

United Nations
**GENERAL
ASSEMBLY**

THIRTY-NINTH SESSION

Official Records



**4th
PLENARY MEETING**

*Monday, 24 September 1984,
at 10.30 a.m.*

NEW YORK

*President: Mr. Paul J. F. LUSAKA
(Zambia).*

AGENDA ITEM 9

General debate

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

2. Mr. REAGAN (United States of America): First of all, I wish to congratulate you, Mr. Lusaka, on your election as President of the General Assembly. I wish you every success in carrying out the responsibilities of that high international office.

3. It is an honour to be here, and I thank you all for your gracious invitation. I would speak in support of the two great goals that led to the formation of the United Nations—the cause of peace and the cause of human dignity.

4. The responsibility of the General Assembly—the peaceful resolution of disputes between peoples and nations—can be discharged successfully only if we recognize the great common ground upon which we all stand: our fellowship as members of the human race, our oneness as inhabitants of this planet, our place as representatives of billions of our countrymen whose fondest hope remains the end to war and to the repression of the human spirit. These are the important, central realities that bind us, that permit us to dream of a future without the antagonisms of the past. And, just as shadows can be seen only where there is light, so, too, can we overcome what is wrong only if we remember how much is right; and we will resolve what divides us only if we remember how much more unites us. This chamber has heard enough about the problems and dangers ahead; today let us dare to speak of a future that is bright and hopeful and can be ours only if we seek it. I believe that future is far nearer than most of us would dare to hope.

5. At the start of this decade one scholar at the Hudson Institute noted that mankind also had undergone enormous changes for the better in the past two centuries, changes which are not always readily noticed or written about.

6. “Up until 200 years ago, there were relatively few people in the world,” he wrote. “All human societies were poor. Disease and early death dominated most people’s lives. People were ignorant, and largely at the mercy of forces of nature.”

7. “Now,” he said, “we are somewhere near the middle of a process of economic development . . . At the end of that process, almost no one will live in a country as poor as the richest country of the past. There will be many more people . . . living long, healthy lives, with immense knowledge and more to learn than anybody has time for.” They will be “able to cope with the forces of nature, and almost indifferent to distance.”

8. We do live today, as that scholar suggested, in the middle of one of the most important and dramatic periods in human history—one in which all of us can serve as catalysts for an era of world peace and unimagined human freedom and dignity.

9. Today I would like to report to you, as distinguished and influential members of the world community, on what the United States has been attempting to do to help move the world closer to this new era. On many fronts enormous progress has been made, and I think our efforts are complemented by the trend of history.

10. If we look closely enough, I believe we can see all the world moving towards a deeper appreciation of the value of human freedom in both its political and its economic manifestations. This is partially motivated by a world-wide desire for economic growth and higher standards of living. And there is an increasing realization that economic freedom is a prelude to economic progress and growth and is intricately and inseparably linked to political freedom.

11. Everywhere, people and Governments are beginning to recognize that the secret of a progressive new world is to take advantage of the creativity of the human spirit; to encourage innovation and individual enterprise; to reward hard work; and to reduce barriers to the free flow of trade and information.

12. Our opposition to economic restrictions and trade barriers is consistent with our view of economic freedom and human progress. We believe such barriers pose a particularly dangerous threat to the developing nations and their chance to share in world prosperity through expanded export markets. Tomorrow, at the International Monetary Fund, I will address this question more fully, including America’s desire for more open trading markets throughout the world.

13. This desire to cut down trade barriers and our open advocacy of freedom as the engine of human progress are two of the important ways the United States and the American people hope to assist in bringing about a world where prosperity is commonplace, conflict an aberration, and human dignity and freedom a way of life.

14. Let me place these steps more in context by briefly outlining the major goals of American foreign

policy and then exploring with you the practical ways we are attempting to further freedom and prevent war. By that I mean, first, how we have moved to strengthen ties with old allies and new friends; secondly, what we are doing to help avoid the regional conflicts that could contain the seeds of world conflagration; and thirdly, the status of our efforts with the Soviet Union to reduce the levels of arms.

15. Let me begin with a word about the objectives of American foreign policy, which have been consistent since the post-war era and which fuelled the formation of the United Nations and were incorporated into the Charter of the United Nations itself.

16. The Charter states two overriding goals: "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind" and "to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small".

17. The founders of the United Nations understood full well the relationship between these two goals. And I want you to know that the Government of the United States will continue to view this concern for human rights as the moral centre of our foreign policy. We can never look at anyone's freedom as a bargaining chip in world politics. Our hope is for a time when all the people of the world can enjoy the blessings of personal liberty.

18. But I would like also to emphasize that our concern for protecting human rights is part of our concern for protecting the peace.

19. The answer is for all nations to fulfil the obligations they freely assumed under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Declaration states that: "The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections". The Declaration also includes the right of everyone: "to form and to join trade unions," "to own property alone as well as in association with others," "to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country," and to enjoy "freedom of opinion and expression". Perhaps the most graphic example of the relationship between human rights and peace is the right of peace groups to exist and to promote their views. In fact, the treatment of peace groups may be a litmus test of a Government's true desire for peace.

20. In addition to emphasizing this tie between the advocacy of human rights and the prevention of war, the United States has taken important steps, as I mentioned earlier, to prevent world conflict. The starting-point and corner-stone of our foreign policy is our alliance and partnership with our fellow democracies. For 35 years, the North Atlantic alliance has guaranteed the peace in Europe. In both Europe and Asia, our alliances have been the vehicle for a great reconciliation among nations that had fought bitter wars in decades and centuries past. And here in the western hemisphere, North and South are being lifted on the tide of freedom and are joined in a common effort to foster peaceful economic development.

21. We are proud of our association with all those countries that share our commitment to freedom, human rights, the rule of law—and international peace. Indeed, the bulwark of security that the democratic alliance provides is essential, and re-

mains essential, to the maintenance of world peace. Every alliance involves burdens and obligations, but these are far less than the risks and sacrifices that would result if the peace-loving nations were divided and neglectful of their common security. The people of the United States will remain faithful to their commitments.

22. But the United States is also faithful to its alliances and friendships with scores of nations in the developed and developing worlds with differing political systems, cultures and traditions. The development of ties between the United States and China—a significant global event of the last dozen years—shows our willingness to improve relations with countries ideologically very different from ours.

23. We are ready to be the friend of any country that is a friend to us and a friend of peace. And we respect genuine non-alignment. Our own nation was born in revolution; we helped promote the process of decolonization that brought about the independence of so many members of this body, and we are proud of that history.

24. We are proud, too, of our role in the formation of the United Nations and our support of the Organization over the years. And let me again emphasize our unwavering commitment to a central principle of the United Nations system, the principle of universality, both here and in the United Nations technical agencies around the world. If universality is ignored, if nations are expelled illegally, then the United Nations itself cannot be expected to succeed.

25. The United States welcomes diversity and peaceful competition; we do not fear the trends of history. We are not ideologically rigid; we do have principles and we will stand by them, but we will also seek the friendship and goodwill of all, both old friends and new.

26. We have always sought to lend a hand to help others—from our relief efforts in Europe after the First World War to the Marshall Plan and massive foreign assistance programmes after the Second World War. Since 1946, the United States has provided over \$115 billion in economic aid to developing countries, and today it provides about one third of the nearly \$90 billion in financial resources, public and private, that flows to the developing world. And the United States imports about one third of the manufactured exports of the developing world.

27. But any economic progress, as well as any movement in the direction of greater understanding between the nations of the world, is, of course, endangered by the prospect of conflict at both the global and the regional levels. In a few minutes I will turn to the menace of conflict on a world-wide scale and discuss the status of negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union. But permit me first to address the critical problem of regional conflicts, for history displays tragic evidence that it is these conflicts which can set off the sparks leading to world-wide conflagration.

28. In a glass display case across the hall from the Oval Office at the White House there is a gold medal—the Nobel Peace Prize won by Theodore Roosevelt for his contribution in mediating the Russo-Japanese War in 1905. It was the first such prize won by an American, and it is part of a tradition of which the American people are very

proud, a tradition that is being continued today in many regions of the globe.

29. We are engaged, for example, in diplomacy to resolve conflicts in southern Africa, working with the front-line States and our partners in the Contact Group. Mozambique and South Africa have reached a historic accord on non-aggression and co-operation; South Africa and Angola have agreed on a disengagement of forces from Angola, and the groundwork has been laid for the independence of Namibia, with virtually all aspects of Security Council resolution 435 (1978) agreed upon. Let me add that the United States considers it a moral imperative that South Africa's racial policies evolve peacefully but decisively towards a system compatible with basic norms of justice, liberty and human dignity. I am pleased that American companies in South Africa, by providing equal employment opportunities, are contributing to the economic advancement of the black population. But clearly, much more must be done.

