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Held at Headquarters, New York,  
on Monday, 14 October 1985, at 10 a.m.

President:

Mr. DE PINIES

(Spain)

- Commemoration of the Fortieth Anniversary of the United Nations [39]

Statements were made by:

Mr. Quett K. J. Masire, President of the Republic of Botswana

Mr. Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, President of the Republic of Maldives

Mr. Edward P. Seaga, Prime Minister and Minister of  
Finance and Planning of Jamaica

Mr. James Fitz-Allen Mitchell, Prime Minister and  
Minister for Finance and Foreign Affairs of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

Mr. Lester B. Bird, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for  
Foreign Affairs and Special Envoy of the Government of Antigua and Barbuda

- Organization of work

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 39

COMMEMORATION OF THE FORTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE UNITED NATIONS

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): I wish to state the following with reference to the draft resolution submitted by India, Iraq, Kuwait, Nigeria, Senegal and Yemen and contained in document A/40/L.2/Rev.1 of 9 October 1985.

I have engaged in extensive consultations with the sponsors and other interested delegations. I was given to understand by the sponsors that their major concern related to the interpretation of paragraph 24 of the report of the Preparatory Committee for the Fortieth Anniversary of the United Nations contained in document A/40/49 of 13 September 1985, on which the General Assembly already took action on 20 September 1985.

In this connection I wish to recall that resolution 3237 (XXIX), adopted by the General Assembly on 22 November 1974, invited the Palestine Liberation Organization to participate in the sessions and work of the General Assembly in the capacity of observer. I also wish to recall that resolution 31/152, adopted by the General Assembly on 20 December 1976, invited the South West Africa People's Organization to participate in the sessions and work of the General Assembly in the capacity of observer.

I wish to inform members that it is my understanding that in acting on the report of the Preparatory Committee the Assembly acted without prejudice to the provisions of the two resolutions I have just referred to and did not intend to derogate in any way from those resolutions, which continue to remain valid and applicable in every respect.

In the circumstances, I understand that the co-sponsors do not intend to press their draft resolution to a vote.

(The President)

This morning the General Assembly will hear speakers under the item entitled "Commemoration of the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations".

The Assembly will first hear a statement by the President of the Republic of Botswana, His Excellency Mr. Quett Masire.

Mr. Quett Masire, President of the Republic of Botswana, was escorted to the rostrum.

President MASIRE: I should like to extend to you, Sir, the most sincere congratulations of my delegation on your election to the presidency of the fortieth session of the General Assembly, which coincides with the fortieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations. Your country, Spain, and, no less, your eminent self deserve the honour.

Your predecessor, a son of Zambia, with which Botswana enjoys deep-rooted ties of friendship, acquitted himself admirably during his tenure of office as President of the thirty-ninth session. We are proud of him.

The Secretary-General has continued to serve the United Nations with the selfless dedication of a committed international civil servant. Our admiration for him and his tireless endeavours in the service of peace is enhanced even more by the inspired forthrightness and honesty evinced by his annual report. We congratulate him on an arduous task brilliantly performed.

Forty years ago the United Nations was founded, at the end of a world war which had brought the world to the brink of total destruction. It was a war which seriously threatened the existence of mankind. But it was also a war from which valuable lessons were learned, lessons which have made it possible for the world to enjoy peace for the past 40 years.

The fortieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations is therefore worth commemorating. The occasion affords us the opportunity to pause for

(President Masire)

reflection and to take stock of the Organization's performance over the four decades of its eventful existence. The United Nations was founded "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war". It is in this Organization that we have placed our hope for peace. On the whole, this objective of the United Nations has been fulfilled. However, there have been sporadic eruptions of conflicts. Every continent has had to endure localized wars of one kind or another, of varying intensity and gravity. Unfortunately, civil and religious wars have remained endemic in some parts of the world. The most fearful of wars is that which is fueled by ideological differences between the East and the West.

(President Masire)

The United Nations is not always capable of preventing the eruption of wars. The fact that wars continue to rage is proof of this. However, we should give the United Nations credit for its success in preventing a repetition of the global conflagrations of the first half of the century.

It is also true that the Organization exists today, 40 years after its creation, side by side with the remnants of colonialism. Yet it has in a special way contributed to speeding up the process of decolonization. The swelled ranks of its membership from the original 51 to 159 today indicates that it has performed meritoriously within the limitations of its powers in the struggle against colonialism. The remaining vestiges of colonialism, particularly in southern Africa, do not reflect failure on the part of the Organization, but, rather, failure on the part of its constituent Members to uphold its ideals. We who comprise the United Nations must take responsibility for every failure associated with it. If the Organization has failed to destroy oppression and injustice in some parts of the world, we are responsible for the failure, because it is we who lack the will and the determination to enable the United Nations to live up to our expectations. We owe it to ourselves to confront squarely the limitations of our vision of what the United Nations is supposed to do in fulfilling its noble obligation.

To redirect the United Nations towards its noble mission a drastic change of attitude is necessary. We must eschew the tendency to regard the Organization as a forum for the articulation of competing parochial interests. Rather, we should view it as one in which the aspirations of humanity are allowed free expression and unfettered fulfilment.

The countries of the third world have invested a great deal of hope in the United Nations. The United Nations means more to them than to the rest of the world, which is capable of looking after itself outside the protective framework of

(President Masire)

the Organization. Our survival in this world is almost inseparably bound up with the survival of the United Nations as the democratic institution which it has become and must continue to be. It is, in the words of my predecessor the late Sir Seretse Khama, spoken in this Assembly some 15 years ago,

"the United Nations is regarded by small States as an institution which protects their special interests." (A/PV.1764, para. 6)

It is therefore in our interest to preserve it.

The United Nations has been a victim of the paralysis caused by East-West rivalry. It has increasingly been used as a forum for waging ideological wars, the effect of which has been the exacerbation of world tensions rather than their reduction. These wars of nerves reflect competition for a world hegemony in which the ideological power blocs are engaged. We play no part in that struggle. The United Nations cannot simultaneously serve as a promoter of peace and as an ideological battleground. It is our view that the Organization ought to be a forum where the actions and aspirations of Member States are harmonized rather than polarized.

But when all is said and done, one overriding truth about the United Nations stands out in stark relief, and it is simply that, to be effective and responsive, the Organization needs authority. Let us give it the authority it needs to ensure compliance with its own decisions. We may not give it the powers of a State with commensurate appurtenances such as police, army and courts to enforce the law, keep the peace and maintain security, but it is not beyond the resolve of our collective will to make the decisions of the United Nations, which are our own decisions, more meaningful than they have been thus far.

