



President: Mr. Jorge E. ILLUECA (Panama).

AGENDA ITEM 9

General debate

1. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from Spanish*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations Mr. Ronald Reagan, President of the United States of America, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

2. Mr. REAGAN (United States of America): Thank you for granting me the honour of speaking today, on this first day of the general debate at the thirty-eighth session of the General Assembly. Once again I come before this body preoccupied with peace. Last year I stood in this chamber to address the special session on disarmament. I have come today to renew my nation's commitment to peace. I have come to discuss how we can keep faith with the dreams that created this Organization.

3. The United Nations was founded in the aftermath of the Second World War to protect future generations from the scourge of war, to promote political self-determination and global prosperity, and to strengthen the bonds of civility among nations. The founders sought to replace a world at war with a world of civilized order. They hoped that a world of relentless conflict would give way to a new era, one where freedom from violence prevailed.

4. Whatever challenges the world was bound to face, the founders intended this body to stand for certain values, even if they could not be enforced, and to condemn violence, even if it could not be stopped. This body was to speak with the voice of moral authority. That was to be its greatest power.

5. But the awful truth is that the use of violence for political gain has become more, not less, widespread in the last decade. Events of recent weeks have presented new, unwelcome evidence of brutal disregard for life and truth. They have offered unwanted testimony on how divided and dangerous our world is, how quick the recourse to violence.

6. What has happened to the dreams of the founders of the United Nations?

7. What has happened to the spirit which created the United Nations?

8. The answer is clear: Governments got in the way of the dreams of the people. Dreams became issues of East versus West. Hopes became political rhetoric. Progress became a search for power and domination. Somewhere the truth was lost that people do not make war, governments do.

9. And today, in Asia, Africa, Latin America, the Middle East and the North Pacific, the weapons of war shatter the security of the peoples who live there, endanger the peace of neighbours, and create ever more arenas of

confrontation between the great Powers. During the past year alone, violent conflicts have occurred in the hills around Beirut, the deserts of Chad and the Western Sahara, in the mountains of El Salvador, the streets of Suriname, the cities and countryside of Afghanistan, the borders of Kampuchea, and the battlefields of Iran and Iraq.

10. We cannot count on the instinct for survival to protect us against war. Despite all the wasted lives and hopes that war produces, it has remained a regular, if horribly costly, means by which nations have sought to settle their disputes or advance their goals.

11. And the progress in weapons technology has far outstripped the progress toward peace. In modern times, a new, more terrifying element has entered into the calculations—nuclear weapons. A nuclear war cannot be won and it must never be fought. I believe that if governments are determined to deter and prevent war, there will not be war. Nothing is more in keeping with the spirit of the Charter of the United Nations than arms control.

12. When I spoke before the twelfth special session, devoted to disarmament [*16th meeting*], I affirmed the United States Government's commitment, and my personal commitment, to reduce nuclear arms, and to negotiate in good faith toward that end.

13. Today, I reaffirm those commitments. The United States has already reduced the number of its nuclear weapons worldwide and, while replacement of older weapons is unavoidable, we wish to negotiate arms reductions, and to achieve significant, equitable, verifiable arms control agreements. And let me add, we must ensure that world security is not undermined by the further spread of nuclear weapons. Nuclear non-proliferation must not be the forgotten element of the world's arms control agenda.

14. At the time of my last visit here, I expressed hope that a whole class of weapons systems—the longer-range intermediate nuclear forces—could be banned from the face of the earth. I believe that to relieve the deep concern of peoples in both Europe and Asia, the time was right, for the first time in history, to resolve a security threat exclusively through arms control. I still believe the elimination of these weapons—the zero option—is the best, fairest, most practical solution to the problem. Unfortunately, the Soviet Union declined to accept the total elimination of this class of weapons.

15. When I was here last, I hoped that the critical Strategic Arms Reduction Talks [*START*] would focus, and urgently so, on those systems that carry the greatest risk of nuclear war—the fast-flying, accurate, intercontinental ballistic missiles which pose a first strike potential. I also hoped the negotiations could reduce by one half the number of strategic missiles on each side and reduce their warheads by one third. Again, I was disappointed when the Soviets declined to consider such deep cuts, and refused as well to concentrate on these most dangerous destabilizing weapons.

16. Despite the rebuffs, the United States has not abandoned and will not abandon the search for meaningful

arms control agreements. Last June, I proposed a new approach toward the START negotiations. We did not alter our objective of substantial reductions, but we recognized that there are a variety of ways to achieve this end. During the last round of Geneva talks, we presented a draft treaty which responded to a number of concerns raised by the Soviet Union. We will continue to build upon this initiative.

17. Similarly, in our negotiations on intermediate-range nuclear forces, when the Soviet leaders adamantly refused to consider the total elimination of these weapons, the United States made a new offer. We proposed, as an interim solution, some equal number on both sides between one and 572. We recommended the lowest possible level. Once again, the Soviets refused an equitable solution and proposed instead what might be called a "half zero option"—zero for us, and many hundreds of warheads for them. That is where things stand today, but I still have not given up hope that the Soviet Union will enter into serious negotiations.

18. We are determined to spare no effort to achieve a sound, equitable and verifiable agreement. For this reason, I have given new instructions to Mr. Nitze at Geneva, telling him to put forward a package of steps designed to advance the negotiations as rapidly as possible. These initiatives build on the interim framework that the United States advanced last March and address concerns that the Soviets have raised at the bargaining table in the past.

19. Specifically, first, the United States proposes a new initiative on global limits. If the Soviet Union agrees to reductions and limits on a global basis, the United States for its part will not offset the entire Soviet global missile deployment through United States deployments in Europe. We would, of course, retain the right to deploy missiles elsewhere.

20. Second, the United States is prepared to be more flexible on the content of the current talks. The United States will consider mutually acceptable ways to address the Soviet desire that an agreement should limit aircraft as well as missiles.

21. Third, the United States will address the mix of missiles that would result from reductions. In the context of reductions to equal levels, we are prepared to reduce the number of Pershing II ballistic missiles as well as ground-launched cruise missiles.

22. I have decided to put forward these important initiatives after full and extensive consultations with our allies, including personal correspondence that I have had with the leaders of the Governments of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization [NATO] and Japan and frequent meetings of the NATO Special Consultative Group. I have also stayed in close touch with other concerned friends and allies. The door to an agreement is open. It is time for the Soviet Union to walk through it.

23. I want to make an unequivocal pledge to those gathered today in this world arena. The United States seeks and will accept any equitable, verifiable agreement that stabilizes forces at lower levels than currently exist. We are ready to be flexible in our approach—indeed, willing to compromise. We cannot, however, especially in light of recent events, compromise on the necessity of effective verification.

24. Reactions to the Korean airliner tragedy are a timely reminder of just how different the Soviets' concept of truth and international co-operation is from that of the rest of the world. Evidence abounds that we cannot simply assume that agreements negotiated with the Soviet Union will be fulfilled. We negotiated the Helsinki Final Act,¹ but the promised freedoms have not been provided

and those in the Soviet Union who sought to monitor their fulfilment languish in prison. We negotiated a biological weapons convention, but deadly yellow rain and other toxic agents fall on Hmong villages and Afghan encampments. We have negotiated arms agreements, but the high level of Soviet encoding hides the information needed for their verification. A newly discovered radar facility and a new inter-continental ballistic missile raise serious concerns about Soviet compliance with agreements already negotiated.

25. Peace cannot be served by pseudo-control of arms. We need reliable, reciprocal reductions. I call upon the Soviet Union today to reduce the tensions it has heaped on the world in the past few weeks and to show a firm commitment to peace by coming to the bargaining table with a new understanding of its obligations. I urge it to match our flexibility. If the Soviets sit down at the bargaining table seeking genuine arms reductions, there will be arms reductions. The Governments of the West and their peoples will not be diverted by misinformation and threats. The time has come for the Soviet Union to show proof that it wants arms control in reality, not just in rhetoric.

26. Meaningful arms control agreements between the United States and the Soviet Union would make our world less dangerous; so would a number of confidence-building steps that we have already proposed to the Soviet Union.

27. Arms control requires a spirit beyond narrow national interests. This spirit is a basic pillar on which the United Nations was founded. We seek a return to this spirit. A fundamental step would be a true non-alignment of the United Nations. This would signal a return to the true values of the Charter, including the principle of universality. The Members of the United Nations must be aligned on the side of justice, rather than injustice; peace, rather than aggression; human dignity, rather than subjugation. Any other alignment is beneath the purpose of this great body and destructive of the harmony that it seeks. What harms the Charter harms peace.