30. In Central America, the United States has lent support to a diplomatic process to restore regional peace and security. We have committed substantial resources to promote economic development and social progress.

31. The growing success of democracy in El Salvador is the best proof that the key to peace lies in a political solution. Free elections brought into office a government dedicated to democracy, reform, economic progress and regional peace. Regrettably, there are forces in the region eager to thwart democratic change, but these forces are now on the defensive. The tide is turning in the direction of freedom. We call upon Nicaragua, in particular, to abandon its policies of subversion and militarism, and to carry out the promises it made to the Organization of American States to establish democracy at home.

32. The Middle East has known more than its share of tragedy and conflict for decades, and the United States has been actively involved in peace diplomacy for just as long. We consider ourselves a full partner in the quest for peace. The record of the 11 years since the October war shows that much can be achieved through negotiations; it also shows that the road is long and hard.

33. Two years ago, I proposed a fresh start toward a negotiated solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict. My initiative of 1 September 1982 contains a set of positions that can serve as a basis for a just and lasting peace.¹ That initiative remains a realistic and workable approach, and I am committed to it as firmly as on the day I announced it. And the foundation-stone of this effort remains Security Council resolution 242 (1967), which, in turn, was incorporated in all its parts in the Camp David accords.

34. The tragedy of Lebanon has not ended. Only last week, a despicable act of barbarism by some who are unfit to associate with humankind reminded us once again that Lebanon continues to suffer. In 1983 we helped Israel and Lebanon reach an agreement that, if implemented, could have led to the full withdrawal of Israeli forces in the context of the withdrawal of all foreign forces. This agreement was blocked, and the long agony of the Lebanese continues. Thousands of people are still kept from their homes by continued violence and are refugees in their own country. The once-flourishing economy of

Lebanon is near collapse. All of Lebanon's friends should work together to help end this nightmare.

35. In the Gulf, the United States has supported a series of Security Council resolutions that call for an end to the war between Iran and Iraq that has meant so much death and destruction and has put the world's economic well-being at risk. Our hope is that hostilities will soon end, leaving each side with its political and territorial integrity intact, so that both may devote their energies to addressing the needs of their people and a return to relationships with other States.

36. The lesson of experience is that negotiations work. The peace treaty between Israel and Egypt brought about the peaceful return of the Sinai, clearly showing that the negotiating process brings results when the parties commit themselves to it. The time is bound to come when the same wisdom and courage will be applied, with success, to reach peace between Israel and all of its Arab neighbours in a manner that assures security for all in the region, the recognition of Israel, and a solution to the Palestinian problem.

37. In every part of the world, the United States is similarly engaged in peace diplomacy as an active player or a strong supporter.

38. In South-East Asia, we have backed the efforts of the Association of South-East Asian Nations [ASEAN] to mobilize international support for a peaceful resolution of the Cambodian problem, which must include the withdrawal of Vietnamese forces and the election of a representative government. ASEAN's success in promoting economic and political development has made a major contribution to the peace and stability of the region.

39. In Afghanistan, the dedicated efforts of the Secretary-General and his representatives to find a diplomatic settlement have our strong support. I assure the General Assembly that the United States will continue to do everything possible to find a negotiated outcome which provides the Afghan people with the right to determine their own destiny, allows the Afghan refugees to return to their own country in dignity, and protects the legitimate security interests of all neighbouring countries.

40. On the divided and tense Korean peninsula, we have strongly backed the confidence-building measures proposed by the Republic of Korea and by the United Nations Command at Panmunjom. These are an important first step towards peaceful reunification in the long term.

41. We take heart from progress by others in lessening tensions, notably the efforts by the Federal Republic of Germany to reduce barriers between the two German States.

42. And the United States strongly supports the Secretary-General's efforts to assist the Cypriot parties in achieving a peaceful and reunited Cyprus.

43. The United States has been and will always be a friend of peaceful solutions.

44. This is no less true with respect to my country's relations with the Soviet Union.

45. When I appeared before the General Assembly, at its thirty-eighth session [5th meeting], I noted that we cannot count on the instinct for survival alone to protect us against war. Deterrence is necessary but not sufficient. America has repaired its strength. We have invigorated our alliances and friendships. We

are ready for constructive negotiations with the Soviet Union.

46. We recognize that there is no sane alternative to negotiations on arms control and other issues between our two nations, which have the capacity to destroy civilization as we know it. I believe this is a view shared by virtually every country in the world and by the Soviet Union itself.

47. I want to speak to the General Assembly today on what the United States and the Soviet Union can accomplish together in the coming years, and the concrete steps that we need to take.

48. As I stand here and look out from this podium, there in front of me I can see the seat of the representative of the Soviet Union, and not far from that seat, just over to the side, is the seat of the representative of the United States. In this historic assembly hall it is clear there is not a great distance between us. Outside this room, while there will still be clear differences, there is every reason why we should do all that is possible to shorten that distance. That is why we are here. Is that not what the United Nations is all about?

49. On 16 January last, I set out three objectives for United States-Soviet relations that can provide an agenda for our work over the months ahead.

50. First, I said, we need to find ways to reduce, and eventually to eliminate, the threat and use of force in solving international disputes. Our concern over the potential for nuclear war cannot deflect us from the terrible human tragedies occurring every day in the regional conflicts I have just discussed. Together we have a particular responsibility to contribute to political solutions to these problems, rather than to exacerbate them through the provision of even more weapons.

51. I propose that our two countries agree to embark on periodic consultations at policy level about regional problems. We will be prepared, if the Soviets agree, to make senior experts available at regular intervals for in-depth exchanges of views. I have asked Secretary of State Shultz to explore this with Foreign Minister Gromyko. Spheres of influence are a thing of the past. Differences between American and Soviet interests are not. The objectives of this political dialogue will be to help avoid miscalculation, reduce the potential risk of United States-Soviet confrontation and help the people in areas of conflict to find peaceful solutions.

52. The United States and the Soviet Union have achieved agreements of historic importance on some regional issues. The Austrian State Treaty and the Berlin accords are notable and lasting examples. Let us resolve to achieve similar agreements in the future.

53. Our second task must be to find ways to reduce the vast stockpiles of armaments in the world. I am committed to redoubling our negotiating efforts to achieve real results: in Geneva, a complete ban on chemical weapons; in Vienna, real reductions—to lower and equal levels—in Soviet and American, Warsaw Pact and North Atlantic Treaty Organization conventional forces; in Stockholm, concrete practical measures to enhance mutual confidence, to reduce the risk of war and to reaffirm commitments concerning non-use of force; in the field of nuclear testing, improvements in verification essential to ensure compliance with the threshold test-ban and peaceful nuclear explosions agreements; and in the

field of non-proliferation, close co-operation to strengthen the international institutions and practices aimed at halting the spread of nuclear weapons, together with redoubled efforts to meet the legitimate expectation of all nations that the Soviet Union and the United States will substantially reduce their own nuclear arsenals. We and the Soviets have agreed to upgrade our hotline communications facility, and our discussions of nuclear non-proliferation in recent years have been useful to both sides. We think there are other possibilities for improving communications in this area that deserve serious exploration.

54. I believe the proposal of the Soviet Union for opening United States-Soviet talks at Vienna provides an important opportunity to advance these objectives. We have been prepared to discuss a wide range of issues of concern to both sides, such as the relationship between defensive and offensive forces and what has been called the militarization of space. During the talks we would consider what measures of restraint both sides might take while negotiations proceeded. However, any agreement must logically depend upon our ability to get the competition in offensive arms under control and to achieve genuine stability at substantially lower levels of nuclear arms.

55. Our approach in all these areas will be designed to take into account concerns the Soviet Union has voiced. It will attempt to provide a basis for a historic breakthrough in arms control. I am disappointed that we were not able to open our meeting at Vienna earlier this month on the date originally proposed by the Soviet Union. I hope we can begin these talks by the end of the year or shortly thereafter.

56. The third task I set in January was to establish a better working relationship between the Soviet Union and the United States, one marked by greater co-operation and understanding.

57. We have made some modest progress. We have reached agreements to improve our hotline, extend our 10-year economic agreement, enhance consular co-operation and explore co-ordination of search and rescue efforts at sea.