The theme of this occasion is "United Nations for a better world". It is an apt challenge, for the world beyond 1985 is for the United Nations one which promises to be even more dangerous than that of the past four decades. The agenda

(President Masire)

of unfinished business is long, varied and daunting. In my own part of the world there is very little to celebrate on this important anniversary. South Africa is at war with itself and, by reason of misplaced aggression, also with the region as a whole. The authors of the apartheid policy have unleashed a reign of terror not only within South Africa itself but everywhere in the region. They seem to be prepared to go to any lengths in their determination to defend apartheid in South Africa, and in so doing they have suspended whatever respect they may have had in the past for the rule of law or for civilized behaviour.

(President Masire)

If the publicity emanating from the South African official media about a series of reforms means a delay in setting up an arrangement that will allow for consultation prior to inevitable meaningful changes, then we cannot wait for those pronouncements any longer. The mood in South Africa, as we see it, is that of a people on the brink of war. Anything less than participation by blacks in the political affairs of South Africa as a whole may not meet their aspirations. We urge all Governments and people of good will to do everything in their power to persuade the South African Government to enter into a meaningful dialogue with all its people, with immediate effect.

South Africa is its own worst enemy in southern Africa. The neighbouring countries which it often accuses of harbouring ill intentions towards it and which it proceeds to attack and destabilize are innocent victims. The Assembly is aware that on 14 June of this year South Africa attacked my country. The Assembly is further aware that subsequently, on 21 June, we brought our case to the Security Council, where resolution 568 (1985) was unanimously adopted. A report on the incident contained in document S/17453 dated 11 September 1985 has been released. In it, we demand compensation from South Africa for the loss of innocent lives and damage to property. We also appeal to the international community to assist us in discharging our responsibilities to refugees.

We are most grateful for the support we received in the Security Council during the discussion of our complaint. And we are grateful in anticipation to those who will be giving serious consideration to the Secretary-General's report on the incident and be responding accordingly.

In addition to the problem of South Africa there is, of course, that of Namibia. It is now seven years since Security Council resolution 435 (1978) was adopted as a blueprint and a cherished hope for peaceful change in Namibia. Nothing has come of that blueprint. The cherished hope has been dashed. Ranged

(President Masire)

against the implementation of Security Council resolution 435 (1978) are indomitable and daunting obstacles. We increasingly fear for the life of that historic resolution and for the blueprint it embodies. We fear even more for the lives of the Namibians.

The issue is no doubt one of the priorities of the United Nations, since Namibia is a special United Nations responsibility. Botswana shares the longest border with Namibia. Its problems therefore affect us directly. Those problems must be resolved because their continued existence aggravates the situation in our region. The recent invasion of Angola by South African troops using Namibia as a springboard shows how urgent is the call for the end of South Africa's illegal occupation of the territory. We condemn the invasion and demand its cessation. It is an act of desperation which can never earn South Africa or southern Africa the peace we so greatly desire.

It is also incumbent upon us on this historic occasion to remind ourselves that even those of us who have achieved independence and freedom still owe one another the mutual respect and tolerance necessary to allow the principle of peaceful coexistence to become more deeply rooted in our relations with one another. As a peace-loving country and a truly non-aligned one, Botswana is saddened by and disapproves of the continued occupation of non-aligned Afghanistan and Kampuchea by foreign troops.

We are deeply troubled by the tragic war that has raged so meaninglessly between Iran and Iraq during the past five years. That war has long since proved that it is not the answer to the grievances of the belligerents. Its cessation is thus long overdue.

We continue to be disturbed by the courting of disaster by those in this very hemisphere who still cherish, beyond salvation, the impossible dream of transforming

(President Masire)

the sub-region of Central America into an ideological monolith. Each country in Central America, as elsewhere in the hemisphere, must be allowed the freedom to pursue its own ideological path.

The question of the reunification of Korea remains unresolved despite an agreement reached in 1972 to that effect. Botswana urges the two Koreas to resolve their differences without interference and achieve the reunification of Korea by peaceful means.

(President Masire)

The Middle East remains a cockpit of conflict and a dangerous area for all its inhabitants without exception. None of the countries of the region is safe so long as the Palestinian question is not settled and the reality of the State of Israel remains an object of doubt, debate and suspicion. A perpetual sense of insecurity is an incentive for suicidal self-destruction. So the right of the State of Israel to exist and the right of the Palestinian people to have a country of their own must be reconciled if the Middle East is to be saved from the scourge of war and conflict.

There are now many new Members of the United Nations from the developing world which require the economic and social functions of the United Nations to be strengthened. Even though some achievements can be discerned, much more remains to be done.

There are social and economic standards that have to be met as a matter of urgency in the developing world, where poverty, hunger, ignorance and disease remain the most debilitating factors. For us to advance further, maximum financial and technical support continues to be necessary. The targets that have been set for the financing of the United Nations Development Programme must be met and the level of official development assistance flows from developed countries to developing countries doubled. The debts accruing as a result of borrowing by developing countries have placed many of those countries in a desperate financial situation which could possibly be dangerous for themselves and for the world as a whole. It is because of this that the call for serious attention to debt problems should be heeded. Botswana believes that meaningful arrangements for the rescheduling of the debts of the developing countries should be agreed upon as soon as possible. As the economies of the developing countries continue to contract and their ability to meet debt obligations continues to diminish, much urgency should be attached to this problem.

(President Masire)

Aid flows to developing countries are welcome. We should, of course, be happier if disbursement and procurement conditions on aid flows were removed. These conditions often delay and sometimes deny the freedom of developing countries to apply the resources provided at the earliest possible time. It would also assist the developing countries even more if the spirit behind aid flows were found also in the area of trade. The problems that stem from difficult aid conditions and barriers to meaningful trade force developing countries into debilitating capital and recurrent costs. These expenses are met by incurring debts to the public and commercial sectors in the developed countries.

The transformation of dominions into independent States should have been accompanied by a change in economic relations. The structure of the world economy, however, has remained the same, to the detriment of the economies of the third-world countries, adding to the frustration of their leaders.

Calls for structural reforms and a new international economic order are being resisted by developed countries. Yet the institutions and practices upon which the world economy has relied in the post-world-war period and to which the developed countries point for solutions are not satisfactory to the developing countries. The world economy is in limbo, whilst the problems it creates, for the developing countries in particular, are worsening. The gap between the rich and the poor countries is widening, with an increasing polarization of demands and attitudes. This, in our view, poses a real and imminent threat to world peace and security.

The North-South dialogue is deadlocked. The North and the South meet separately and make demands of each other, which the other side promptly rejects. The Cancun summit, which held so much promise as a forum for meaningful discussion, was not blessed with a consensus. And yet, to date there is no special process through which meaningful international negotiations can take place.