28. The founders of the United Nations expected that Member nations would behave and vote as individuals, after they had weighed the merits of an issue—rather like a great, global town meeting. The emergence of blocs and the polarization of the United Nations undermine all that the Organization initially valued.

29. We must remember that the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries was founded to counter the development of blocs and to promote détente between them. Its founders spoke of the right of smaller countries not to become involved in others' disagreements. Since then, membership in the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries has grown dramatically, but not all the new members have shared the founders' commitment of genuine non-alignment. Indeed, client Governments of the Soviet Union which have long since lost their independence have flocked into the Movement and once inside have worked against its true purpose. Pseudo non-alignment is no better than pseudo-control of arms.

30. The United States rejects as false and misleading the view of the world as divided between the empires of the East and the West. We reject it on factual grounds. The United States does not head any bloc of subservient nations, nor do we desire to. What is called "the West" is a free alliance of Governments, most of which are democratic and all of which greatly value their independence. What is called "the East" is an empire directed from the centre, which is Moscow.

31. The United States today, as in the past, is a champion of freedom and self-determination for all peoples. We welcome diversity; we support the right of all nations to define and pursue their national goals. We respect their decisions and their sovereignty, asking only that they respect the decisions and sovereignty of others. Just look at the world over the last 30 years and then decide for yourselves whether the United States or the Soviet Union has pursued an expansionist policy.

32. Today, the United States contributes to peace by supporting collective efforts by the international community. We give our unwavering support to the peace-keeping efforts of this body, as well as to other multilateral peace-keeping efforts around the world. The United Nations has a proud history of promoting conciliation and helping keep the peace. Today, United Nations peace-keeping forces or observers are present in Cyprus, Kashmir, on the Golan Heights and in Lebanon.

33. In addition to our encouragement of international diplomacy, the United States recognizes its responsibilities to use its own influence for peace. From the days when Theodore Roosevelt mediated the Russo-Japanese War in 1905 we have a long and honourable tradition of mediating or dampening conflicts and promoting peaceful solutions. In Lebanon, we, along with France, Italy and the United Kingdom, have worked for a cease-fire, for the withdrawal of all external forces, and for restoration of Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity. In Chad, we have joined others in supporting the recognized Government, in the face of external aggression. In Central America, as in southern Africa, we are seeking to discourage reliance upon force and to construct a framework for peaceful negotiations. We support a policy to disengage the major Powers from third-world conflict.

34. The Charter of the United Nations gives an important role to regional organizations in the search for peace. The United States efforts in the cause of peace are only one expression of a spirit that also animates others in the world community. The Organization of American States was a pioneer in regional security efforts. In Central America, the members of the Contadora Group are striving to lay a foundation for peaceful resolution of that region's problems. In East Asia, countries of the Association of South-East Asian Nations [ASEAN] have built a framework for peaceful political and economic co-operation that has greatly strengthened the prospects for lasting peace in their region. In Africa, organizations such as the Economic Community of West African States are being forged to provide practical structures in the struggle to realize Africa's potential.

35. From the beginning, our hope for the United Nations has been that it would reflect the international community at its best. The United Nations at its best can help us transcend fear and violence and can act as an enormous force for peace and prosperity. Working together, we can combat international lawlessness and promote human dignity.

36. If the Governments represented in this chamber want peace as genuinely as their peoples do, we shall find it. We can do so by reasserting the moral authority of the United Nations.

37. In recent weeks, the moral outrage of the world seems to have reawakened. Out of the billions of people who inhabit this planet, why, some might ask, should the death of several hundred shake the world so profoundly? Why should the death of a mother flying toward a reunion with her family or the death of a scholar heading toward new pursuits of knowledge matter so deeply?

Why are nations which lost no citizens in the tragedy so angry?

38. The reason rests on our assumptions about civilized life and the search for peace. The confidence that allows a mother or a scholar to travel to Asia or Africa or Europe or anywhere else on this planet may be only a small victory in humanity's struggle for peace. Yet what is peace if not the sum of such small victories?

39. Each stride for peace and every small victory are important for the journey towards a larger and lasting peace. We have made progress. We have avoided another world war. We have seen an end to the traditional colonial era and the birth of 100 newly sovereign nations. Even though development remains a formidable challenge, we have witnessed remarkable economic growth among the industrialized and the developing nations. The United Nations and its affiliates have made important contributions to the quality of life on this planet, such as directly saving countless lives through its refugee and emergency relief programmes. These broad achievements, however, have been overshadowed by the problems that weigh so heavily upon us. The problems are old, but it is not too late to commit ourselves to a new beginning, a beginning fresh with the ideals of the Charter.

40. Today, at the beginning of this thirty-eighth session, I solemnly pledge my nation to upholding the original ideals of the United Nations. Our goals are those that guide this very body. Our ends are the same as those of the founders of the United Nations, who sought to replace a world at war with one where the rule of law would prevail, where human rights were honoured, where development would blossom, where conflict would give way to freedom from violence.

41. In 1956 President Dwight Eisenhower made an observation on weaponry and deterrence in a letter to a publisher. He wrote:

“When we get to the point, as we one day will, that both sides know that in any outbreak of general hostilities, regardless of the element of surprise, destruction will be both reciprocal and complete, possibly we will have sense enough to meet at the conference table with the understanding that the era of armaments has ended and the human race must conform its actions to this truth or die.”

He went on to say,

“. . . we have already come to the point where safety cannot be assured by arms alone . . . their usefulness becomes concentrated more and more in their characteristics as deterrents than in instruments with which to obtain victory . . .”

42. As we persevere in the search for a more secure world we must do everything we can to let diplomacy triumph. Diplomacy, the most honourable of professions, can bring the most blessed of gifts, the gift of peace. If we succeed, the world will find an excitement and accomplishment in peace beyond that which could ever be imagined through violence and war.

43. I want to leave you today with a message I have often spoken about to the citizens of my own country, especially in times when I have felt they were discouraged and unsure. I say it to you with as much hope and heart as I have said it to my own people. You have the right to dream great dreams. You have the right to seek a better world for your people. All of us have the responsibility to work for that better world and, as caring peaceful peoples, think what a powerful force for good we could be. Let us regain the dream the United Nations once dreamed.

44. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from Spanish*): On behalf of the General Assembly I wish to thank the President of the United States of America for the important statement he has just made.

45. I should like to remind representatives that, in accordance with the decision taken by the General Assembly at its 3rd plenary meeting, the list of speakers in the general debate will be closed on Wednesday, 28 September, at 6 p.m.

46. Mr. GUERREIRO (Brazil):* It is with great pleasure, Sir, that I congratulate you on your election as President of the thirty-eighth session of the General Assembly. This choice does justice to the services you have rendered to the United Nations. I am certain that thanks to your professional and personal qualities our work will be conducted in a most able and competent manner.

47. At the same time, I wish to express my Government's recognition of the solid and productive work done by your predecessor, Mr. Imre Hollai, in presiding over the thirty-seventh session.

48. I greet you as a representative of a Latin American nation in the year in which we commemorate the bicentennial of Simón Bolívar. It is both just and gratifying for us to pay homage to the Liberator, whose ideals should be recalled at this moment when Latin America must give renewed proof of its historic commitment to peace and to the causes of concord, progress and dialogue. In this context, allow me to stress the important contributions made by your country, Panama, at the international level.

49. I wish also to congratulate Saint Christopher and Nevis on its admission to membership in the United Nations. We extend our best wishes to the new Member State for a future of peace and prosperity.

50. The general debate traditionally gives us the task of presenting an assessment of the international situation, and this makes it essential for us to reflect upon what is today an unprecedented state of crisis.

51. At the last session the unparalleled seriousness of the international situation brought, for the first time, a head of State of my country to the General Assembly [5th meeting]. On that occasion, President João Figueiredo gave a much-needed warning about the risks and dangers that threaten the very existence of international society.

52. In the face of a situation that evoked dark memories of the crisis of the 1930s, the head of the Brazilian Government made a vehement appeal that we once again combine our efforts in the task of building peace and making a fresh start on international co-operation for development. I am certain that President Figueiredo expressed hopes and concerns shared by the vast majority of peoples and nations.