58. We have also offered to increase significantly the amount of United States grain for purchase by the Soviets and to provide the Soviets with a direct fishing allocation off United States coasts. But there is much more we could do together. I feel particularly strongly about breaking down the barriers between the peoples of the United States and the Soviet Union and between our political, military and other leaders.

59. All of these steps that I have mentioned, and especially the arms control negotiations, are extremely important to a step-by-step process towards peace. But let me also say that we need to extend the arms control process, to build a bigger umbrella under which it can operate—a road-map, as it were, showing where during the next 20 years or so these individual efforts can lead. This can greatly assist step-by-step negotiations and enable us to avoid having all our hopes or expectations ride on any single set or series of negotiations. If progress is temporarily halted at one set of talks, this newly established framework for arms control could help us take up the slack at other negotiations.

60. Today, to the great end of lifting the dread of nuclear war from the peoples of the Earth, I invite the leaders of the world to join in a new beginning. We

need a fresh approach to reducing international tensions. History demonstrates beyond controversy that, just as the arms competition has its roots in political suspicions and anxieties, so it can be channelled in more stabilizing directions and eventually be eliminated, if those political suspicions and anxieties are addressed as well.

61. Towards this end I will suggest to the Soviet Union that we institutionalize regular ministerial or cabinet-level meetings between our two countries on the whole agenda of issues before us, including the problem of needless obstacles to understanding. To take but one idea for discussion, in such talks we could consider the exchange of outlines of five-year military plans for weapons development and our schedules of intended procurement. We would also welcome the exchange of observers at military exercises and locations. And I propose that we find a way for Soviet experts to come to the United States nuclear-test site, and for ours to go to theirs, to measure directly the yields of tests of nuclear weapons. We should work towards having such arrangements in place by next spring. I hope that the Soviet Union will co-operate in this undertaking and reciprocate in a manner that will enable the two countries to establish the basis for verification for effective limits on underground nuclear testing.

62. I believe such talks could work rapidly towards developing a new climate of policy understanding, one that is essential if crises are to be avoided and real arms control is to be negotiated. Of course, summit meetings have a useful role to play. But they need to be carefully prepared, and the benefit here is that meetings at the ministerial level would provide the kind of progress that is the best preparation for higher-level talks between ourselves and the Soviet leaders.

63. How much progress we will make, and at what pace, I cannot say, but we have a moral obligation to try and try again.

64. Some may dismiss such proposals and my own optimism as simplistic American idealism. And they will point to the burdens of the modern world and to history. Well, yes, if we sit down and catalogue year by year, generation by generation, the famines, the plagues, the wars, the invasions mankind has endured, the list will grow so long and the assault on humanity so terrifying that it seems too much for the human spirit to bear.

65. But is that not narrow and short-sighted and not at all how we think of history? Yes, the deeds of infamy or injustice are all recorded, but what shines out from the pages of history is the daring of the dreamers and the deeds of the builders and the doers. These things make up the stories we tell and pass on to our children. They comprise the most enduring and striking fact about human history: that through the heart-break and tragedy man has always dared to perceive the outline of human progress, the steady growth in not just the material well-being but the spiritual insight of mankind.

“There have been tyrants and murderers, and for a time they can seem invincible. But in the end, they always fall. Think on it—always. All through history the way of truth and love has always won.”

That was the belief and the vision of Mahatma Gandhi, and it remains today a vision that is good and true.

66. “All is gift” is said to have been the favourite expression of another great spiritualist, a Spanish soldier who gave up the ways of war for that of love and peace. And if we are to make realities of the two great goals of the Charter of the United Nations—the dreams of peace and human dignity—we must take to heart these words of Ignatius Loyola: “We must pause long enough to contemplate the gifts received from Him who made us—the gift of life, the gift of this world, the gift of each other.”

67. And the gift of the present, for it is this present, this time, that now we must seize. I leave you with a reflection from Mahatma Gandhi spoken with those in mind who said that the disputes and conflicts of the modern world are too great to overcome. It was spoken shortly after Gandhi’s quest for independence had taken him to Britain.

“I am not conscious of a single experience throughout my three months’ stay in England and Europe that made me feel that after all East is East and West is West. On the contrary, I have been convinced more than ever that human nature is much the same no matter under what clime it flourishes and that, if you approach people with trust and affection, you would have tenfold trust and thousandfold affection returned to you.”

68. For the sake of a peaceful world, a world where human dignity and freedom are respected and enshrined, let us approach each other with tenfold trust and thousandfold affection. A new future awaits us. The time is here, the moment is now.

69. One of the founding fathers of our nation, Thomas Paine, spoke words that apply to all of us gathered here today. They apply directly to all sitting here in this Hall. He said: “We have it in our power to begin the world over again.”

70. The PRESIDENT: 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.

71. Mr. GUERREIRO (Brazil):* On behalf of the Government of Brazil, it gives me great satisfaction to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the presidency of the thirty-ninth session of the General Assembly. I am certain that I express the confidence that all delegations present here in this Hall place in your experienced and balanced guidance for the success of our labours. I also take the occasion to greet you as a representative of Zambia and the African continent, with which my country has strong cultural, historical and political ties.

72. At this point, allow me also to pay a well-deserved tribute to Mr. Jorge Illueca for the competent and able manner in which he presided over the work of the thirty-eighth session of the General Assembly.

73. It is a privilege to congratulate the people and Government of Brunei Darussalam upon their new membership in the United Nations, and I hereby renew my best wishes for the peace and prosperity of that country, with which Brazil already has diplomatic relations.

74. It is our daily experience to live with international tension and crises. Clearly the crises overlap successively in a vicious and self-reinforcing process. More than ever, orderly change is required.

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

75. To face this challenge, Brazil believes in the commitment to the fundamental principles of international life contained in the Charter of the United Nations. My country reaffirms that its foreign policy adheres to the high aim of seeking solutions consistent with the universal causes of peace and development. It maintains a balanced approach to current international issues.

76. We understand that only confidence can create a lasting basis for dialogue and co-operation among nations.

77. These values and this will to change guide my words in opening the general debate.

78. Epochs of crisis, such as the one we are going through, evidence themselves not only in facts but also in ideas and in the political culture. The United Nations cannot remain immune to the crises of our times.

79. From the generation that founded the United Nations we inherited a message that repudiates double standards in judgements. More than ever, it is necessary to recover the meaning of that message. The strong and the weak, the allied and the adversaries must understand and abide by the criteria that govern international life. Only thus can dialogue become truly possible. This is one of the fundamental reasons for the work performed at the United Nations.

80. Although authoritarianism may assume many guises, it does not seem right, in this year of 1984, to confuse the ideal of peace with the obsessive proclivity to war. Freedom, justice or progress should not be invoked to cloak a desire to dominate. There can be no quibbling about respect for the universal principles of the Charter. Equality means equality; sovereignty means sovereignty; non-intervention means non-intervention. Those who give in to expedient temptations to the detriment of the values essential to the credibility of the United Nations are only deluding themselves.

81. Brazil has taken clear, well-known positions on the great foci of political tension that continue to challenge the international community's capacity for action. After years of debate and negotiation on some of these questions, sizeable margins of consensus have been reached.

82. It will not be denied that the best road to self-determination and independence for Namibia is the implementation of Security Council resolution 435 (1978). As long as this directive is followed, the recent signs of flexibility on the part of South Africa are auspicious for dialogue and negotiation. In addition, the conscience of the international community has remained unequivocal in its repudiation of racial discrimination, and for that very reason the United Nations cannot compromise nor waiver in its absolute condemnation of *apartheid*.

83. Time has shown that a comprehensive, just and lasting solution in the Middle East cannot be foreseen outside the parameters originally established by the United Nations. A succession of crises resulting from the non-acceptance of those parameters has for more than a generation been preventing the building of peace in that disturbed area.

84. In the Middle East as in other regions, Brazil condemns the persistence of a policy of *faits accomplis* in defiance of the Charter of the United Nations. Among the many victims of the recent and persistent crisis in Lebanon, we must mourn the loss of many

soldiers of the multinational forces operating there. This should make us all, even the most powerful, reflect on the role that the United Nations can and should play in the conduct of peace-keeping operations in fulfilling the mandates of the international community with the full backing of the Security Council.

85. In all areas of tension, such as Afghanistan and Kampuchea, the principle of non-intervention should admit no exceptions to its application. Wherever attempts are made to interfere in national political processes, whether by force or by infiltration under the cover of technical excuses, they will deserve the condemnation of the international community. It is no longer possible to believe that public opinion can still be deceived by façades of legitimacy for acts of real intervention which seek strategic advantages or mere prestige.