(President Masire)

Regional and South-South arrangements hold out a limited promise of hope. We in Botswana, together with eight other countries in southern Africa, have formed the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference (SADCC). Our efforts in that regional grouping have practical objectives. We hope that this arrangement will eventually enable us to compete in the world trade arena following the complete success of our programme of action on economic development and the strengthening of our capacity for self-sufficiency in food, primary industries and essential services. We appreciate the co-operation with and assistance to SADCC coming from many of the countries assembled in this Hall today.

(President Masire)

The next 40 years will be crucial. Having pledged ourselves to continue to learn lessons from our past, so that we may be better prepared to face the future with confidence, we have the duty to live up to the theme of this anniversary. "United Nations for a better world" is the clarion call to ensure that our own generation and generations beyond must continue to be saved from the scourge of war. The United Nations must return to its old-fashioned values - not to the values of the cold war but to those stipulated in the Charter, particularly its preamble.

Throughout the world great hopes are invested in this fortieth anniversary. It is hoped that the nations here gathered to commemorate the anniversary will infuse the United Nations with a new sense of purpose, a new mission and a new relevance. The Organization has not been a failure, but it can do better.

Mr. Quett Masire, President of the Republic of Botswana, was escorted from the rostrum.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): The Assembly will now hear a statement by the President of the Republic of Maldives, His Excellency Mr. Maumoon Abdul Gayoom.

Mr. Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, President of the Republic of Maldives, was escorted to the rostrum.

President ABDUL GAYOOM: It is indeed a great privilege for me to address the General Assembly on the important occasion of the fortieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations. I am speaking here as representative of a very small nation, which, though small in size and population, has a proud history as an independent, sovereign people for over 2,000 years. In that perspective alone, we feel that we have something to say about the affairs of the world in which we all live.

(President Abdul Gayoom)

But before I say anything else allow me, Sir, to congratulate you on your election to preside over this historic session of the General Assembly. I wish you luck, which you will need, in the successful performance of your important duties. I should like also to express my sincere good wishes to Mr. Perez de Cuellar, the Secretary-General, whose constructive and courageous efforts to enhance the role of the United Nations in the crucial issues facing the world today are deeply appreciated by my people.

When one glances through the pages of recorded human history on this planet, one is struck by an evident truth, which is very simple in itself but which, strangely enough, often escapes those who wield power in the world. From the times of Attila the Hun to those of Genghis Khan, from the wars of Napoleon Bonaparte to those of Adolph Hitler, the lesson of history is that war does not pay, that oppression does not last, that the forces of evil and destruction have no permanence, that it is only the forces of good, the messengers of truth and the peacemakers that can make a lasting contribution to human progress. That is not only a lesson of history, but a divine message of which we have taken little heed. Does not our Holy Book, the Koran, say in unambiguous terms:

"In this way does God set forth the parable of Truth and Falsehood: for as far as the scum is concerned, it passes away with the flood, as does all dross: but that which is of benefit to man abides on Earth." (Holy Koran, Surah XIII, verse 17)

The question that baffles us small peoples of the world is: Why do not those who possess power, in any of its manifestations, ever seem to learn from history? Why do they not comprehend that bloodshed, exploitation and oppression, though they might give them temporary power, wealth or whatever, will eventually lead to their own downfall and destruction? That is a question we wish to ask the protagonists

(President Abdul Gayoom)

of apartheid, the defenders of racial discrimination, the oppressive forces of zionism and the perpetrators of armed aggression wherever they may be.

We are now celebrating the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations. On this occasion, and on many others, we have listened to many voices, both here in this very Hall and elsewhere, raised in criticism of the United Nations and its system. I beg to differ. I know that the United Nations system has many shortcomings, but I recognise that it has done mankind a world of good. I do not refer here to the United Nations as represented by the General Assembly or to the Security Council alone; I refer to the whole United Nations system, with all its specialized agencies and affiliated bodies.

(President Abdul Gayoom)

May I, to cite just one example, speak of the success that the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has achieved in alleviating to a large extent world-wide suffering and premature death among the most vulnerable in any society - the very young. Needless suffering of the world's children, humanity's greatest resource and reservoir of hope for all of our tomorrows, and their needless death, have been prevented by the co-operation of the Member States of this Organization, through an institution they have founded on the finest of human ideals. I should like to record here the Maldives' fullest support for the important resolution adopted recently by the UNICEF Executive Board underlining the possibility of achieving the goal of universal immunization of young children by 1990.

What better living fact than this as a cause for inspiration when the spirit of our Charter is set free from narrow-minded and self-centred political motives? For what are we about if not about life itself, about its enhancement, its enrichment and its progression? From the eradication of small-pox from the face of the earth, to the remarkable rescue operation of the temple of Abu Simbel in Egypt, to the mechanization of our Island Republic's fishing fleet, to the hundreds of social and economic development programmes carried out in many parts of Asia, Africa, Europe and Latin America, the United Nations system with its specialized agencies and affiliated institutions has created a better tomorrow for the world's children, has preserved important aspects of human civilization and human culture for posterity, and has made major contributions towards improving the quality of life of millions of people all over the world.

On the political side, I acknowledge that many of the hopes of the founding Members had when they sat in San Francisco 40 years ago and put their signatures to the United Nations Charter, remain unfulfilled. While it may be so, the United

(President Abdul Gayoom)

Nations has, on many occasions, risen to the level of its great responsibilities in stopping aggression, in safe-guarding security and in maintaining global peace.

Consider, for example, the Korean conflict, the Middle Eastern wars, the Congo, Cyprus and Lebanon. I do not wish to pass judgement on the United Nations action over those bitter conflicts. What matters is that the United Nations acted, and acted surely and swiftly, and in so doing saved mankind from the imminent danger of a third world war. Let us not forget, therefore, that great endeavours have been mounted over the years and that the flag of the United Nations has been raised high in the cause of peace.

I think at this time particularly of the late lamented Secretary-General, Dag Hammarskjöld, who wanted to leave his post in protest over an instance of armed aggression committed by some Member States against another Member State, and who later met his tragic end working resolutely for peace in Central Africa. It is appropriate that we think of that great man's sacrifice at this time of anniversary, as indeed it is for us to remember the sacrifices all those in the United Nations peace-keeping forces have made in many hotbeds of armed conflict around the globe.

Another worthy contribution of lasting merit the United Nations has made to the noble ideal of human freedom and emancipation has been the process of decolonization which has resulted in the granting of independence to most of the lands that had been under colonial rule. This year we mark the 25th anniversary of that important event.

Of course it is unquestionable that much remains to be done, and I should like to take this opportunity to enumerate some of those problems that continue to cause the Maldives considerable concern.