53. In the past 12 months, however, our reserves of faith and confidence have been harshly tested. In his first report to the Assembly,² the Secretary-General warned that we were "perilously near to a new international anarchy". Despite the seriousness of these words, little has been done to relieve the extraordinary tensions that affect us all at both the political and the economic level.

54. The fact of the matter is that tensions are growing, trade and the economy languish in a cycle of depression, and the recovery of some coincides with worsening difficulties for others. Misery and disorder prevail; the nuclear

arms race prospers; and the powerful seem reluctant to seek moderation and dialogue.

55. The thirty-eighth session of the General Assembly is being held under the negative sign of an organic and lasting crisis that demands structural solutions. It should be recalled that the word "crisis" comes from a Sanskrit root that also means "to clean", "to untangle", "to purify". At its very roots, then, crisis is an invitation to purification and renewal. It behoves us all to reach decisions that will lead to evolution without rupture, to change within a context of order. International order is based upon an adequate understanding of the different needs of each nation, and the achievement of such an understanding is precisely the role of the United Nations as an institution dedicated to the democratic and egalitarian coexistence of States.

56. While calling to mind the obvious imperfections of the international order, Brazil is not departing from its traditional policy of moderation and balance, inspired by the pluralistic background of its national society. Brazil is both a Western and a third-world country, with a foreign policy that reflects internationally the invaluable wealth of our historical experience. As inheritors of different cultures, we have a natural and deep-rooted respect for diversity—an indispensable condition for harmony.

57. In the political sphere, many years have elapsed without a single truly significant multilateral success, without a single solution to any important question: the Middle East, Central America, southern Africa, South-East Asia, Afghanistan, the Malvinas, strategic and medium-range nuclear missiles—the list is long.

58. When positions of strength, such as that of the Soviet Union in Afghanistan, seem to become consolidated instead of giving way to justice and reason, it is the international system as a whole that deteriorates. Likewise, the incident that led to the destruction of a South Korean commercial airliner by Soviet aircraft, with the unpardonable loss of innocent lives, is a cause of acute concern and condemnation. The principle of rejection of the use of force—one of the essential foundations of the Organization—admits of no devious application in any areas of tension.

59. With respect to the problems affecting Central America, the Brazilian position is clear and known to all. The basic principles of self-determination and non-interference in the affairs of each country must be applied in this context. We favour a diplomatic and negotiated handling of the tensions so that a climate of understanding may be created, in lieu of confrontation and ideological polarization, and so that the process of transferring global tensions to that area may come to an end.

60. We have confidence in the spirit of responsibility and independence of the Central American countries. We have confidence in democracy and pluralism, not only as a system of internal coexistence but also as a norm of coexistence of countries. We hope that in Central America no nation will become, *volens nolens*, a satellite or an instrument of any other.

61. However, we should not restrict ourselves to the current aspects of the Central American crisis. The real problems will not be solved until the basic structural deficiencies—decades or even centuries of unending frustration and blatant internal and external imbalances—have been overcome. We believe that a serious and concentrated effort of international co-operation must be undertaken, particularly in socio-economic terms, with the aim of effectively eradicating the chronic problems that beset Central America.

*Mr. Guerreiro spoke in Portuguese. The English version of his statement was supplied by the delegation.

62. In Latin America, practical actions towards peaceful solutions of controversies and respect for the basic principles of international law are deeply rooted. For that reason, Latin America—acting particularly through the nations belonging to the Contadora Group—is in the best position, through proximity and cultural affinity, to make a valuable contribution towards working out a peaceful solution to the problems of Central America. We should all give our support to the selfless efforts made in this context, which give the greatest hope of a positive and diplomatic approach to this grave situation.

63. The current difficulties cannot be isolated from the extended context of the international crisis we are undergoing. The Central American problem cannot be reduced to ideological confrontation. Nor is it possible to remove its evils by force. Further to initiatives taken to reduce tensions, the solution to the problems of the region clearly calls for efforts on the part of each nation to demonstrate that it is not a danger to the security of its neighbours. Experience has taught us that polarization does not favour lasting solutions. In the case of Central America, the small nations would be the major victims of an undesirable radicalization of the situation. There again, it is absolutely essential to re-establish a climate of confidence conducive to dialogue.

64. The fundamental principles which orient Brazilian foreign policy are identical with those governing the best traditions of Latin American diplomatic action. Brazil reaffirms its immutable resolve to strengthen its relationship with all its neighbours, on the basis of solidarity and co-operation, equal to equal. Mutual respect, seeking for legitimate grounds of agreement, and strict adherence to the rules of law and good neighbourliness, in practice as well as in theory, are the best patterns for international comportment. In this regard, the Brazilian Government reiterates its support for the full implementation of Security Council resolution 502 (1982), on the issue of the Malvinas. The role that the United Nations can and should play in seeking a peaceful and negotiated solution for this question, which closely affects the Latin American countries, is of fundamental importance. In this respect, Brazil reaffirms its support for Argentina's rights of sovereignty over the Malvinas Islands and expresses its growing concern over any militarization of that area. It is the position of Brazil that the South Atlantic must remain an area of peace and harmony.

65. I cannot fail to express the anxiety that we feel before the picture of insecurity and violence in Lebanon, a nation so often victimized by aggression. It is urgent to stop this new escalation of violence. I reaffirm Brazil's determination in favour of preserving the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of that country, whose sons have contributed so much to the progress of Brazil.

66. It is increasingly urgent to implement the United Nations resolutions which express an international consensus in favour of a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the successive crises in the Middle East. My Government firmly adheres to the terms of those resolutions and vehemently condemns the policy of *faits accomplis* that has hampered negotiations in that region. We must insist upon justice prevailing, upon the evacuation of territory held by force, upon the implementation of the rights of the Palestinian people, upon the creation of conditions that will make it possible for all States in that region to live in peace within their own frontiers.

67. As a country dedicated to the ideals of social and racial harmony, Brazil reiterates its emphatic condemnation of the institutionalized practice of racism that characterizes the régime of South Africa. The policy adopted

by Pretoria feeds the hotbeds of tension in southern Africa and is a disservice even to the ideals and interests of the West. The military incursions into Angola, Mozambique and Lesotho must end. The illegal occupation of Namibia, whose independence is being delayed by the intransigence of South Africa, must urgently cease. There is no pretext to justify evading the implementation of Security Council resolution 435 (1978).

68. On the other hand, my Government wishes to congratulate the Secretary-General on his efforts to fulfil the mandate received from the Security Council to carry on consultations with the aim of finding a solution to this grave problem.

69. It is the task of our generation not only to reconstruct a world in crisis, but, above all else, to prevent its destruction. As President Figueiredo stated at the thirty-seventh session:

“There is no future—nor can there possibly be one—in that sad, unacceptable substitute for peace which is the balance of terror. We cannot persist in the illusion that world harmony can be founded on an excess capacity for destruction.” [5th meeting, para. 9.]

70. The desire for absolute security on the part of one State constitutes a threat of absolute insecurity for all others. Peace will not result from the multiplication of arsenals. It is urgent to seek objective understanding, to create a minimum of mutual confidence and information, and to recreate the mechanisms of the dialogue to reduce tensions, opportunities for misunderstandings and risks of incidents.

71. The United Nations cannot be kept out of the truly important negotiations on disarmament. It is understandable that any concessions in this field must be extremely complex. But whatever affects all must be considered by all. Realism should not lead us to forget that the balanced use of political intelligence is, in the end, more powerful than the unilateral use of force.

72. It is alarming to note that, in 1983 alone, the resources spent on weapons came to \$800 billion, which is more than the total of the foreign debt of the developing countries. That figure is enough to make us understand the magnitude of the challenge which we must face.

73. On 16 May 1975, Brazil acceded to the Antarctic Treaty.³ Ever since then, Brazil has followed a programme which is compatible with its economic possibilities and entirely geared to the development of scientific research. Our decision to participate fully in the Antarctic Treaty is also based on the fact that this document is the only legal instrument applicable to the sixth continent. It can be said that this Treaty has brought about a new objective juridical situation.

74. On 12 September of this year, the consultative parties to the Treaty, meeting at Canberra, recognized Brazil as a consultative party. In taking on this responsibility, Brazil reaffirms its adherence to the principles of peace, co-operation and freedom of scientific investigation enshrined in the Treaty and in the recommendations adopted over a period of more than 20 years by the consultative parties.