86. In Central America there will be no long-term solutions without whole-hearted observance of the basic principles of self-determination, mutual respect among all nations and democratic life. For that reason it is vital that the work of the Contadora Group should go forward and be carried to a successful conclusion, since that Group is best able to promote awareness of the problems of the region in all their historical, social, political and economic complexity. Good relations in the hemisphere today depend, in a very critical way, on stability in Central America.

87. The spirit of the Charter must prevail so that we may have dialogue and negotiation. In this regard, it behoves us to express our thanks to the Secretary-General, who, whenever called upon, has given his good offices and played the role of mediator, even under adverse circumstances, with a sense for the opportune and a discretion appropriate for each occasion.

88. The same applies to the question of the Malvinas. The contribution of the United Nations continues to be indispensable for reaching a positive solution and should include providing encouragement for diplomatic understanding between the parties. This is a question that directly affects the Latin American countries, which have a solid position on the merits of the case, recognizing the rights of Argentina and desirous of dispelling the risk of tensions in an area that has a vocation for peace and harmony. This is the time to demonstrate consistency and authenticity, to honour the principles of the Charter by implementing Security Council resolution 502 (1982) in its entirety.

89. For all the critical problems I have just mentioned, the United Nations has not failed to take stands and prescribe cures.

90. But the scarcity of effective solutions does not derive from flaws in assessment: the problems persist because of fragmentation in the political will of the international community. While the decision-making machinery and even the implementation of decisions of the United Nations remain stalled, painfully negotiated formulas for consensus are subject to a process of erosion. The practical result is, very often, a lamentable retreat from the bases of understanding officially endorsed by this forum. To use an eloquent example, I recall the Final Document [resolution S-10/2] of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly, which was devoted to disarmament.

91. Thirty-nine years ago, still under the impact of a conflict without precedent, the United Nations was born under the sign of universality and equality among nations. The Organization, in its very name, mirrors the ideal of solidarity and union and, in addition, the recognition that no longer can any nation afford to live in isolation. If there was a generous utopianism apparent in this vision, there was also a lucid grasp of the real needs for mankind's survival and well-being.

92. In our century, no nation, however powerful, can defy the international community as represented here, nor can it cut itself off from dialogue with other nations. No single State can enact laws for the whole world. In other words, to be effective, international leadership must be vested with real democratic meaning. It will be strong as long as it maintains this intrinsic value.

93. The international system should not be vertical and centralized. Whatever affects everyone must be decided upon by all. This argument applies specifically to two themes of global interest that cannot be dealt with separately: peace and development. But it is precisely in these themes of such vital importance for humanity that the political deadlock makes itself felt and equations of power override democratic dialogue.

94. Last August I had the opportunity to address the Conference on Disarmament, where I reiterated my country's growing apprehension at the acceleration of the arms race.² I then announced Brazil's endorsement of the Joint Declaration issued on 22 May 1984 by six Heads of State or Government to the nuclear Powers, and I quoted the following excerpt from it: "It is primarily the responsibility of the nuclear weapons States to prevent a nuclear catastrophe, but this problem is too important to be left to those States alone" [see A/39, 277, annex].

95. In order to discharge such a task, which is of first priority, international decision-making must effectively incorporate broad and representative participation by the community of nations. This will curtail the current monologue of intransigence which has replaced the negotiating process among those who through dialogue should have the primary responsibility for the security of us all. Under such a paralysing influence, discussions on "arms control" run the risk of completely missing their mandatory final objective: general and complete disarmament under effective international control.

96. The dynamics of confrontation, in its various doctrinary disguises, only lead to higher levels of terror, not of security. Political intelligence has already identified this tragic rationalization of the will to power.

97. Peace must not be turned into a mirage; it must not fade in the spiralling arms race. There is no substitute for peace, and peace emerges from a just and credible international order, not from a balance of mistrust. That is a fundamental lesson of the Charter of the United Nations.

98. It is on the economic plane that the contemporary crisis has its most sensitive dimension, but its dynamics are essentially political. The roads to peace and development cannot fail to be parallel. We are in an extreme situation which forces us to examine its roots without illusions or pretenses.

99. Brazil will not give up its development prospects; it cannot accept a reduction in the place it has

gained for itself in international trade within legitimately agreed rules. For a long time my country has been fighting in the proper forums for correction of the defects in the world economic structure, of which we are today one of the chief victims.

100. Several times in the General Assembly I have voiced Brazil's concern at the course the international economy has been taking during the last few years. In many different ways I have reiterated a call for a determined international effort to overcome the effects of the grave world crisis. I have reaffirmed the need to reverse a growing tendency towards the erosion of a most valuable asset, something for which we all worked hard during the post-war period; namely, international co-operation in the service of development as an indispensable factor for the management of a trade and finance system that is undoubtedly precarious and unstable.

101. At a certain stage I stated that "when the world economy becomes highly diversified and the problems are universal in scope, the challenge is no longer that of how to obtain unilateral advantages but is that of how jointly to define viable ways to govern an increasingly unstable system."

102. Recent occurrences, such as the reduction of inflation and the resumption of growth in some developed countries, seem to demonstrate the validity of recourse to unilateral policies by one or other of the main developed countries. However positive the recovery now taking place in some developed economies may be, it cannot be denied that it is limited and that it is leading to an excessive escalation of the coefficient of instability in the international economic system.

103. Nor can it be denied that, because of recourse to unilateral policies, perverse mechanisms have come into existence whereby debtor countries are led to transfer resources that subsidize the prosperity of wealthy nations. Worse still, those debtor nations see their prospects for development stultified under the impact, often overwhelming, of actions taken by the great industrial Powers.

104. The solution of the pressing problems of the international economy cannot be found in individual actions or short-term approaches; nor can it be ensured as a by-product of the recovery of one or other developed country. This is all the more true when such recovery, which is subject to strong elements of uncertainty and risk, has a restrictive effect upon the possibilities of expansion of other countries, particularly those most deeply in debt.

105. The way to a sustained and healthy recovery of the international economy cannot, therefore, be through the precarious reactivation of a few economies and an attempt, inevitably doomed to failure, to maintain an economic policy with restrictive effects upon the prospects for development of the nations of the third world.

106. The social and political tensions to which those countries have been subjected cannot continue much longer, nor can their peoples continue to live indefinitely at the mercy of abrupt fluctuations in the already intolerably high interest rates, in the availability of financial flows and in the conditions of access to international markets.

107. Over the past few years there have been recurrent episodes of resistance to concerted international action on the part of the developed countries, as shown by the lack of results at the International

Meeting on Co-operation and Development, held at Cancún in 1981; the obstacles posed to the launching of global negotiations; the failure of the latest session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development; and the non-compliance with the principles and commitments of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. In view of the extremely adverse situation confronting us, the time has come to open new avenues in the direction of the objectives which President Figueiredo defined—when addressing the General Assembly at its thirty-seventh session [5th meeting]—as the need to restructure the international economic order.

108. The rejection of dialogue and concerted action among Governments has had particularly harmful consequences over the past two years, which were characterized by the emergence of the debt crisis, with devastating results for Latin America. Countries whose efforts to maintain adequate rates of growth in the 1970s, which were important at that time to sustain the level of economic activity in the developed world, today see themselves, because of events beyond their control, punished by severe recessive pressures. This is certainly not the reward they deserve for the important contribution they made to the prosperity of the world's economy.

109. The developing world has not failed to give clear indications of its willingness to enter into a realistic and constructive dialogue, as evidenced by several statements delivered in such varied forums as the Economic and Social Council, UNCTAD, GATT and the IMF. Their willingness to do so has been strengthened by a growing internal movement at the level of South-South co-operation and of interregional contacts.

110. As regards Latin America, three important steps in search of a dialogue with the developed world were taken this year with the holding of the Latin American Economic Conference at Quito in January and, more recently, the meetings held at Cartagena in June and Mar del Plata earlier this month by 11 countries particularly affected by the question of indebtedness.

111. At Quito, Cartagena and Mar del Plata, Latin American countries, acting in a moderate, objective and pragmatic manner, put forth a body of political principles which, in their view, should govern the relationship between debtors and creditors. They laid emphasis on the need for the creditors to recognize their share of responsibility in the solution to the debt problem, as well as the importance of symmetry and equity in sharing the burden of the adjustments required.