(President Abdul Gayoom)

In our region of the world, we in the Maldives feel strongly about the failure to convene the Colombo Conference, designed to agree on ways to implement the United Nations resolution to declare the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace. Some 14 years have elapsed since the passing of this United Nations resolution, aimed at protecting the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the States in the region. The Maldives, which is surrounded on all sides by the Indian Ocean, is convinced that the demilitarization of the Indian Ocean is absolutely essential for the progress and stability of the region. Furthermore, we cannot accept any suggestion that makes the convening of the Colombo Conference conditional on matters that are totally unrelated to the relevant United Nations resolution.

In the context of the right of sovereignty and self-determination enshrined in the United Nations Charter, the Maldives calls for the immediate restoration of the people of Palestine to their homeland, as we believe that without due recognition of the Palestinians' right to national sovereignty and national statehood on their own soil, there will be no durable or meaningful peace in the Middle East. The Maldives strongly deplores the continued failure of Israel to abide by the United Nations resolutions, its obdurate refusal to withdraw from all Arab territories occupied in the 1967 war, and its continued acts of armed aggression in the region.

The Israeli acts of war against Arab countries have now reached such alarming proportions that even the recent, deplorable bombing of the Tunis Headquarters of the Palestine Liberation Organization, is lightly shrugged off by Israel as a routine act of self-defence. Such acts of wanton and unwarranted aggression must be stopped at all costs, if the search for peace in the Middle East is to continue.

With regard to the tragedy of the Iran-Iraq conflict, we urge an immediate cease-fire and the withdrawal of all forces to established boundaries, which we

(President Abdul Gayoom)

regard as essential for a just and peaceful settlement of the dispute. The Maldives calls, with particular emphasis, for South Africa to end its illegal occupation of Namibia, and its equally illegal acts of aggression against the sovereign State of Angola. And in South Africa itself, we demand an immediate end to the state of emergency, the release of political detainees held without trial, and the prompt, unconditional release of Nelson Mandela.

Again, in the interests of peace, and of an end to bloodshed and human suffering, we call for an immediate withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan, a move that would respect that nation's territorial integrity and preserve its non-aligned status. I take this opportunity, also, to reconfirm my Government's support for the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Kampuchea, believing that only then can a comprehensive political solution emerge based on the will of the Kampuchean people themselves. Further, we support all efforts that are being made for the peaceful re-unification of Korea in accordance with the wishes of the Korean people.

(President Abdul Gayoom)

On the international economic front, the Maldives voices its deep disappointment and dismay over the non-fulfilment of the hopes raised by the sixth special session of the General Assembly 11 years ago. Present international economic and trade arrangements perpetuate severe inequalities and continue to promote an unfair and inequitable transfer of resources from the developing South to the industrialized North. We therefore look to an early restructuring of the existing economic and trade patterns at a time when the threat of protectionism looms even larger on the horizon, a scenario in which ultimately both the industrialized and the developing nations would lose and none would benefit.

In addition, the Maldives calls on the international community to give greater consideration to the economic damage being done to the small States of this world, and particularly the small island States, by prevailing financial and trading arrangements. We strongly feel that the vulnerability of small island States and their fragile economies must become a high priority area in which adequate measures must be taken urgently to redress the existing grave inequalities. Indeed, the direct link between economic instability fuelled by unfair and lopsided practices and the overall security of the world's small island States is worthy of greater and more urgent examination than has prevailed in the past.

Of course, all these concerns, vital as they undoubtedly are, pale into relative insignificance beside the ever present threat that hangs over the human race. I refer, of course, to that of nuclear annihilation. It is time for all nuclear States to realize the simple and awesome truth that in the event of any nuclear devices being used, whether in attack or in self-defence, none would survive to be the victor. It is with this terrible eventuality in mind that the Maldives calls for sustained efforts towards the goal of disarmament and the dismantling of nuclear arsenals.

(President Abdul Gayoom)

The people of the world, in whose name the United Nations was founded 40 years ago, have watched with great hope and expectation the steady growth of the Organization. Its membership has more than trebled, from 51 in 1945 to 159 today, and the activities of its principal organs and specialized agencies have expanded enormously during the past four decades to cover the whole spectrum of human interrelationships.

To many people around the world the United Nations is an unwieldy Organization which talks a lot but does precious little. To our way of thinking, as I have tried to submit, the United Nations system is doing its job in many crucial areas of human concern. There is no question that it has its problems and its difficulties, but with all of them there is ample proof that the world needs the United Nations; for over and over again in the past 40 years the United Nations has shown that it can do things no other organization can do or has ever been able to do before.

We who live in places far away from the centres of debate in these premises wonder whether one of the major problems that inhibit United Nations action in many vital issues, as well as in emergencies, is not the repeated, unjustifiable exercise of the right of veto in the Security Council. It is, of course, well understood that at the birth of this Organization the right of veto was devised to safeguard the security and the vital interests of the permanent members of the Council. But over the years, as the Organization has grown and its range of concerns vastly expanded, serious doubts have arisen in the minds of many regarding this practice. I may be wrong, but is it not true that the veto has on many occasions constituted an impediment to world peace and security, which, after all, is the basic and overriding concern to promote which the United Nations was established in the first place?

(President Abdul Gayoom)

Small nation though we may be, we in the Maldives stand as ready as we always have to make our contribution to the noble purpose of the United Nations, with neither our faith in its founding ideals diminished nor our belief in the ultimate triumph of human solidarity shaken. Indeed, we have recently, though in very tragic circumstances, witnessed how the nations of the world can rally to alleviate suffering, both in the face of famine in Ethiopia and in the case of the natural disaster in Mexico. We applaud these humanitarian initiatives, which emanate from the finest of human attributes.

In conclusion, may I suggest that there is no better way to celebrate this Organization's fortieth year than to rededicate ourselves to the achievement of those goals so essential to human progress. Let us go forward together in common cause and with unity of purpose. Let us be worthy of the Charter for humanity written 40 years ago.

Mr. Abdul Gayoom, President of the Maldives, was escorted from the rostrum.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): The next speaker is the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Planning of Jamaica, His Excellency the Right Honourable Edward P. Seaga.

Mr. Edward Seaga, Prime Minister of Jamaica, was escorted to the rostrum.

Mr. SEAGA (Jamaica): We meet to commemorate a truly momentous occasion in the history of the international community. Our predecessors who met in San Francisco 40 years ago sought to create an organization, and indeed a system, that would be the foundation of a more enlightened future. As those who undertake change inevitably are, they were encumbered in this task by the stubborn realities of their time. Nevertheless, their vision, wisdom and daring were such as to bring into being the institution whose anniversary we now celebrate. Indeed, the finest tribute to the role and work of this Organization is that 40 years after the San Francisco Conference we can assert with conviction that the United Nations and the principles and ideals it represents have altered irrevocably and for the better the character of international relations in our half of the twentieth century.