75. The current recession is the longest and possibly the most serious contraction of economic activity in the past 50 years. It is no longer possible to cherish the illusion that this is a passing crisis. Its deep-rooted causes are to be found in the very structure of international relationships, as demonstrated by the global dimensions of the crisis.

76. Despite the depth and extent of the crisis, precious opportunities have recently been lost to halt the process

of deterioration, which is now accelerating. Ever since the International Meeting on Co-operation and Development, held at Cancún in 1981, the North-South dialogue has been losing ground. The crisis has followed its painful path from the commercial to the financial, bearing living witness to the interaction among the many aspects of the world economic system and to the fragility of the mechanisms of multilateral co-operation.

77. The total foreign debt of the developing countries is quickly approaching the trillion-dollar mark. The rates of growth of such debt, pushed upwards by absurdly high levels of interest, are far higher than the real growth rates of any country in the world. They are even higher than the most outstanding rates of growth achieved during the most favourable periods by the countries which developed most rapidly. What is unbearable today will be considerably worse tomorrow.

78. International trade, until recently the great lever of progress for North and South alike, has entered a period of stagnation and retrocession, asphyxiated by growing protectionist barriers—an inadequate response to the problems of recession and unemployment—and also by the burden of foreign debt—which together restrict to an unbearable extent the import capacity of the debtor countries, thus making it impossible for them to sustain the levels of economic activity needed to meet the requirements of their peoples and to generate the very resources necessary to meet their commitments.

79. The international community needs innovative and effective proposals, but it is still operating with outdated conceptual and institutional instruments, which can only provide standardized and mechanically applied responses. That is the dominant intellectual response, but at the factual level there is just as much frustration: there is more and more protectionism at a time when increased foreign trade is more necessary than ever; financial burdens are increasing when it is absolutely necessary to reduce them; lending capacity is contracting when its growth is a basic requirement; recessive policies are proliferating at a time when development is more necessary than ever.

80. Last June, the sixth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development was the most remarkable demonstration of the constant frustration that has marked multilateral economic negotiations. At the start of the meeting, which was held at Belgrade—for which the developing countries made careful preparations—I stated that the international community could not afford a further failure, and that a wide-ranging co-operative effort between the North and the South should be launched as a matter of urgency. Unfortunately, the moderate and constructive attitude taken by the developing countries failed to induce the developed countries to adopt a more flexible position. From Cancun to Belgrade, both the North and the South lost precious opportunities for dialogue and understanding, and at this moment, all that is left to the international economy is an uncertain and risky gamble on the results of *ad hoc* emergency measures that were adopted to solve problems which, by their very nature, are structural and lasting.

81. In the face of such instability and uncertainty, would not this be the moment for the international community to think seriously about readjustments to be made in the Bretton Woods institutions and in GATT, to make them better adapted to the conditions and needs of today's international economy? These conditions and needs are profoundly different from those which, for three decades after the Second World War, made it possible to keep high rates of growth in world trade and economic output.

82. Brazil is one of the countries that has been most seriously affected by the current crisis, and this is, to a great extent, an ironic consequence of the fact that the development model adopted by the country was based on a vote of confidence in the international community's capacity to provide all countries with greater opportunities in international trade and on financial markets.

83. My country has made and will assuredly continue to make heavy sacrifices in order to adjust to the new and more difficult financial circumstances and to fulfil its commitments as a capital borrower. However, the Brazilian people cannot be denied the prospect of development, particularly when the major causes of its hardships are to be found, not in intrinsic limitations to the nation's productive structure, but rather in an unusual combination of external factors related to the economic policies and negotiating positions of some of the great Powers.

84. In these circumstances, the problems that afflict us are not exclusively ours but also concern those countries that have benefited so much from exports of capital, at costs which they are able unilaterally to define and alter. It makes no sense that such countries, often acting against their own interests in the repayment of their loans, deny their debtors, through the application of a most stringent protectionism, the export opportunities they need to pay their debts.

85. This was the reason why President Figueiredo said, when he addressed the Assembly last year, "The solution of the present crisis lies not in aid for developing countries but in ensuring conditions that would enable them to meet their obligations through a fair return for their work" [*ibid.*, para. 50].

86. Before concluding my statement, I must refer to a specific problem of a critical nature that must not be seen from an emergency viewpoint only.

87. For five years my country has been suffering from the tragic effects of drought. The semi-arid north-east of Brazil is going through a particularly difficult period which defies the courage and severely tests the endurance of the local population and creates enormous obstacles to the implementation of plans for Brazilian regional development. The effects of this protracted drought are a national responsibility of Brazil's and are the object of integrated action on the part of the Government, but they cannot fail to have an impact on the nation's activities abroad.

88. Brazil has consistently supported the activities of the United Nations to combat desertification, especially with regard to the recovery and progress of the Sudan-Sahel region. We have also closely followed the debate on the measures designed to provide resources for the implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification approved in 1977.⁴ We share the opinion that the question of climatic phenomena such as drought and desertification should be examined within the broader context of international co-operation and from a long-term perspective.

89. If the present crisis is to have a renovating and purifying effect, the international system must be revitalized in an authentically democratic sense. At the international level, democracy corresponds to respect for national individualities and recognition of the sovereign equality of States. This means, in essence, that international coexistence should be based on the strict observance of the principles of self-determination and non-intervention and should pursue peaceful, rational and balanced solutions.

90. The fact that the United Nations is now approaching its 40th anniversary is one more reason for us to learn a lesson of renewal from the contemporary crisis. It is essential that we preserve the spirit of those who took part in the construction and consolidation of the United Nations. A critical review of the past will be truly meaningful only if it is useful as a practical guide to present and future action.

91. The pace of history is accelerating, and the Organization cannot remain static. There is a wisdom inherent in the purposes and principles of the Charter of San Francisco. It is particularly urgent to apply these purposes and principles in keeping peace, preserving security and resuming development.

92. As President Figueiredo said in the statement he made last year, the main point is that "It is our common duty to fulfil the expectations of our predecessors, who, having themselves experienced the direct consequences of political disorder, economic depression and war, pledged their resolve, as well as ours, to promote peace and development" [*ibid. para. 23*].

93. Mr. ROMULO (Philippines): It is a privilege to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as President of the thirty-eighth session of the General Assembly. You bring to this high office impeccable qualifications, experience and wisdom. It is a tribute to Panama that one of its illustrious sons, a former Minister for Foreign Affairs and currently the Vice-President of its Government, now serves as President of the Assembly. Panama and the Philippines share a common historical heritage and strong ties of friendship. It is therefore with greater pleasure that we see you lead our deliberations.

94. At the same time, we extend our congratulations to the outgoing President. Working under the pressure of serious international events, he discharged his duty with admirable dispatch and objectivity.

95. We begin our deliberations under the shadow of a horrible disaster. The loss of the commercial airliner, KAL Flight 007, shot down under circumstances not satisfactorily explained, is a tragedy in human terms. What is undeniable is that the unarmed commercial plane was destroyed by missiles fired by Soviet military aircraft and that all its 269 innocent—I repeat, innocent—passengers, of whom 24 were Filipinos, perished. My Government and people share the universal condemnation of and indignation over the loss of human lives, and we have formally asked for a full investigation to establish responsibility for the disaster. We have also asked for reparations to the families of the deceased.

96. The tragedy has another dimension. It could aggravate tensions between the super-Powers. It is therefore a matter of serious concern to the Assembly. To prevent its repetition we suggest that the Assembly begin the study of new and binding international agreements to ensure the safety of commercial aviation in circumstances similar to those which befell the Korean airliner.

97. This year has seen a sharp increase in the intensity and proliferation of conflict in the world. More than ever, the world Organization, through no intrinsic fault of its own, has been relegated to the sidelines in the very circumstances that it was created to moderate and resolve. This is not in keeping with the intent of the founders or in accordance with the will of the majority of the Members. It is brought about, rather, by the reluctance of a few States to acknowledge the will of the global community. It is, of course, these very conditions which led to the demise of the League of Nations.