112. At Cartagena, especially, the participating countries took a significant step by clearly and strongly expressing their political will to act together in search of a dialogue with the Governments of the creditor nations on the general aspects of the debt issue. As indicated in the Cartagena Consensus [see A/39/331], the question of the debt requires adequate political consideration at the international level, as it has obvious political and social consequences. Only the will of the governments of creditor and debtor countries will make it possible to modify the conditions which hamper the attainment of lasting solutions to problems which cannot be dealt with exclusively through a dialogue with the banks, by isolated action on the part of international financial institutions or by the mere behaviour of the markets.

113. The Ministers for Foreign Affairs and Ministers of Finance of the 11 countries that had met at Cartagena gathered at Mar del Plata, on 13 and 14 September to call for a dialogue with the Governments of the creditor nations. In the Mar del Plata Communiqué [see A/39/554], they stressed the need for a meeting dedicated to the debt question and the means to alleviate the burden now faced by indebted nations. This dialogue, which will of course take into account the interests of all parties involved, is considered indispensable for the solution of problems that cannot remain subject to the vagaries of a highly unstable international economic environment. Let us hope that this time our appeal will not be in vain.

114. Like peace, development also threatens to become a mirage in the eyes of the weaker countries. If I insist on this correlation, it is to stress that in the political sphere, as well as in the economic, the difficulties we face arise from the very structure of the international system, resistant to change not mediated by power.

115. We can no longer avoid recognizing that if current distortions persist, the existing crisis will culminate in decisively hurting everyone, poor and rich, debtors and creditors alike. As we approach the end of the century, the economic world, like the political world, has become indivisible. Interdependence is not a rhetorical image: it is a historical necessity that demands political action in the sense of co-operation and not of regression or isolation.

116. To conclude, I should like to return to my initial remarks on the role of the United Nations in the present-day world.

117. Too frequently, the Organization has seen itself transformed into a "forum for sterile confrontation", as President Figueiredo stated when he addressed the General Assembly in 1982. In acknowledging the virtual paralysis of the machinery of multilateral diplomacy, Brazil seeks a higher objective: the preservation and perfection of the United Nations, to make it what it should be, the forum *par excellence* for settling controversies between States and promoting international co-operation.

118. Brazil does not subscribe to the allegation that the United Nations is condemned to becoming an anachronism. What would be more properly anachronistic would be the rejection of democratic dialogue within the community of nations; the rejection of genuine aspirations and formulas of consensus resulting from lengthy and wearing negotiating efforts; the prospect of the geometrically expanding gap in the distribution of wealth between the nations of the North and South.

119. There will be reason for comfort and optimism if we profit from the lessons of accumulated experience. As the United Nations approaches its fortieth anniversary, it has a more sorrowful, albeit clearer, perception of its limitations. This perception is courageously reflected in the reports on the work of the Organization submitted to the Assembly by the Secretary-General in the past three years. His suggestions for improving the potential of the United Nations are both timely and valuable. This notwithstanding, his warning that we are "perilously near to a new international anarchy"³ remains frighteningly vivid.

120. Never has humanity been so indissolubly associated in destiny, and yet, to our peril, the

international community's capacity to act is weakening every day.

121. The United Nations is once again suffering acutely from the corrosive effects of the rivalry between the super-Powers. It would be unwise to ignore the realities of power in international life. None the less, it is also realistic to note that the justification of coercion is, in fact, the acknowledgement that political intelligence and creativity have failed. A greater threat is in the offing: that of a tragic doctrinal retrogression with regard to the rules governing relations among nations. Times of crisis always foster national egotisms.

122. Once again it must be stated that the Charter of the United Nations is a common heritage of political wisdom. The United Nations is not the monopoly of any country or bloc of countries, nor is it committed to immobility. Efforts to attain harmony must respect differences between individuals as well as between peoples. To reaffirm this philosophy, which is the responsibility of all, rich and poor, strong and weak, is also to preserve an arduously gained spiritual legacy, one to which Brazil remains faithful.

123. Mr. TALEB IBRAHIMI (Algeria) (*interpretation from Arabic*): Your assumption, Sir, of the presidency of the thirty-ninth session of the General Assembly gives the Algerian delegation much pleasure and many reasons for satisfaction. Your selection is fitting recognition of your well-known and highly regarded competence and experience, as well as evidence of the international community's gratitude to you as President of the United Nations Council for Namibia, which has made a much valued commitment to the liberation of that Territory and the recovery of the full rights of its people and has made praiseworthy efforts to bring them about.

124. Your selection, Sir, is also naturally a tribute to your country, Zambia, whose initiatives and actions have consistently demonstrated a profound commitment to the restoration of the rule of law wherever it is undermined and the restoration of justice wherever it is flouted. This commitment, which is part of your country's heritage and tradition, has found a powerful means of expression and implementation in the wisdom and enlightened vision of President Kenneth Kaunda.

125. The fact that you come from Africa, Sir, gives a further dimension to your selection—that of the African presence at this session, which brings even more forcefully to the attention of the international community, meeting here, all that remains to be done to bring about the triumph throughout our continent of the aspirations of its peoples freely to decide their own destiny and be assured of the means to improve their lot.

126. Your predecessor, Mr. Jorge Illueca, served the United Nations well. In a gravely troubled world environment, he strove to play his part, which was an important one, in our common endeavour to restore the dialogue and rebuild the confidence that are today so sorely lacking in the international community.

127. The Algerian delegation wishes to include in these congratulations and this tribute the Secretary-General. We cannot praise too highly his actions and initiatives in his efforts to bring to bear, in the easing of tensions and the peaceful settlement of conflicts, the contribution of the United Nations, the force of

its principles and the justice of its objectives of universal peace and prosperity.

128. The Algerian delegation also takes pleasure in welcoming Brunei Darussalam to the United Nations.

129. At this time of taking stock, looking back and evaluating what has been accomplished, so that we may better appreciate what has still to be done, we find no grounds for encouragement. The concerns expressed, the growing uncertainty and self-centred attitudes are sure to continue in view of the worsening of the international environment.

130. The exacerbation of the East-West confrontation and the recrudescence of imperialist activities threaten world peace and hinder co-operation between nations. The few accomplishments of détente are still being questioned. The Movement of Non-Aligned Countries welcomed the beginning of détente, because it held the promise of universal application.

131. There are strong, pressing tendencies today to reduce the aspirations of our peoples and the interests of our nations to mere aspects of the East-West rift. The search for spheres of influence and States which may be used as staging posts or strategic points remains at the heart of confrontational power relationships. The natural right of peoples to freedom and the sovereign right of States freely to choose their own means of nation-building are still being hindered or actively thwarted. Relations of co-operation and exchange between States are still subject to restrictive approaches conceived and carried out in terms of political allegiance and obedience.

132. In its high degree of sophistication and destructive power, the escalation of the arms race combines the horrific and the absurd. Space itself is being opened up to rivalry and confrontation, the prospects of which boggle our imagination. Accordingly, the crisis in international relations has come closer to the brink than ever. It is accompanied by an unprecedented breakdown in dialogue and communication, which worsens the crisis, increases mistrust, adds to uncertainty and dangerously darkens the world horizon. In addition, it seriously disturbs the rare possibilities that still exist.

133. It is hardly necessary to add that a world economic crisis worsens the crisis that I have described and feeds on it. An analysis of all recent international financial events can lead only to the conclusion that there is a constant decline in international co-operation for development.

134. The clear threats to the international monetary and financial system have not sufficed to call attention to the crucial problem of development financing. The indescribably tragic economic situation in Africa has given rise to initiatives, recommendations and programmes of action, all of which have faced obstruction or, at best, indifference. The commodity market, international trade in general, monetary disarray, and access to technology and to capital markets are factors which are at the heart of today's fundamental imbalances in the world economy.

135. At a time when interdependence is a fact, there is no room for narrow views of the world order. In the face of the obvious interrelationship among these problems and the influence of one sector of human activity upon others, it is futile to reduce the solution to a search for initiatives regarding individual sectors or for fragmented action. It is equally futile to bank

on a fragile and precarious recovery in some countries without a guarantee of development for all the others.

136. The international community cannot possibly avoid these facts which relate, essentially, to the structures of the prevailing system of international relations. The changes under way—however diverse their origins and varied their manifestation or means of implementation—all point to the need for structural action. The world economy today cannot merely submit to the natural state of affairs. In a situation of critical inequality of resources and of opportunities for growth and development, the laws of nature consolidate existing pockets of opulence and expand areas of deprivation, wherever they persist.