The commendable role of the United Nations in so many fields, ranging from political decolonization, peace-keeping and technical assistance to the codification of instruments of human rights and the progressive development of international law is well recognized. The specialized agencies, dealing with a range of subjects from agriculture to population studies, from labour to industrial development and culture, have played an important part in their areas of concern. It is a record in which the international community can take pride. But the world is still much too dangerous and imperfect a place for us to confine ourselves to paeans of praise even on a commemorative occasion. We have as well an obligation to recognize and give due consideration to the shortcomings of the Organization. We are all Members of this body and cannot evade responsibility for its decisions, for its functioning and for its effectiveness, or lack of it.

The United Nations was in many ways a nursery for the new nations created in the freedom struggles of the 20 years following 1945. Almost all these new States were based on the territorial boundaries drawn by the colonial Powers that, moved by strategic and economic considerations, often ignored the racial, linguistic and

(Mr. Seaga, Jamaica)

cultural affinities and differences of a region. The creation of the independent nation-State was the first step in the difficult process of fostering a national identity. It is a process which is still being nurtured, in economic, political and social conditions which often tend to encourage the centrifugal forces that exist in societies.

It is a process, moreover, which has had to be played out in front of a watching and concerned world. Advances in technology, particularly in telecommunications, and the growing international network of transnational trade and financing, have made the world a smaller stage, at the same time as the number of actors has increased enormously. We all know a lot more about each other now and have more to do with the affairs of each other, than we did a generation ago. At a certain level we are all concerned about the events in each other's country, because they so often and so easily affect events in our own. For example, the slightest increase in the interest rate in one of the major industrialized countries can add millions of dollars overnight to the debt of another country, with the consequential compressions in expenditure on social services and the corresponding increases in social tension. Political events in a developing country can affect the commodity operations of major corporations and banks on stock markets thousands of miles away. Such are some of the stubborn realities of our interdependent world.

It is becoming increasingly clear that many of the stubborn realities which continue to face the international community today can be tackled only in a collective effort. How else are we to deal with the implications of man's venture outside his terrestrial home, as explorer and tourist, as warrior and industrialist? How else are the nations of the world to deal successfully with assaults on the global environment, the ecology of the planet? How else are we going to deal with exploitation, for the benefit of all mankind, of our common

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heritage: the sea; or the implications of the revolution in communications and information? How else shall we confront the glaring global differences in levels of living and the implications which flow from the success or failure of man's adventure into new ideological, economic and political systems to improve individual welfare and prosperity? Finally, are there not new ways to deal with the web of international political problems which would cause the growing use of force and threats of the use of force to cease, making possible political solutions? Each of these issues in its own way touches the life of every single person on this planet. None of them is within the capacity of any State or group of States to resolve.

These issues will be addressed, no doubt, by the full range of United Nations agencies and forums and will be the subject of presentations by the visiting Heads of State and Government who will address this landmark session. For my own part, I shall focus on only two of these issues which continue to attract world attention and concern: the deepening issues of the economic crisis and the exploding arenas of persistent political conflict.

At this landmark session we must rededicate ourselves to venture ahead, and summon the political will to be effective in dealing with these stubborn realities which will be the focus of international anxiety, conflict and negotiation within the United Nations system in the decades to come.

The failures of the United Nations have been failures of will: collective will in some cases, but traceable usually to the dogged determination of individual actors either to disregard or block the application of that will.

Namibia is a glaring example. For many years the South African régime has been able to defy a judgement of the International Court of Justice and the repeated denunciations by this Organization because it knows that the individual will of certain Members is less resolute on this matter than is the broader determination.

(Mr. Seaga, Jamaica)

The collective conscience of the world has long expressed outrage and disgust at South Africa's system of apartheid. The cry for freedom for the tortured soul of that country has not gone unheeded. The call for concrete action has been loud from the developing nations and some others. Now, the black people of South Africa, humiliated and degraded for decades by a system which was obviously impervious to verbal assault, are taking matters into their own hands. They are attacking the citadel of apartheid with their own bodies and the bodies of their children, some only a few years old. And now, some sanctions are being applied.

On this issue Jamaica stands on its record of having severed all relations with South Africa as far back as 1960, and we speak with the fervour and conviction of a developing nation with strong historical and ethnic links with the African continent and a firm commitment to the principles of human rights, justice and the democratic process.

To the extent that a collective will on this question appears to be developing at last, the international community must continue to apply that determination relentlessly in support of the dismantling of apartheid and the emergence of a State which recognizes the human worth of each and every one of its citizens, irrespective of colour, religious beliefs or the work that they do.

To achieve that, limited sanctions alone are not enough. The international community must press for a limit to new investment, the cessation of new lending and a firm line on the régime's repayment of its external debt.

The prospects of diminished foreign participation in the South African economy are already creating imbalances in the economy which are weakening the value of the rand. If the will exists to isolate South Africa in the world of international finance and trade, the rand becomes the barometer of the powerful forces of international dislocations which will follow the collapsing currency. It is those powerful internal economic forces which respect the value of the rand, more than the

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anguished domestic or international cries for human and political rights. This will eventually be the undoing of apartheid. The concern of South Africa has never been with the value of rights, only with the value of rands; apartheid is structured to defend rands, not rights. To dismantle apartheid we must dismantle the base of the rand.

And to those who assert that those measures will hurt most the persons they are designed to help, their answers have already been given. The black people of South Africa have begun boycotting white businesses in a spontaneous effort that is daily becoming more effective. And in order to contribute to the destruction of apartheid the leaders of the front-line States have affirmed that they are willing to suffer the pressures on their own countries which dislocation in the South African economic will cause. The mandate is now clear. The will of the international community must not falter.

The crisis in the Middle East is another long-standing problem which has been on the agenda of the United Nations since 1946. The region is a focal point of strong and deep passions based on religious and nationalist aspirations. At the core of the problem is the issue of rights and conflicting claims: the right to self-determination and to a homeland, the right of return and the right of States to live in peace and security.

The way forward must lie in mutual accommodation and a mutual acknowledgement of the legitimate rights of all the different interests. We know the process will not be easy. So much has happened to intensify feelings of bitterness and hostility and to harden the attitudes of the contending parties to the conflict. But, since no one can benefit from the present stalemate, an effort must be made to achieve a solution through peaceful means. Violence involving full-scale war from time to time and acts of violence through international hijackings and the taking of hostages have not brought the problem any nearer a solution. Negotiation and

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accommodation seem the only viable alternative. Any formula for peace must have as its goal a comprehensive agreement in which justice is done, for without it no peace can be lasting or durable.