98. We are only too aware of the highly volatile situation in the region of the world where my country is

located, where foreign troops continue to occupy Kampuchea. The international community has repeatedly called for a comprehensive political solution to the Kampuchean problem which will provide for the withdrawal of all foreign forces and ensure respect for the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and neutral and non-aligned status of Kampuchea, as well as the right of the Kampuchean people to self-determination free from outside interference. My Government, in concert with other members of ASEAN, is firmly committed to the restoration of a stable and lasting peace in the region based on the real independence of the Kampuchean people. The countries members of ASEAN have therefore issued an appeal for Kampuchean independence which has been circulated to the members of the General Assembly [A/38/441]. My country places considerable hope in the future of the coalition headed by Samdech Norodom Sihanouk as President. The international community has recognized this coalition as the legitimate representative Government of this sad and decimated country. A chain of events that will be positive for the peace, freedom and neutrality of South-East Asia can follow the restoration of Kampuchea to the Kampuchean people. We believe that the international community must renew and redouble its efforts to achieve that result.

99. In Afghanistan, the international community is similarly called upon to undertake fresh efforts to restore the legitimate right of the people of Afghanistan freely to determine their own destiny. The intensified activities of the foreign troops there suggest that they are in Afghanistan to stay. The Assembly cannot, on the basis of the principles which are its reason for being, accept this intolerable situation. The failure to make headway on the Afghanistan problem is all the more regrettable in view of the exemplary efforts of the special representative of the Secretary-General, our able Mr. Diego Cordovez, to promote a meeting of minds at the Geneva conference. In the middle of this year, progress was achieved only to founder on the rock of technicalities which have their real basis in lack of confidence and political will.

100. In another part of the world, the visit of the Secretary-General to Namibia and South Africa last month, under a mandate from the Security Council, defined the basic problems which impede agreement on the steps which could lead to the independence of Namibia. The question is whether South Africa genuinely wants a solution. In its view, Namibia is not the problem; the problem is Angola. Yet it is clear that the security problems of both South Africa and Angola are not necessarily resistant to solution. In the view of my Government, further progress on the question of Namibia can be achieved only when South Africa recognizes its larger responsibility for the peace of the whole of southern Africa, of which it is an integral part.

101. If there is an area of the world pre-eminently on the minds of all members of the world community, it is the Middle East, including the situation in Lebanon. We can recall many years, even decades, of relative harmony and peace in a prosperous Lebanon. One of the root causes of the turmoil which has destroyed the political balance in what had been a peaceful country is the unresolved problem of the future of the Palestinian people. Lebanon's invasion by Israel has now led to the direct involvement of major Powers in the area. The most immediate need, in our view, is for a cease-fire and the cessation of hostilities throughout Lebanon. We rejoice that such a cease-fire has been achieved and we join in the hope of the Secretary of State, Mr. Shultz, that the fact will force Syria and Israel to follow suit. The efforts

of the United Nations to deploy, at a minimum, observer teams should continue to be supported, and the goal remains the withdrawal of all unauthorized non-Lebanese forces. At an appropriate time it would also be highly desirable to replace the remaining non-Lebanese forces with a United Nations peace-keeping presence, while the Government of Lebanon consolidates its role and the democratic political balance is restored. We were happy to read the statement of the Foreign Minister of Saudi Arabia today, when he said that an agreement had been reached for a cease-fire in Lebanon, ending the war and starting a national dialogue. What has been secured is a great achievement. We appeal to all our Lebanese brothers to go beyond the bloodshed and the hatred in order to resume the building of Lebanon.

102. The Middle East, however, will not cease to be a seed-bed of conflict until the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination—including its right to establish an independent State in Palestine—and the rights of all States in the region, including Israel, to a secure existence within internationally recognized borders are assured.

103. If the Middle East remains a dangerous flash-point for global conflict and possibly for nuclear war, the accumulation of weapons designed for such a war also continues to accelerate.

104. Is there anything new to be said about the arms race? Each year we rehearse the frightful statistics, the wasteful sums spent on the arms race, both conventional and nuclear, which could have been better used for economic development.

105. The United States has something like 9,500 war-heads in its strategic arsenal, while the USSR disposes of 7,700. Two or three hundred are generally regarded as sufficient to devastate either nation. The USSR has about 13,000 smaller nuclear explosives, each much larger than the bomb dropped on Hiroshima in the Second World War, while the United States has a tactical arsenal of about 20,000 smaller weapons.

106. The number of resolutions on disarmament adopted last year is a measure both of the concern felt in the international community and of the futility of the effort we have made year after year to elicit positive action from the two major protagonists. In the past 20 years the major Powers have not cared to complete a comprehensive test ban, a modest first step in slowing down the nuclear arms race. It is both unconscionable and unthinkable that not even this small step has been achieved.

107. The most needed step now is an immediate moratorium on the development and production of new strategic nuclear weapons systems.

108. I take some hope from the newer directions which are beginning to emerge in the Disarmament Commission and other bodies of the Organization. The concept of common security developed in the report of the Independent Commission on Disarmament and Security Issues⁵ parallels a concern which I have long expressed. I am convinced that a search for security is bound by its very emphasis to be more fruitful than a search for disarmament *per se*. As Chairman of the Group of Experts on the Relationship between Disarmament and International Security, I have pointed out that States have chosen to emphasize the pursuit of arms limitation and disarmament without examining how security is to be provided in the absence of national arms and armies.

109. The Secretary-General, in his report of a year ago,² strongly stressed the ways in which the United Nations and its Members were failing to live up to their

responsibilities, especially in the field of the maintenance of international peace and security. We fully shared his view then, as we do now. The world Organization is principally afflicted by the indifference of some of its significant Members.

110. With the twenty-fifth anniversary of the United Nations a major effort was begun to enhance the capabilities of the United Nations in the light of the manifold changes which had taken place in the world since its founding. The major focus for this effort has solidified in the 47-nation Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization. During the course of its existence the Special Committee has produced the most substantial study on ways to improve the United Nations that has so far been developed. Most of the members of the Committee have contributed their best efforts to this end.

111. At its previous session, the General Assembly adopted the Manila Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of International Disputes [*see resolution 37/10*], a major achievement of the Special Committee. Based on the urgency lent to the work of the Special Committee by the report of the Secretary-General, we were optimistic that further significant results would be forthcoming from that Committee. Unfortunately such has not been the case. The session of the Committee during this year has been a disappointing and disheartening one, despite the best efforts of its able Chairman, Mr. Nabil El-Araby of Egypt. We are gratified, of course, that discussion on a joint proposal by Romania and the Philippines on the establishment of a permanent United Nations commission for mediation, conciliation and good offices has begun, and we look forward to further elaboration of this proposal.

112. The world economy is in disarray. Despite signs of limited progress, large portions of the earth are in the deadly grip of poverty. Yet we accept the principle that interdependence is not an option but a fact. It involves mutuality of interests and commonly derived solutions. Where these new realities are resisted, a malfunction in the infrastructure of the world economy inevitably develops. Withheld participation leads to imbalance and inequities.

113. The thirty-seventh session of the General Assembly was extended until 19 September in a desperate effort to launch global negotiations on international economic co-operation. That it failed is symptomatic of the malaise characterizing this aspect of international relations.

114. The results of the sixth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development are a further sign of such malaise. That meeting, begun with bright promise when the developing countries, in their meetings at New Delhi and Buenos Aires, decided to approach the session of the Conference held at Belgrade with an expressed willingness to co-operate. The lack of significant results has left us with a bitter aftertaste.

115. We have no magic recipes for ending the impasse, but my Government will continue to contribute its modest share to every effort to overcome those problems. It was in this spirit that we proposed last year the inclusion in the agenda of an item entitled "New international human order: moral aspects of development".⁶ We believe that the establishment of a moral framework for economic co-operation provides an important key to the promotion of the inevitable just international economic co-operation. I hope that together we can elaborate a new international human order for economic co-operation.

116. We look with favour on the joint proposal submitted by the delegations of Malaysia and Antigua and

Barbuda on consideration of the question of Antarctica [A/38/193]. A study of this subject should enhance understanding of that largely unknown continent. We believe that the destiny of Antarctica is a matter of universal concern and should not be left in the hands of a few States only.

117. As I leave this rostrum, I wish to pay a tribute to the Secretary-General, who has brought to his office a refreshing candour, as well as the courage of his convictions. He has provided us with lucid insights into the problems besetting the world. At the thirty-seventh session of the General Assembly, he asked Member States to redouble their efforts to solve their differences, and at the Seventh Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, at New Delhi in March, he reminded us that the United Nations should be developed more as a forum for negotiations and agreements and less as a place of confrontation and debate. In his report to the current session [A/38/1], he outlines the various issues confronting the Assembly and calls for a recommitment to the Charter because, "With an objective as elusive and as vital as the preservation of peace, a sense of shared purpose and direction is imperative."