137. The only conclusion to be drawn is that we seem to be determined—or at least resigned—not to see coexistence among our peoples and our nations except, on the one hand, through the primacy of force and claims to domination and, on the other, through exploitation aimed at keeping the largest possible number of people beyond the pale of prosperity and well-being.

138. Is there no reasonable alternative to all this, which is part of a fatal fascination with destruction? In mankind's progress towards the fulfilment of its destiny, is it only the inevitability of fear which can dissuade, and guaranteed mutual annihilation which can lead to peace on this earth? Cannot human intelligence and the world's vast resources make possible a destiny—for all and with the participation of all—other than that of wealth for a few and deprivation for the majority?

139. The improvement of international relations and the task of establishing a new universal order demand co-operation and participation by all. Everyone must make his contribution to the building of peace, justice and progress.

140. Algeria learned from its war of national liberation, and it is identified with the ideal of non-alignment. It has taken on the duty strictly to observe principles leading to the achievement of co-operation, understanding and free exchange among nations. Algeria has also taken on the duty to contribute to the spread throughout the world of the policy of good neighbourliness, the negotiated settlement of disputes and the realization of the legitimate aspirations of peoples, with respect for the identity, the options and the rights of all.

141. That same duty guides Algeria's behaviour in the region to which it belongs: the great Arab Maghreb. For my country, the building of the great Maghreb is part of a joint destiny and, hence, of historical determinism itself. We are convinced that what brings us together legitimizes our ambitions, the magnitude of our objectives and the credibility of our means of attaining them. We have faith in all our available means to overcome transitory hazards and passing problems, for we cannot believe that they can indefinitely thwart the task of unification which is so broadly shared and so greatly desired. There are imperatives to meet and demands to satisfy in the building of this structure. The first among them is to achieve the most favourable conditions, to define clear-cut principles and to establish a sound basis for bringing together the will of peoples and the pooling of their efforts.

142. It is obvious that, in its very essence, the building of the great Arab Maghreb is also in keeping

with the requirements of our national development processes through the mobilization of our potentials and of our complementary elements, without which there can be nothing but unavoidable harm and damage, manifested in dislocation in our ranks, in wasted resources and in lost opportunities. There can be nothing but retreat, when the need is to advance and rise to the heights required so desperately by the needs of our peoples. There can be nothing but disunity, when collective effort and a determination to overcome circumstances can and must make the endeavour an authentically united one.

143. In making that endeavour, there are regional realities which must be taken into account, just as there are real opportunities which must be seized. It is essential that hidden realities do not degenerate into additional obstacles, just as it is essential that underestimating the opportunities available does not lead to resignation and a wait-and-see attitude.

144. In all this, no lucid, coherent unified endeavour can be credible to or supported by our peoples unless it faces realities rather than ignoring them for the sake of making things easier or of short-term considerations.

145. The very relevant lessons learned from past experience, the strength of our commitment to the ideal of unity and the respect rightly due to the aspirations of our peoples call, here too, for clear-sightedness in our approach and discipline in defining and reaching the various stages in the process.

146. One fact must be understood: any unified action which disregards or is thought to disregard these imperatives cannot be implemented. When it is a matter of the destiny of peoples and the future of countries, a belief in voluntarism—however worthy of respect it may be—cannot take the place of the needed clarity and method, just as spontaneity itself—however creative it may be—cannot prevail over the need for discipline and for building gradually on experience.

147. The treaty of fraternity and concord, which has been supported by Mauritania, Tunisia and Algeria, is steeped in these imperatives. It was created by actively taking these requirements into account, the cardinal objective remaining that of creating a healthier climate and the establishment of a framework more propitious for the unification of the Greater Maghreb.

148. This treaty has a philosophy, namely, that of unity, and all of its provisions stem from the will for action undertaken towards that end. Benefiting from our past experience, it has integrated those lessons in the plan for action adopted and the objectives laid down. The treaty is open to all those animated by a sincere belief in the unity of the Greater Maghreb and by a genuine will to bring about its complete success.

149. The plan for a Greater Maghreb can only be brought about by actions which, avoiding precipitate undertakings that might be harmful, are properly and thoughtfully organized. This plan is that of an endeavour which brings together that which is ready and does not divide any further that which is available to be pooled. The plan for a Greater Maghreb can only have as its grand design those elements which, free from temporary objectives, are aimed at meeting the true expectations of the peoples of the region.

150. In our region a body of understanding, peace and co-operation is being built. There are people ready to unite for the collective good; there are also the will and the determination—and in my country these are resolute—to work for active good neighbourliness in the enlightened interests of all the peoples of the region.

151. The building of a Greater Maghreb offers unique conditions for overcoming misunderstanding, tension and conflict in the region, in particular, in Western Sahara. If the building of the Greater Maghreb brings about the conditions for a just settlement of that conflict, it is equally clear that in this work of construction nothing should be allowed to infringe the national rights of the people of Western Sahara or to damage or prejudice them in any way.

152. It could not be otherwise for my country, for Africa and for the international community as a whole, which has determined that the question of Western Sahara is part of the ongoing process of decolonization. Particularly in this case, this is the view of the Organization of African Unity [OAU] expressed in resolution AHG/Res.104 (XIX), adopted by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity at its nineteenth ordinary session, held at Addis Ababa in June 1983, and endorsed by the General Assembly in resolution 38/40. This view has been the subject of African consensus and of the international community as a whole. Through the OAU and the United Nations, whose actions and initiatives are complementary and mutually supportive in this matter, the means of bringing about a just settlement remain open. The OAU, in particular, provides the natural framework and the necessary means for such a just settlement. If that framework was not used and if those means failed, it is not because the current chairman of the OAU or the implementation committee established by the continental organization had not done everything possible to achieve peace; nor is it the fault of the Saharan Arab Democratic Republic, because it has abundantly demonstrated its commitment to reconciliation between the brotherly peoples of Morocco and Western Sahara. The current Chairman of the OAU and all of Africa have properly located the responsibility for the present impasse. The readiness shown by some who have attempted, albeit in vain, to thwart and to counter the intransigence of others can therefore be measured. Thus, on the eve of the twentieth session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity, those who have assumed their duty are well known, just as those who have shirked their duty are known. Algeria ventures to hope that the work of peace has not exhausted its available resources or had its last word.

153. Since there is an awareness of the higher interests of our region which will prevail over the belief in the *fait accompli* and as long as the conviction prevails that there is no possible alternative to stability, security and progress of the Greater Maghreb without undertaking to guarantee the legitimate rights of all its peoples, this endeavour remains worthy of our continuing efforts and our constant determination to ensure that everything possible is done so that the logic of force will give way to the desire and need for peace, understanding and concord, which should prevail over conflict and disunity.

154. At this crucial stage when so much is at stake, the work of the OAU requires the contribution and support of the United Nations. It is vital for the international community here and now to have a clear understanding and appreciation of everything that is at stake in our region.

155. The same contribution and the same support of the United Nations must be given with respect to the OAU in its endeavour to achieve peace in Chad.

156. This is the place to take note of the beginning of the withdrawal of foreign troops from Chad, which the OAU made a primary condition for the cessation of the fratricidal confrontation in that country. This was made possible through the constant pressure exerted by Africa and the firmness of its determination to make the destiny of Chad the subject of a free decision by the people of Chad themselves. The opening of the process of the withdrawal of foreign troops from that territory therefore represents a step within the process of the national reconciliation of Chad and, through it, a milestone in the building of an African consensus. The same pressure remains to be exerted, the same efforts remain to be deployed, and the same determination remains to be maintained that the withdrawal, far from reflecting the concerns of foreign Powers alone, must be carried out with strict respect for the national unity of Chad and for its full territorial integrity.

157. Algeria, for its part, attentive as it is to all developments in this region, remains determined and ready to do everything possible to bring about the full implementation of African decisions and, through them, the restoration of understanding and concord among all the people of Chad.

158. In southern Africa, the challenge of *apartheid* remains. Thus, a crime against humanity, a colonial fact and a policy of expansion and aggression still go unpunished. Certain attempts have been made to tamper with the constitution—and we know what their fate has been—in order to confer legality or legitimacy on a system which, because of its very essence, we believe cannot possibly be reducible to rearrangements or reforms; the denial of humanity cannot be allowed to continue; aggression and expansion, which are at the very heart of *apartheid*, make it plain, if there were any further need of this, that the only possible improvement in that system would be its very disappearance. A crime against humanity cannot be absolved; it must be punished.