We must never accept the notion that this stalemate of passions between aggrieved parties cannot be broken at the summit. Here, more than anywhere else, is a role for the United Nations to play at the level of the Secretary-General, the only honest broker able to keep the power brokers at arm's length, proposing, opposing, negotiating and eventually compromising to secure a peaceful settlement. Is such a settlement really beyond the economic resources of the Arab world, the technical skills of Israel and the political will of the antagonists in the immediate and wider world? Were this resource-rich area united, would it not be another Europe? Is this not the real goal: to transform a large region of the globe from a source of distress to a resource of development? Are we, as the alternative, to live in a world of escalating hostilities, hijackings and hostages? Is it possible to erect a safety-net against the one madman in a cinema who yells "Fire" and delights in the stampede?

The United Nations, and particularly the General Assembly and the Security Council, has up to now functioned consonant with the major preoccupations of its Members, which are focused on their own territorial, political and economic integrity. This should not prevent a bolder course of action by the United Nations to moderate international issues as required to deal with the stubborn realities of the future. In some instances mediation may be appropriate - for instance, there is the question of the possible reunification of the two Koreas; in others, United Nations leadership must cause high-level studies to be prepared on its own instance on the basis of which it can offer technical, and not political, analyses of persistent problems for evaluation and guidance.

(Mr. Seaga, Jamaica)

The United Nations, in Article 55 of its Charter, is vested with a specific mandate to promote higher standards of living, full employment, conditions of economic and social progress and development, and the solution of international problems. The Charter's mandate in the area of economic co-operation and development must be taken seriously. This requires us to recognize the extent to which the external environment bears upon the achievement of goals and targets in individual countries. If there was ever a time when they were unrelated, that is certainly no longer the case.

(Mr. Seaga, Jamaica)

Recent events clearly show the considerable extent to which the fiscal, monetary and trade policies of the industrial countries determine the external climate facing developing countries. The data show a growing web of linkages reflected in the flows of information, technology, people, goods and services.

That relationship of linkages between developed and developing countries is now perceptibly altering. Owing to the need of the industrial countries to stabilize and restructure their own economies to deal with the grave imbalances created by dramatic dislocations in the 1970s, there is no longer a willingness on the part of the donor group to engage in the North-South exchange of the previous decades on the distribution of unattached aid.

The stubborn reality of persistent economic pressures has forced the extended hand of unconditional development assistance to be retracted and conditional lending arrangements with policy prescriptions of economic stabilization and restructuring to be substituted in its place. In effect, the transfer of resources in the past was project oriented and was largely based on the need to strengthen and develop public sector services. Future programmes of official development assistance will, moreover, ask the question: Is the economy structured to achieve growth and to improve export earnings so as to ensure a greater ability to increase standards of living and reduce debt?

That new policy governing the transfer of resources will have fundamental and traumatic effects on a wide range of developing countries which will now have to proceed to introduce austerity policies of expenditure cuts and revenue increases to ensure stabilization of their economies as well as to restructure policies to orient their economies to achieve improved growth and better export earnings.

My own country was among the first to introduce programmes of economic stabilization in co-operation with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and,

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simultaneously, structural adjustment of the economy in co-operation with the World Bank. We concurrently embarked on a programme of deregulation of the economy in co-operation with the United States Agency for International Development (AID).

Today, three years later, Jamaica has restored the main elements of economic stabilization, reducing the fiscal deficit by more than one-half as a percentage of gross domestic product, and has reversed the negative foreign-exchange outflows of the international reserves.

Simultaneously, the Jamaican economy has been restructured by the revival of the tourism sector, the rehabilitation of agriculture as the most dynamic sector of the economy today and the resurgence of particular sub-sectors of export manufacturing. Together, those three sectors improve the balance of the restructured economy, which was previously dependent solely on the dominant bauxite-alumina sector.

The economy has concurrently been deregulated, removing price and import controls and divesting public entities that can be more effectively operated by private ownership or management.

The key to this strategy has been the bold decision to float the Jamaican dollar to enable it to reach a competitive rate of exchange, which it has.

Yet, having done everything that it is envisioned and proposed that other debt-troubled countries should now do in compliance with the new direction and emphasis of programmes involving aid or other financial flows in the future, Jamaica still faces grave problems.

Analysis will show that neither the demand management policies of the IMF, the supply-side restructuring programme of the World Bank nor the deregulation of the economy encouraged by AID is sufficient for those countries that depend on the prices of primary commodity exports, which contribute very substantially to both export and domestic revenues.

(Mr. Sesga, Jamaica)

In Jamaica's case, while the newly stabilized, restructured and deregulated economy was being constructed, the underpinning of the new superstructure was being eroded by the rapidly disappearing resources of the mining sector, in which production and exports have collapsed by one-half over the past five years.

The end result was that the new policies have thus far resulted in improved earnings in 1985 of \$US270 million over 1980, but the decline in the mining sector has created a deterioration of \$US500 million over the same period.

As a result, all the monumental and painful effort of adjustment has succeeded in moving us one step forward while the collapse of demand in the international market-place has moved us two steps backwards.

As a nation, we have taken all the painful and courageous decisions required to put our economy on a sounder footing, and positive results are beginning to emerge. But somewhere in the international system, at points beyond our control, recessionary forces not of our making are counteracting our measures, with negative results.

I have described the case of Jamaica at some length because we are now at the point where we have already accomplished all that other nations are at present being urged to do on the assumption that such adjustments will bring relief to troubled economies, yet our own economy is still deeply troubled because of the collapsing weight of the international commodities market for bauxite and alumina.

I make this specific point because there are other nations with similar problems, whose major export markets for oil, tin, copper and other resources are fast contracting while positive restructuring is taking place.

In summary, that group of nations constitutes a special category that must be examined case by case so that particular solutions can be devised to the fundamental problem of the collapse of primary export markets, for the prescribed

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solutions and orthodox policies correctly advocated by the international lending agencies will not of themselves produce the desired results.

The widespread experience that commodity prices have not increased in step with the recovery of international trade is the basis for the pessimism of the debtor countries that the debt crisis is with us now more than ever before, in sharp contrast to the optimism of the creditor countries, which interpret global performance data as a sign that the crisis has been contained. The global figures mask an underlying range of continuing weak performances.

The debt issue is of critical importance and there is a strong mutual interest in ensuring a global solution to the problem. Many proposals are being offered to stay the political pressure for debt cancellation or limitation in the light of prevailing international anxiety regarding the search for solutions.

(Mr. Seaga, Jamaica)

I believe we have arrived at the point where evaluation is necessary to determine whether new borrowing will enable us to "borrow our troubles away", how much new trade is required to enable us to "earn our troubles away", and what are the unorthodox mechanisms and facilities that will enable each to perform its role effectively.