118. In conclusion, I should like to quote from a speech delivered by General Omar Bradley in 1957. General Bradley was of course an American and his words were addressed to his fellow Americans, but they retain, a generation later, perfect relevance to the problems of our time and address all citizens of the world. He said:

"The central problem of our time . . . is how to employ human intelligence for the salvation of mankind. It is a problem we have put upon ourselves.

"If I am sometimes discouraged, it is not by the magnitude of the problem but by our colossal indifference to it. I am unable to understand why . . . we do not make greater, more diligent and more imaginative use of reason and human intelligence in seeking an accord and compromise which will make it possible for mankind to control the atom and banish it as an instrument of war.

"Unless we soon get started [on a just accord], it may be too late . . . Time is running against us, and it is running against us with the speed of Sputnik."

I leave you with this food for thought.

119. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from Spanish*): The kind words addressed to my country and myself by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Philippines are particularly appreciated, coming as they do from one of the signers of the San Francisco Charter.

120. Mr. ZAMBRANO VELASCO (Venezuela) (*interpretation from Spanish*): It is no mere formality, Sir, for me to convey to you the satisfaction of my country and my personal pleasure at your election as President. This is not simply because you are a Latin American, because your country is abundantly qualified for that distinction or because you have demonstrated in your every action competence and a vocation to serve which guarantee the successful conduct of our work. Beyond all these relevant facts, it is of very special significance to us that a Panamanian is presiding over the General Assembly in the year when we are commemorating the bicentennial of the birth of the Liberator, Simón Bolívar.

121. Panama is a permanent testimony to the political genius of Bolívar. The Amphictyonic Congress, convened by him on the Isthmus of Panama in 1826, was the forerunner of this international Organization and of the formulation of the basic rules for the maintenance of international peace and security.

122. It is appropriate also to convey, on behalf of my country, the sincere gratitude of Venezuelans for the interest shown by this Organization and the representatives of Member States in the commemoration of this important anniversary. Today, more than ever, in the midst of the conflicts and uncertainties which darken the international outlook, the tireless struggle of the Liberator Simón Bolívar for the freedom of peoples and the dignity of man should be an inspiration to us.

123. Imbued with this spirit, the heads of State of Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia, and you, Mr. President, as the representative of Panama, meeting in Caracas on the anniversary of Bolívar's birth, signed a Manifesto to the Peoples of Latin America, which has been duly distributed to the States Members of the United Nations [A/38/325]. It is a reaffirmation of the Bolivarian ideals, as applied to the main current problems of our region.

124. In our time, those ideals of unity and freedom take on new forms in a variety of links that unite the peoples of the Bolivarian republics; they are to be found with fresh force in relations among American nations; they place us among the developing countries; and they provide the banner under which the final end of colonialism and the prevention of acts of aggression and interference by the great Powers will be achieved.

125. The ceremony commemorating the bicentennial of the Liberator, held last July here at United Nations Headquarters, was very gratifying to Venezuelans. A former President of Venezuela, Mr. Rafael Caldera, delivered an address, as did representatives of the other countries liberated by Bolívar, and representatives of all the regions of the world.

126. The wide participation which this commemoration attracted in this Organization is irrefutable proof that the Bolivarian ideals of independence, self-determination and equality have become realities based on the same aspirations to self-betterment and justice in the brotherhood of peoples of other continents, especially Africa and Asia. It is a clear expression of solidarity among the peoples of the third world.

127. For us, the accession to independence of the new American nation of Saint Christopher and Nevis and its admission to membership in the United Nations are similarly a source of special satisfaction.

128. It is profoundly disturbing that situations of force tenaciously persist, without regard for the rights of peoples and individuals.

129. No objective progress has been achieved regarding the withdrawal of foreign troops from Kampuchea or Afghanistan. Furthermore, Chad has now been added to the list of African countries in the internal problems of which foreign troops are intervening. And the world public seems to have forgotten the existence of an open state of war between Iran and Iraq, although it is now in its third year and could still potentially provoke an uncontrollable conflagration.

130. The situation in Lebanon gets worse by the hour. It is therefore necessary to assist and support the suffering people of that country to bring that long and tragic quarrel to an end and create an atmosphere conducive to dialogue and détente, so that their most intrinsic values and rights may become effective realities and their nation may regain its territorial integrity and enjoy the free exercise of its sovereignty. To this end, peaceful coexistence and reconciliation must be sought among the various groups which make up the Lebanese nation, and outside influences must be suppressed, since they tend rather

to deepen and exacerbate the differences between those groups.

131. In the mean time, the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people are no nearer realization, and South Africa maintains its artificial obstacles to the independence of Namibia.

132. Understandably, international public opinion is profoundly conscious of these open breaches of world peace, which involve various countries or groups of countries. But we should not forget that peace is not just the absence of war. It is far more than that; it is the total absence of any kind of violence. Thus, it would take forever to list every kind and focal point of violence existing within certain States which lead to the proliferation of further major conflicts and in the end reach the international arena.

133. It is important and useful to use all possible means to prevent these internal disputes since experience has shown that once they reach major proportions there is much less likelihood of finding effective solutions.

134. In these circumstances, action by the Secretary-General, however energetic and persistent, is not enough to quench all the fires, seeing the scantiness of the means available to him.

135. The international community must overcome what appears to be a growing indifference to these constant breaches of the peace and the law and give its most resolute support to action by the Organization to restore the disrupted normal conditions.

136. All Member countries, large and small, individually and collectively, have a contribution to make in this endeavour. Indifference or resignation or the belief that only the super-Powers have solutions to the problems inevitably leads to an aggravation of the conflicts and increases the danger of a final catastrophic confrontation.

137. What is known as the Contadora initiative, in which joint action is being taken by Colombia, Mexico, Panama and Venezuela to prevent the territory of our Central American brothers from becoming a battlefield for contending blocs, is the peaceful outcome of our conviction that members of the international community must participate in the solution of regional and world problems.

138. In my opinion there are solid grounds for optimism about the possibility of satisfactory and permanent solutions being found.

139. In their endeavours, the countries of the Contadora Group have adhered strictly to the principle of non-intervention. Without preconceived ideas or self-seeking, the countries of the Group, always with objectivity and impartiality, have tried to foster the search for solutions which are acceptable to the countries concerned, through dialogue and negotiation.

140. Non-intervention attains its true expression when it is based on the full exercise of self-determination. Self-determination is the foundation of non-intervention, because, starting from the principle that man is free, it follows that peoples must be free also. There can be no excuse for invoking non-intervention in order to deprive peoples of their freedom, since universal solidarity, whose roots lie in one and the same human condition, prevails over national differences.

141. If we, the peoples of the third world, have been the most active defenders of non-intervention as a fundamental principle of international order and of coexistence between nations, it has been precisely because intervention practised by powerful nations has prevented the will of our peoples from being unreservedly expressed.

142. Today we consider the principle of non-intervention to mean that every people may exercise its right to self-determination. We cannot accept non-intervention as a rhetorical expedient under the cover of which some people or groups of people thwart the will of the peoples.

143. In 1979, when the situation prevailing in the Nicaragua of the Somoza dictatorship was being debated in the Organization of American States, Venezuela, in joint action with the other countries of the Andean Pact, pushed for recognition of the principle of solidarity among peoples, superseding national barriers, because what was at stake was the fight for respect for human rights and for the very principle of self-determination of peoples.

144. Repeated and periodic expressions of the will of the people, free and untrammelled, is a prerequisite for peace among nations. Accordingly, we believe that the establishment of a stable peace in Central America presupposes a sustained thrust to institutionalize democracy in the region.

145. The Contadora Group, in its efforts, has taken into account the social and economic conditions of the countries in the region. To lessen tensions in the area it is essential to work constantly to overcome the conditions of social injustice.

146. Political difficulties, the arms traffic, armed uprisings, border tensions, and mistrust heightened by all these factors, spur on the arms race, which in turn raises the level of tension and absorbs resources which would be better channelled into economic and social development.

147. The strengthening of democratic institutions in all the countries of the region seems to us to be the way to break this vicious circle; hence our insistence on considering the process of establishing democracy and respect for pluralism as the first step to consolidating peace.

