory of the Republic of Indonesia since its independence in 1945 and this is recognized by all countries in the world.

368. My delegation takes this opportunity to reserve its right to reply to those allegations at such future time as it may deem appropriate.

369. Mr. ALLADAYE (Benin) (*interpretation from French*): I apologize to members of the Assembly for speaking a second time and prolonging the discussion somewhat. However, I am obliged to return to this rostrum to confirm the terms of the statement that I made a few minutes ago. I withdraw nothing from the statement I made.

The meeting rose at 7.55 p.m.