159. *Apartheid* is creating in southern Africa, with tacit acquiescence and complicity, a structure of hegemonistic ambitions throughout the region. South African national resistance demonstrates every day to the world the strength of its aspirations and its essential claim that its rights be satisfied. Furthermore, the attitude of unusual lucidity and courage adopted by the oppressed South African communities has dealt a very severe blow to *apartheid*, thus showing that in a situation of total oppression it is futile to bank on division in order the better to establish domination and exploitation.

160. In Namibia, another manifestation of *apartheid* persists: the colonial occupation of a Territory which the United Nations has undertaken to lead to independence. Links have been established and conditions set which are an obstacle to the proper working out of this process, which enjoys the unanimous support of the international community. We cannot accept any pre-conditions based on external

calculations which impede the independence of Namibia. The South West Africa People's Organization is the sole, authentic representative of the Namibian people. The unswerving application of Security Council resolution 435 (1978) is the framework and the instrument of the decolonization—which is at present being curbed or distorted—of this African Territory.

161. A challenge of the same nature and scope confronts the international community in the Middle East. In this region, the exercise of the national rights of the Palestinian people has been thwarted; the territories of Arab States have been occupied or annexed and their security is being threatened. The occupation of southern Lebanon is an obstacle to the national unity of Lebanon. The Israeli-American strategic alliance encourages Zionist expansionism and gives it the means to achieve its ends. Only one conclusion can be drawn from all the tragic experience of the vicissitudes in this area, namely, that there will be no just and lasting peace in the Middle East until the national rights of the Palestinian people, the denial of which remains at the heart of the crisis in the region, are recognized.

162. The martyrdom of the Palestinian people and its national resistance impose a duty upon the international community which it must discharge, first and foremost by ensuring the exercise of the right of the Palestinian people to establish an independent State on its ancestral territory under the authority of the Palestine Liberation Organization [PLO], its sole, authentic and legitimate representative. Within this context, action in support of the convening of an international conference on the Middle East in which the PLO would be assured full and effective participation is a major priority of the United Nations.

163. Another priority of particular importance for my country is action to ensure the cohesion, unity and strengthening of the capacity to act of the PLO. This is the way to establish a platform of political initiative and action which would enjoy the authentic support of all Palestinians, reinforce Arab potential and, beyond that, provide the international community with a framework for solidarity and support of the Palestinian cause.

164. Other conflicts and hotbeds of crisis in the world persist and are becoming exacerbated or intensifying. They give rise to legitimate concern on our part.

165. The persistence and tragic course of the war between Iraq and Iran concern us deeply. It is because we believe in the possibility of and the existence of the means for a just solution that Algeria has worked ceaselessly to bring about the necessary conditions for a political solution which cannot but serve the ultimate interests of our brothers in Iraq and Iran and thereby those of the unity of our ranks dictated by our common destiny.

166. The question of Cyprus also persists and reminds us of the need to do everything possible to bring about understanding and harmony between the two Cypriot communities. To this end, it is essential that there is full respect for the independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity and non-aligned status of the Republic of Cyprus. We venture to hope that this essential requirement will prevail over the still controllable effects of recent regrettable developments. In this regard, we are particularly

encouraged by the tireless efforts of the Secretary-General.

167. The growth of tension in Central America is also a subject of concern. The fundamental issue in this region remains the right of peoples freely to determine their own political and economic system and their path of development without interference, constraint or impediment. We cannot go on indefinitely denying this fact, which we have to thank the Contadora Group for highlighting by proposing a new approach to the settlement of the problems in Central America. It is the duty of the international community to give its support and assistance by constant action to bring about the restoration of peace and stability in the region.

168. The escalation of the arms race is a very damaging factor in contemporary international relations, particularly because its effects are combined with the breaking off of disarmament negotiations. It is imperative for all that these negotiations be resumed in a spirit of sincerity and responsibility, free of any attempt to claim or achieve supremacy.

169. If we realize that security through fear is not true security and that, if it is desired, there is the alternative of the peaceful coexistence of all peoples, it will be possible to establish a climate of peace and confidence among nations.

170. To attain this objective, concerted action must be taken within the framework of a process for tackling the essential problems involved in setting up a system of true collective security. As long as disarmament efforts continue to be separated from the crucial question of collective security, and as long as this continues to be seen exclusively in terms of the balance of power, our efforts will be futile or, at best, totally inadequate to meet the requirements of the day.

171. The interrelationship of the factors of security and disarmament dictate integrated action inasmuch as disarmament is not an end in itself, and its goals must serve to bring about universal peace and security based on justice and right. This is the fundamental stake and this is the major challenge we face.

172. The meeting on strengthening of security and co-operation in the Mediterranean region, held at Valetta on 10 and 11 September last by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Mediterranean countries which are members of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, is the expression of a determination to help meet this challenge and to perform this task, because the Mediterranean is, by its nature, a zone of peace and co-operation and cannot be dissociated from the security of Europe or separated from general international security.

173. In an international environment which is universally in a state of unrest and instability, the world economic crisis is deteriorating into a critical phase. International commercial, financial and monetary structures are constantly in a precarious state. Liquidity has no relationship with the actual needs for development financing. The increase in the rates of interest, apart from creating extra obstacles to access to international capital markets, is enclosing more and more countries within the endless spiral of indebtedness, which is not aimed at the financing of development activities but rather at the mere servicing of the debt itself. Primary commodity prices have remained bogged down, thus cutting off countries

which are often among the poorest from precious resources.

174. A factor which aggravates this situation is that international co-operation for development is regressing in spirit, in effectiveness and in its extension. All the evaluations of the various international conferences, in particular the most recent ones, agree in drawing this conclusion. Even more serious, the organs or institutions of multilateral co-operation are intervening in sectors that are very sensitive for the developing world, which is facing what really must be called a diminution of its resources; this is the case with the IDA, IFAD and UNDP. This is an urgent situation which the international community must reverse. There are also fields of critical interest for the developing world where international action is urgently necessary. In this context, Africa must be the centre of concern of the international community. On that continent, the economic situation of a large number of countries has been reduced to a simple matter of daily tragedy. This situation requires an urgent collective effort and the highest possible priority. In this regard, the initiatives of the Secretary-General should enjoy the commitment of all and their whole-hearted support.

175. The state of monetary and financial disorder represents a veritable axis of imbalance and instability in today's system of international economic relations. This has to do with structures that have to be remodeled and with an overall framework that has to be thought out again. To this end, the convening of an international conference on general financial and monetary problems is of the highest priority.

176. The fact of the actual interdependence of nations is something we must all understand; it has come to stay, just as has the fact of the interpenetration of problems facing us and their close and intimate interrelationship. Hence, if the plan for global negotiations is still meeting considerable obstacles as regards its implementation, nothing alters its validity and its capacity to bring about solutions.

177. In a precarious and uncertain environment, it is a matter of legitimate satisfaction to note that South-South co-operation is being embarked upon with resolution and with a sense of responsibility as regards the honouring of promises. The meeting of Ministers for Foreign Affairs and Ministers of Finance of 11 Latin American countries at Cartagena in June of this year was further evidence of this. This process, which has had such a good beginning, is worthy of our encouragement and of the strengthening of our commitment to it and of the consolidation of the conditions and means necessary for its accomplishment.

178. This appraisal sheds harsh light on what is at stake and on the magnitude of the challenges facing the United Nations. In the face of such a profound and total crisis, it is of the utmost harm for dialogue and communication to have been broken off so completely. It is of the utmost harm also for the framework of the United Nations, which is of course so necessary for such dialogue and communication, to have fallen so much out of favour.

179. If the fact of a divided humanity has made the United Nations powerless, united humanity can make its mission one of force and credibility.

180. If we are convinced that the United Nations is an act of hope, then it is we who harbour the genius

and potential for rehabilitating the United Nations in its work of civilization.

181. Mr. HALLGRÍMSSON (Iceland): I take pleasure, Sir, in joining previous speakers who have warmly congratulated you on your election as President of the thirty-ninth session of the General Assembly. I am confident that your wisdom and experience will be of great value.

182. Allow me also to take this opportunity to welcome Brunei Darussalam as the 159th Member of the United Nations and to extend to this newly independent State my country's sincere wishes for a peaceful future.

183. The General Assembly, at its sessions each year, could be the most important forum in the world. It is a unique gathering where representatives of a great variety of States express and exchange views on a great variety of issues.