148. Peace will not necessarily bring freedom; rather it is freedom which will serve as the foundation for peace.

149. Peace among and within the nations of Central America will be consolidated through an expression of the will of the people. In exercising their right to self-determination, the peoples will find a way to co-exist. Doing away with this consultation of the will of the people, falsifying the results of such consultations or merely ignoring them, are factors which undermine faith in democracy and impel peoples to seek solutions by force.

150. One cannot therefore invoke the difficulties which in any given situation argue against the practice of consulting the will of the people, because postponement, far from helping to improve the situation, will tend to worsen it and hence to increase the probability of widespread violence.

151. In the Manifesto to the Peoples of Latin America mentioned earlier, the Presidents of the Bolivarian republics expressed that concept very clearly, pointing out that:

“The systematic and recurrent practice of holding elections not only represents the sole means of legitimizing the exercise of power, but also—through the natural alternation characterizing this system, when accompanied by the necessary safeguards to ensure that the will of the people is effectively expressed through those elections—constitutes the most effective means not only of enabling pluralism to provide a vehicle for the expression of ideas, tendencies and opinions in the utmost freedom, but also of ensuring that respect for the rights of others on an equal footing with one's own is instilled in the hearts of men and

becomes a permanent way of life, since this is the only means for society to develop in peace.”

152. The Contadora initiative is an interesting example of subregional co-operation in an endeavour to solve locally problems of common interest in the face of strong tensions and attempts by power centres outside the sub-region to bring pressure to bear.

153. We, the Contadora Group countries, are aware of our abilities and our limitations. We want a subregional solution, but we are aware of the existence of an East-West confrontation and of the impossibility of bringing it to an end. We are making a great effort to mobilize every country in the subregion, although we realize that we have no power to impose measures or to bring pressure to bear to have them accepted. This is our weakness and at the same time our strength. The Central American countries are beginning to rebuild their confidence, encouraged by the presence of witnesses of good faith who cannot, indeed have no wish or claim to, achieve positions of hegemony.

154. In this connection, the four heads of State of the member countries of the Contadora Group stated in the Cancún Declaration on Peace in Central America:

“It is also necessary that other States with interests in and ties to the region should use their political influence in helping to strengthen the channels of understanding and should unreservedly commit themselves to the diplomatic approach to peace.” [See A/38/303, annex.]

155. However, it is not sufficient for the States of the region to act in a constructive manner. It is also essential for all States to refrain from any actions that might further aggravate the conflict. In this sense it is highly regrettable that countries which have never had any major links with the countries of the subregion, and whose interest in it has always been as remote as their geographical position, should display a growing presence on one side or the other, for reasons which are apparently far from real concern for the welfare of the Central Americans.

156. I should like to express the sincere gratitude of the Government of Venezuela, which is doubtless shared by the other members of the Contadora Group, for the broad support we have received from other Member countries of the United Nations for the efforts being made under the guidance of the heads of State of the four republics.

157. At the very time when the world is celebrating the 35th anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the persistence of that insult to human dignity which is the policy of *apartheid*, enshrined in the legislation of the South African régime, is particularly painful. Recently my country had the honour of being host to the Latin American Regional Conference for Action against *Apartheid*, organized by the Special Committee against *Apartheid*, in which Governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and eminent public leaders and experts participated. The Declaration, adopted at that Conference, states that *apartheid* “is an inhuman system of racist domination and exploitation, a negation of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and, indeed, a crime against humanity” [see A/38/451]. It also proclaims “the solidarity of the Governments and peoples of Latin America with the Governments and peoples of Africa in their struggle for the total emancipation of their continent and for peace, freedom and justice”.

158. We are proud that this solidarity was proclaimed at Caracas, and we are proud to have been of use to a

cause which we defend and understand, because reason and truth are its foundations and because we do not understand how the stability of a society can be based on the degradation of human dignity.

159. In reiterating our determination to continue a constant fight against racism and racial discrimination, and to give our firmest co-operation to the international and regional crusade against *apartheid*, we recall with admiration a man who is today the symbol of the struggle against racial prejudice and who is for that reason serving a sentence of imprisonment in South Africa—Nelson Mandela, who is under detention for fighting the *apartheid* régime and for advocating justice and human rights and the rights of peoples, and who was denied permission to participate in the ceremony conferring upon him the Simón Bolívar International Prize of UNESCO.

160. The South African régime's scorn for world public opinion is not limited to its practice of racism. In addition, it includes a recalcitrant attitude to the demand for the independence of Namibia. The Secretary-General's efforts to achieve progress in this difficult situation have our fullest support.

161. The lack of progress on disarmament causes Venezuela grave concern. We view disarmament as the necessary means to ensure and maintain international peace and security, since the present balance of power, based on the possession of the largest possible number of weapons, far from bringing us the security that we all seek, is leading us step by step towards an ever more precarious situation, which could end in the outbreak of a nuclear war, with the devastating results that we fear. Unfortunately, the present situation is characterized by a deadlock in the negotiations intended to achieve partial agreements on disarmament, and indeed it even seems that we have lost ground in comparison with the slight advances achieved earlier.

162. The growing confrontation between the two most powerful countries on earth is a drama that is being watched with alarm by the other countries of the world, whose only means of action is to raise their voices to call for a return to sanity. This anxiety-ridden atmosphere has just been tragically emphasized by the destruction by the Soviet air force of a passenger aircraft of Korean Air Lines. This act, totally unjustifiable in any circumstances, might have been avoided had there been a different climate in relations between the main power centres.

163. The world economic crisis, which has a particularly serious effect on the developing countries, has impelled those countries recently to undertake intensive efforts in the field of international economic relations. The need to deal with this situation is being urged at many forums and meetings, and there are insistent calls for appropriate study and action on what is now the decisive question for the future of mankind and for world peace.

164. It has been pointed out repeatedly that the present crisis is structural. It has been demonstrated that it is neither the result of temporary conditions nor a cyclical phenomenon and that there is no chance of recovery—perhaps even of survival—unless consistent emergency and long-term measures are taken to bring about profound changes in structures and to transform the whole economic system.

165. The efforts made by the developing countries have been seriously affected. We are facing simultaneously a fall in the prices of raw materials, a rise in the prices of manufactured imports, intensified protectionism and high interest rates in the developed countries. High interest rates in particular have been a determining factor in the loss of equilibrium in the balance of payments of the

developing countries, with a corresponding effect on their possibilities of economic and social progress.

166. There has been repeated condemnation of the fact that the minimum targets for international co-operation have not been met. This failure, among other things, has led increasingly to recourse to international loans, which today amount to the overwhelming sum of 630 billion United States dollars, with the result that about 40 per cent of the export earnings of developing countries is absorbed by the servicing of that debt.

167. Furthermore, production growth rates have fallen, both in the developing countries and in the industrialized world. In 1982 the value of world trade fell by 6 per cent. In addition, commodity prices fell further to record low levels, and their real value fell to the lowest level for the past 50 years; this helped to lower inflation, but only in the developed countries.

168. Added to this were protectionist and discriminatory policies which have created a concentration of power, thus preventing the developing countries from exercising their right to participate on an equal basis in international trade.

169. During the sixth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, held at Belgrade, a set of measures was proposed which could have made a significant contribution to the restructuring that we are discussing. We all know that once again an opportunity has been lost. That is why we feel impelled to point out to the Powers which bear the most responsibility, which exercise the most influence, that they made a mistake in not understanding the urgency of the situation or the pressing need for multilateral action as the only sensible and effective way to find solutions.

170. Nor have we succeeded in launching the global negotiations, because of the negative attitude of the greatest economic Power in the world. This attitude has precluded any move towards a harmonious and coherent outcome of the crisis, towards a scheme based on the co-operation and understanding which is the very spirit and *raison d'être* of the world Organization and of the system of specialized and regional agencies.

171. The developing countries, on the other hand, have shown great flexibility, and have changed many of their own proposals with a view to undertaking joint coherent action to assist national efforts. But national efforts cannot replace a global approach, with full and responsible participation by both developing and developed countries.

172. A major part of our collective efforts has been devoted to strengthening and implementing the Caracas Programme of Action of May 1981.⁷ We have singled out many fields in which there are both opportunities and complete readiness to co-operate: trade, food and agriculture, energy, raw materials, financing, industrialization and technical co-operation.