It must not be assumed that global lending programmes, global growth expectations or a global trade revival will automatically mean global recovery. A case-by-case approach is critical to any proposed global treatment, as the case of Jamaica underlines as a specific example typical of the larger group of similarly placed countries which might do everything in their power to succeed, but which fail to succeed because of what lies outside their own power to achieve.

Whether we shall earn our problems away depends in part on how willing the industrialized countries are to allow the structural adjustment of their own economies. The temptation to resort to protectionism is strong, but the present and the future require creative participation rather than entrenched resistance to the current industrial evolution.

The coming into being of a global market-place is but one factor in the growing interdependence of the world, and we who begin this next stage in the world's history will have as our pre-eminent responsibility the management of interdependence. It will be our talents and ingenuity and knowledge that will be called on to restore equilibrium after the necessary dislocations which are an inevitable part of the changes that are bringing us closer together at the same time as they threaten to keep us farther apart.

Let us recall some of the most important of those changes. Since the 1950s, more than 80 new nations have emerged on the world scene, among them my own country, Jamaica, which is 23 years old this year.

(Mr. Seaga, Jamaica)

Those countries represent 542 million people, 12 per cent of the world's population. The post-colonial world, therefore, is one that has obvious geopolitical realities. It is fertile ground for competing ideologies; and indeed, the growing confrontation of ideologies is a part of the post-colonial dialectic, which represents another factor that complicates our world. At the same time, the increasing sophistication of weapons of war has given mankind a truly apocalyptic power and an awesome responsibility. And finally, the revolution in communications brought about by the transistor, the satellite and the computer has propelled us into the information age, hastening the advent of the global community.

We are going, therefore, into a world which will demand a continuing ability to come to terms with new beginnings, to face constantly shifting horizons, to find new solutions for new times.

There are always three possible reactions to change. One is to resist it, exhausting energies in destructive conflicts; another is to ignore it, and therefore to be overtaken by change; and the third is to understand, respond to and guide it.

In an interdependent world, only the last reaction will lead to resolutions and bring us to that wise symbiosis that offers the best hope for our collective peace and survival. It is within this interdependent world of changing perspectives and horizons that the United Nations will operate in the next stage of our history.

Mr. Edward Seaga, Prime Minister of Jamaica, was escorted from the rostrum.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): The next speaker is the Prime Minister and Minister for Finance and Foreign Affairs of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, His Excellency the Right Honourable James Fitz-Allen Mitchell.

Mr. James Fitz-Allen Mitchell, Prime Minister of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, was escorted to the rostrum.

Mr. MITCHELL (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines): I wish to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its historic fortieth session. As a diplomat experienced in international affairs, you are well qualified to guide us through this session, which is all-important in the life of the Organization.

My delegation also wishes to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to your predecessor, Ambassador Paul Lusaka, for the skilful and efficient manner in which he presided over the General Assembly at its thirty-ninth session.

I wish, too, to offer my compliments to the Secretary-General on the able manner in which he is exercising his responsibilities, particularly in areas of political tension in widely scattered parts of the world. We note with appreciation his report to the General Assembly at its current session, and we assure him of the support of the Government and the people of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines in his tireless labours and in his quest for peace, the settlement of disputes, and development for all our peoples.

We wish to take this opportunity to express our Government's sympathy with the people of Mexico who are suffering under the impact of the recent earthquakes. We in the Caribbean know the nature of the tragedy caused by volcanic eruptions and hurricanes, and we trust that the international community will respond positively to the needs of the rehabilitation process in Mexico.

For the last 40 years, the Government and the people of the United States - and in particular the City of New York - have acted as host to this Organization and its delegations. I wish therefore to express my gratitude to New York in particular, and to the United States in general, for their hospitality to the rest of the world over the past four decades. Perhaps no other city in the world could have survived the impact of all our varied cultural influences.

(Mr. Mitchell, Saint Vincent  
and the Grenadines)

Forty years after the United Nations came into being the purposes and principles of the Organization laid down at the outset remain as valid today as they were in 1945. The Charter has stood the test of time, and the Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines supports its maintenance in its present form. Whatever the shortcomings in its implementation or the limitations of the United Nations institutions, they do not derive from the Charter. We would therefore rededicate ourselves to the principles so ably set forth by the founding fathers for this body that has served us so well.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines became in 1979, a year of dislocating volcanic eruption, the 154th Member of this Organization. I would hate to imagine what independence would have meant for a small country like ours, with approximately 100,000 people, if an Organization like the United Nations had not existed. Small and dependent countries shed by the metropolitan Powers would be drifting aimlessly if an Organization like the United Nations were not there to create a focal point of belonging. Indeed, it would be no exaggeration to congratulate the United Nations on providing a framework for the sovereign existence of small nations.

Perhaps one criticism of the Charter that will be voiced on this anniversary, either within these walls or outside, concerns the right of small countries to the same status of one vote as larger and more powerful countries. However irksome this may have proved over the years, I do not believe that on balance it has been the cause of the major problems in the functioning of the United Nations system.

I turn my attention now to those countries denied membership of the United Nations. I trust that when the time comes to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary there will be no people in the world unrepresented here. The United Nations will then have achieved genuine universality.

(Mr. Mitchell, Saint Vincent  
and the Grenadines)

A few days ago representatives of 149 countries attended meetings of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund in the South Korean capital of Seoul. It is ridiculous that the dynamic people of the Republic of Korea are not represented here. We support their right of accession and hope that the impediments to this membership can be resolved. Recent progress in the Red Cross talks and also the economic talks between the two Koreas of different ideologies are paving the way for meaningful co-operation. That co-operation must be encouraged, and it is here in the United Nations that dialogue can be given a tangible form of encouragement. Therefore, it is desirable that the Members of the United Nations help create a better political environment for a peaceful solution of the Korean question by encouraging both Koreas to continue the dialogue. The admittance of both Koreas as Members of the United Nations might assist in reducing tensions and creating peace in the Korean peninsula.

Another country denied access to full membership is the Territory of Namibia. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines believes that the bases of any definitive solution to the Namibian problem are contained in Security Council resolution 435 (1978), and urges the international body to seek its early implementation.

Over the past 40 years there has been no more intractable problem than the conflict in the Middle East. No part of the world has escaped the impact of the controversy between Israel and the Palestinians. Small countries have absolutely no control over the resolution of such a conflict, but the conflict has had, and continues to have, from time to time, an influence on economic conditions which adversely affect us and, since we in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines are not immune, we must place our position on record. We recognize the right of Israel to exist and also support the right of the Palestinians to a homeland. We pray that

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the stalemate in the Middle East created by the denial of a homeland to the Palestinians will not continue to drag on interminably. In the interest of world peace and security we look forward to a peaceful resolution of the dispute within the framework of the United Nations Charter, one that will satisfy the just aspirations of all the peoples of the region.