184. But how successful are we in making use of this unique forum to advance our basic ideals of peace, prosperity and human rights enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations? How successful have we been in creating the kind of world our peoples have so long wished for but been denied in this twentieth century of two world wars and almost innumerable armed conflicts? Are we making progress towards our goals or are we drifting away from them?

185. At the end of last year, when the thirty-eighth session of the General Assembly had pondered the world situation for three months, your predecessor, Sir, Mr. Illueca, of Panama, summed it up by saying that that session had been: "the mirror in which mankind has seen reflected the multifaceted aspects of the profound crisis of the modern world" [*104th meeting, para. 193*]. Nothing very positive seems to have occurred since then. Some might even be tempted to say that we have rather been moving still further in the wrong direction. On this first day of the Assembly's general debate, it seems appropriate to ask the following questions. Where are we heading? What is this session likely to accomplish? Is it going to accomplish anything truly important?

186. In a very noteworthy interview not long ago one of the veterans of this Organization, the former representative of Singapore, Mr. Koh, said: "Nothing is moving at the United Nations at the moment." Is this to be the case also in the months—or even years—to come? Are we going to deal with the great number of important issues on the agenda of this session of the General Assembly by wrapping them into fine words or drowning them in inconsistent or unrealistic resolutions, and then forget all about them until the opening of another equally unsatisfactory session?

187. Are we now, as in last year's session—and similarly before that—going to adopt 63 resolutions on disarmament without any real effort to reconcile our differences or to point a way out of the present impasse? Should that be the case, the prospects would really be bleak.

188. In his very interesting appraisal of the current world situation, the Secretary-General mentions the "tendency to side-step major problems in a way which is likely in the long run to increase frustration and bitterness" and also "an apparent reluctance to make the effort required to use international organizations effectively" [*see A/39/1*].

189. At the outset of the thirty-ninth session the situation in many parts of the world calls for new methods and fresh efforts in an attempt to attain genuine improvement. Action will have to replace words and active negotiations the passing of hollow resolutions. All States, without regard to their size but based on their ability to contribute honestly, should participate in this process. This session of the General Assembly—which will be attended by so many influential political leaders and officials—will offer us an opportunity to start moving again. Let us all try to the best of our abilities to contribute to such a serious new effort to eliminate some of the great problems besetting our nations and the world community as a whole.

190. The five Nordic countries—Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden—which were not always friendly in past centuries have now over a long period derived the benefits of close and effective co-operation in a great number of fields. Living conditions and daily life in this area of the world reflect an evolution which would be beneficial to all who adopt a similar course.

191. The gavel you use, Sir, in presiding over this world Assembly, which was created by an Icelandic sculptor, Asmundur Sveinsson, also reflects the changes that have occurred among the Nordic peoples through the centuries. The gavel's head shows a Viking praying for peace, a theme chosen by the artist.

192. The Nordic peoples, who in olden times raided and fought against other peoples, now wish to live in peace and to share with others a life-style which has its origins in the noble ideals that all of us, the signatories of the Charter of the United Nations, have declared as our goals.

193. The current situation in world affairs and some of the major issues on the agenda of this session were the subject of a traditional meeting of the five Nordic Ministers for Foreign Affairs in Reykjavik earlier this month. A communiqué giving the Ministers' views on these matters has been distributed to all delegations at the United Nations and to the Secretary-General. The Ministers reaffirmed the strong support of the Nordic countries for the United Nations. They underlined the essential role of the United Nations in the maintenance of peace and the need to strengthen the Organization's effectiveness in conflicts and crisis situations. They reiterated that respect for the fundamental principles of international law as laid down in the Charter of the United Nations must be the guideline for the conduct of all States. They also stressed the importance of preserving the universal character of the United Nations.

194. It is self-evident that all nations desire peace. In so far as peoples themselves are free to decide, it should thus be possible to preserve the peace. However, not all peoples are masters of their own fate. Under such circumstances our gravest concern is the relentless arms race and the paradox that military spending this year will reach a trillion dollars while a large part of mankind is starving. It is therefore a matter of the greatest urgency that the leading military Powers multiply their efforts to limit and reduce conventional and nuclear weapons.

195. It is to be hoped that the Soviet Union, having for almost a year been unwilling to continue negotiations on some of the most threatening types of weapons now in existence, will reconsider its atti-

tude. It would indeed be fortunate if contacts during this session of the General Assembly could bring about such a basic change of atmosphere, mitigating the agony that the current state of affairs is causing mankind.

196. Our aim must be a comprehensive solution of the disarmament question, the attainment of which must be dealt with effectively as a matter of the greatest urgency and priority. Partial or regional arms limitation agreements which only lead to the transfer of arsenals to new locations are bound to have limited value and can even create new dangers.

197. As a spokesman for a country like Iceland, which derives its livelihood from the precarious living resources of the sea, I must voice our grave concern at the acceleration of the naval arms race. This aspect of the current military build-up worldwide may become the subject of further debate during next year's session of the General Assembly, when it is hoped that the study on the naval arms race, which was decided upon at the thirty-eighth session [*resolution 38/188G*], will be completed.

198. Any arms control agreement reached must contain adequate provisions for effective verification. Any State which accepts mutual treaty obligations in disarmament or other fields with the intention of fulfilling them does not have to hesitate about committing itself to reciprocal verification procedures.

199. I totally share the view of the Secretary-General that the main obstacle to disarmament and arms limitation is the insecurity of nations. Its origins may be found in the distrust between leading nations that took its current shape soon after the Second World War. All attempts to ameliorate this most unfortunate situation have until now been in vain. No durable confidence has been built between the leading Powers of the world. The building of confidence is therefore the single most important task now before the international community. Our attempts to move forward on this narrow and difficult road to a new and more peaceful world situation must be intensified. For that purpose, full use must be made of this unique forum where we are gathered now and its various organs and of the ongoing Conference on Confidence- and Security-building Measures and Disarmament in Europe, meeting at Stockholm. However, the possibility of success depends above all on the behaviour of States—not just on words spoken from this rostrum or elsewhere.

200. The building of genuine democracy among the world's nations—that is, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, respect for the sovereignty of States and the right of peoples to self-determination, the rule of law prevailing over the rule of force, and a more just distribution of economic resources—is the overriding pre-condition from which increased confidence will flow. All this and much more is pledged by all States when signing the Charter of the United Nations joining the Organization, but a different degree of implementation causes imbalance and insecurity.

201. First and foremost, each and all of us must put our own house in order. Since, through bilateral or multilateral treaties freely entered into, we have undertaken mutual obligations, we have no right to expect immunity from criticism if we fail to live up to our commitments. In this context, I must say that it has been most deplorable to see the peoples of

many countries suffer from flagrant breaches of human rights obligations. For instance, *apartheid* and the treatment in a number of countries of individuals who have been claiming basic human rights for themselves and their fellow citizens cause us the gravest concern. A case in point is the sad affair of Andrei Sakharov and his wife, Yelena Bonner.

202. The need to improve the lot of the least developed countries of the world and to strengthen the basis for their economic survival cannot be over-emphasized. The developed countries must open up their markets for products from the third world. Development assistance from the industrialized countries will not alone solve the serious difficulties of the developing countries; they must also be granted, *inter alia*, the benefits of free trade. Similarly, the industrialized countries should, in their overall trade relations, eliminate barriers and other protectionist measures, such as government subsidies, which hamper the normal, efficient division of labour between countries.

203. On this first day of the Assembly's general debate there are on the list of speakers representatives of some of the biggest and some of the smallest States Members of the Organization. This truly reflects the variety of the membership, as well as the fact that all nations, large and small, have a stake in United Nations efforts to build a better world.

204. Through experience mankind has acquired knowledge of forms of democratic government

which, however imperfect, guarantee as far as is humanly possible the well-being of the peoples. Nevertheless, totalitarian, undemocratic methods deny such well-being to large populations on many continents.

205. We still have a long way to go. Let us not, however, underestimate the progress we have made during the almost four decades since the United Nations came into being. Our inability in past years to reverse the arms race throws a shadow over our hopes for immediate improvements. Nevertheless, let us not lose faith in a still brighter and better future. Let that faith give us strength to renew our pledges and to seek the fullest possible implementation of the noble ideals which are the corner-stone of the United Nations.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.

NOTES

¹See *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents* (Washington, D.C., Government Printing Office, 1982), vol. 18, No. 35, p. 1081.

²See CD/540/Appendix III/Vol. V, document CD/PV.283.

³See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 1*.