173. One can envisage the immense possibilities for mutual assistance offered by complementarity both now and in the future. While at Caracas we believed that the potential was already there, two and a half years after our fruitful meeting we have not only confirmed this fact, but have also realized that there is an extraordinary and deep-seated will not only to strengthen co-operation, to have closer links, but to translate our decision to achieve solidarity into reality.

174. In Latin America we have worked hard to strengthen co-operation and broaden economic relations among the countries of the region, particularly in the Andean area, where we have established what is perhaps the most important integration scheme in the developing world.

175. The Andean Pact seeks not only to improve the domestic standards of living in the member countries but also to prepare a collective position that will enable us to incorporate this group of countries into the scheme of international economic relations within more equitable parameters.

176. The international crisis itself and the indifference of those who do not feel its adverse effects as we do compel us to redouble our efforts. This was placed on record in the Declaration on Subregional Integration issued by the Andean Presidents, in July of this year, and I quote:

“We have decided to give fresh impetus to the process of integration by revising its goals, updating its programmes of action in the international and subregional contexts and improving its instruments, drawing on the experience gained in the 14 years since the signing of the Cartagena Agreement. We are convinced that the strengthening of Andean integration will significantly bolster Latin America's efforts to meet the challenges created by the crisis.” [See A/38/329.]

177. The President of Venezuela, Luis Herrera Campins, has devoted special attention to solving the economic and social problems we are facing today. His active participation in the most important efforts to correct North-South inequality is widely known. His view of the economic problems of development and of relations between the North and South has always been framed in a spirit of dialogue and understanding. His most recent statements on this important topic were made in Caracas at the opening of the conferences at the ministerial level of the Inter-American Economic and Social Council of the Organization of American States and of the Council of the Latin American Economic System [SELA]. At these Conferences we were able to assess the efforts made to find solutions and make proposals for the solution of both regional and global problems. At the first of those meetings, President Herrera Campins said:

“We want concerted solutions, which should proceed from the need to determine the real causes—structural and circumstantial—of the crisis, so that the formulas for solutions approved here will have a more solid foundation, solutions which are to be transmitted to the Inter-American Economic and Social Council for final approval.

“We are not asking anything of the industrialized countries that would be beyond the realm of what is possible and proper.”

178. The results of that meeting offer a glimmer of light in the darkness that characterizes the attempts at a systematic North-South dialogue that would make it possible to lay the foundation for a more just economic order based on solidarity. This was emphasized by President Herrera Campins a few days later at the opening of the meeting of the Council of SELA to which we referred earlier, when, in summing up the achievements of the Special Conference on External Financing of the Organization of American States, he said:

“It is worth while recalling that it was the calm, firm and constructive presence of Latin America in that North-South hemisphere scenario which made it possible, albeit somewhat hesitantly, to pry open the doors to a dialogue with the United States of America which we believe is necessary and cannot be delayed. To achieve, unanimity in approving the ‘Bases for an Understanding’, with all the conceptual burden of that formulation, represents a very important step which will have most far-reaching effects in the years to

come, provided that we know how to conduct ourselves in unity and with flexibility in undertaking the major tasks the times demand of us.”

179. Along the same line of regional action, an important event was the meeting of personal representatives of heads of State and Government of Latin America and the Caribbean, which was held at Santo Domingo at the beginning of last month to prepare a Latin American economic conference that, on the initiative of the President of Ecuador, is to be held at Quito this year.

180. If we arrive at an overview of the efforts that we Latin Americans are pursuing, we can see that to the aforementioned initiatives by Contadora, SELA, the Andean Pact and the co-ordinated activities within the inter-American organizations, we have to add other sub-regional efforts and initiatives, such as those carried out in conjunction with the Latin American Integration Association, the Caribbean Community, the Treaty for Amazonian Co-operation, as well as those of the River Plate Basin Treaty and the Agreement of San José. All of this makes us aware of how our family of nations is setting an active example in its quest for solidarity and co-operation.

181. We have noted with interest the documents submitted to us on the Malvinas Islands, which reaffirm the obligation of the parties to negotiate on the question of sovereignty.

182. The outcome of the tragic confrontation in the South Atlantic should in no way lead the United Kingdom to think that the successful use of force has created the slightest right in its favour or has in any way obliterated the illegality of its possession of the Malvinas Islands. As the English themselves are wont to say, “Two wrongs do not make a right”. For Venezuela, neither the passage of time nor any other circumstance can legalize the occupation by extra-continental Powers of any territory of the American republics which are already independent.

183. For this reason of principle, Venezuela will never accept the consolidation of the plunder of which our territory was a victim after independence, at the hands of the British Empire. At the same time, Venezuela cannot lose sight of the fact that its principal interlocutor at present is no longer the British Empire, the perpetrators of the seizure, but the sister-nation of Guyana, whose people was likewise a victim of colonialism and which, like Venezuela, has to face the difficult problems which confront all developing countries.

184. Venezuela has acted in this spirit from the very moment that Guyana acceded to independence. It has always sought to present its legitimate claims with a view to a peaceful settlement, in accordance with the letter and spirit of the Charter of the United Nations. Thus, in 1966, we signed the Geneva Agreement,⁸ whereby both countries committed themselves to finding satisfactory solutions for the practical settlement of the territorial problem.

185. It is regrettable that through the years which have gone by since then, the Government of Guyana has not had the breadth of vision to realize that sincere and frank negotiations with Venezuela on the final settlement of the problem which both countries inherited, besides being fair and right, would also be in the best interests of both peoples.

186. The Geneva Agreement to which I have already referred made provision for the parties to request assistance from the Secretary-General of the United Nations in finding a peaceful means of solution. This procedure is now under way and the Government of Venezuela is particularly pleased to note that thanks to the efforts

of the Secretary-General both personally and through the effective intermediary of the Under-Secretary-General for Special Political Affairs, there are positive signs which seem to warrant optimism regarding the establishment of a propitious climate in relations between our two countries for finally reaching a satisfactory practical settlement which will put an end to the dispute in a peaceful and friendly way.

187. America and the world are commemorating the bicentennial of the birth of the Liberator Simón Bolívar. He gave us not only freedom and independence, but also an enduring ideal, which neither fades nor withers, which cannot be extinguished or altered. “Bolívar still has much to do in America”, said José Martí. Proof of this lies in the splendid practical results of Bolivarian ideals. Bolívar is still present in relations between nations, in the promotion of equality and the prevention of subjugation. He is present in multilateral diplomacy on the side of the weak and developing peoples of the third world. Bolívar is here in the United Nations as the standard-bearer in the struggle to put an end to colonialism, prevent great-Power aggression and interference, seek a peaceful settlement of conflicts and defend human rights and public liberties. Bolívar is also present in the United Nations specialized agencies in the efforts to improve the terms of trade, prevent economic exploitation, defend industrial workers and farmers and improve health and education, because he anticipated the structure and philosophy of the organizations which sustain the progress and improvement of the human condition.

188. When there is a tragic world crisis, a financial and economic crisis, a monetary and commercial crisis, a crisis of political values and ideological concepts, a crisis of social and economic programmes, a moral crisis characterized by the weakening of ethical values and the invasion of pragmatic practices, a crisis of faith in the ideals of civilization and culture, an overwhelming crisis because of the technological supremacy of the most destructive offensive weapons man has ever devised, I invoke the name of Simón Bolívar as a shield, an ideal, a safeguard of the preservation of freedom, peace, order and progress for our peoples and for all mankind. Two hundred years after his birth, the Liberator is here, showing us the way and illuminating it with his example.

189. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from Spanish*): I thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Venezuela for his generous words about me and my country, which I cannot but attribute to our common Bolivarian outlook.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.

NOTES

¹ Final Act of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, signed at Helsinki on 1 August 1975.

² *Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 1.*

³ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 402, No. 5778, p. 72.

⁴ *Report of the United Nations Conference on Desertification, Nairobi, 29 August-9 September 1977 (A/CONF.74/36)*, chap. I.

⁵ “Common security—a programme for disarmament” (see A/CN.10/38 and A/CN.10/51).

⁶ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-seventh Session, Annexes*, agenda item 71, document A/37/192.

⁷ Adopted at The High Level Conference on Economic Co-operation among Developing Countries, held at Caracas from 13 to 19 May 1981 (See A/36/333 and Corr.1, annex).

⁸ Agreement to resolve the controversy over the frontier between Venezuela and British Guiana (United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 651, No. 8192, p. 323).