It is praiseworthy that during the 40 years of its existence the United Nations has steadfastly endeavoured to give effect to the Charter objectives of promoting respect for, and the observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all. The numerous international conventions and declarations concluded under its auspices give expression to the moral conscience of mankind and represent humanitarian standards for all members of the international community. However, my delegation is aware that in spite of the manifold efforts of the United Nations in this field, serious violations of human rights are still being committed against individuals and groups in several areas of the world. In our country, my Government has provided the opportunity for expression which not long ago was denied us and we will continue to promote respect for all our citizens, without regard to race, colour, sex or religion.

Of all the crises in the world today, the growing conflict between the minority régime and the liberation movement in South Africa is of most direct and urgent concern to the United Nations. We in the Caribbean who have experienced the conditions of colonialism and whose populations are characterised by much the same racial blending of Africa, Europe and India are at a loss to understand the lack of faith in the evolution of racial harmony in due process of time. The Government and people of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines condemn the evil policy of apartheid,

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and the Grenadines)

which is a crime against humanity and contrary to all the principles of the Charter. We pledge ourselves to do all we can, in accordance with the letter and the spirit of the Charter, to assist in the elimination of apartheid in South Africa.

We consider that what is particularly important in this regard, in terms of securing results in facing the mighty machine of government in South Africa, is that the international community continue to give a clear and unambiguous signal that the status quo has absolutely no chance historically of being sustained. Change is the first basic law of the universe and, secondly, nature abhors a vacuum. The vacuum prescribed for the majority has had the walls enclosing it shattered. What is needed now is serious dialogue among the leadership of the races in South Africa to create a constitutional framework for the evolution of harmony among all races in South Africa, based on the principle of one man, one vote.

(Mr. Mitchell, Saint Vincent  
and the Grenadines)

I now turn to some of the problems of our region. In reference to peace and security in our hemisphere, the Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines wishes to place on record our support for the Contadora process. We feel that those of us who are committed to peaceful reform are the best hope for the evolution of democracy within the region and that our judgement should be trusted accordingly.

There are two developmental issues which are of the utmost importance and which the United Nations will need to continue to address. They are the burdens of the debtor nations and the high rate of population increase in poor countries.

Global economic recovery continues to be tentative but is being further stymied by increased protectionism in world trade, which effectively reduces the capacity of developing countries to service their debt and sustain economic growth, since a larger proportion of revenue is being utilized for debt servicing. Limited advances have been made in our region only through stringent structural adjustment policies, with severe human cost, particularly for the poorest sections of our society. Where limited improvements have been effected these have been outstripped by population increases. Our region's labour force has expanded beyond the level that can be sustained by our economic activity and thus rising unemployment continues to challenge our economic well-being.

This brings me to my second concern, that is, population planning. I wish to place on record our support for the United Nations Fund for Population Activities. In this regard, I wish to state, however, that each country should be free to determine its own strategy for population activities. There should be no attempt to impose moral standards on others. I will go further and state that it is

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immoral to impose the morality of the rich on poor countries whose increase in economic activity is nullified by excessive population growth.

I wish to express my humble opinion on the spectacle of vast expenditure on arms as seen by us, as representatives of the poor. I am not one to invite mankind to cease extending the boundaries of our knowledge. Scientific research continues to improve the condition of mankind, but to think that there will not be a new way in which a defence initiative will be undermined once more by espionage preying on human weakness is to ignore the lessons of the last 40 years.

What is the point of spending billions on secretive defence which experience has told us espionage will sooner or later render useless? Far better, I think, to address the problems of poverty and development and strengthen the economies of those that want to be stronger partners in a free world. It will never be too late to pursue that other goal shared by the rich and poor alike, even though in varying degrees, to improve the quality of life. Let us never tire of urging this option in the councils that matter as we approach the close of our century.

I wish to congratulate the Secretary-General and the Preparatory Committee on the work they have put into organizing this fortieth anniversary. Anniversaries are suitable occasions to reflect on the past and plan for the future. My delegation rededicates itself to supporting the United Nations Charter and its institutions. An Organization that continues to accommodate the tense rivalries among us deserves our support.

Mr. James Mitchell, Prime Minister of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, was escorted from the rostrum.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): The next speaker is the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Special Envoy of the Government of Antigua and Barbuda, His Excellency the Honourable Lester B. Bird.

Mr. BIRD (Antigua and Barbuda): This is the first occasion, Sir, on which my delegation has spoken at the fortieth session of the United Nations General Assembly and I should like to take this opportunity to congratulate you on your election to the presidency. In your statement to the General Assembly upon your election as President you stressed that, if Member States stopped giving free rein to their self-interest in certain situations and made an effort to subordinate it to the common good of mankind, we would be on the way to finding solutions to many conflicts. Your observation was in keeping with the spirit that inspired the framers of the United Nations Charter 40 years ago. Wise from the lessons of an awful conflagration that left the world a legacy of death and destruction, chastened by the consequence of national chauvinism and expansionism, they were determined that mankind would not return to the abyss of war to again bring anguish and despair upon itself.

Yet I noted with interest that on the day following your statement a member of the press accredited to this Organization delved into Cervantes's book Don Quixote de la Mancha to find parallels between the fantasy island of Barataria and the United Nations and between you, as President of the General Assembly, and the fictional Governor of Barataria. I was struck by this, because I am always disturbed by the readiness of some to dismiss as impractical any call for nations to work for the common good of humanity. I am astonished at their willingness to equate a call for joint action in the interest of all mankind with Don Quixote tilting at windmills. It is as if, for some, to care has become a vice and not to care a virtue.

(Mr. Bird, Antigua and Barbuda)

It is unfortunate that those with the loudest voices are the ones who reject every champion of internationalism as a Don Quixote. It is regrettable that those who grab the most attention are the ones who denigrate global action as chasing windmills. For there is a greater body of opinion that is largely ignored and regularly marginalized which says the pursuit of common good is right and action in the interest of all mankind is just.

Those who today oppose war, those who urge that the bomb be banned, those who demand equal rights for all regardless of race or religion, those who speak out against tyranny and oppression, against exploitation and expansionism - they are the inheritors of the spirit that moved the framers of the United Nations Charter. They are the keepers of those lights which Winston Churchill in 1945 said "burn brighter and shine more broadly than before". They are the body of opinion that supports joint action for the common good. They are the body of opinion that places immense value in this United Nations and its work.

When the first session of this Assembly was held in 1946, its membership numbered a mere 51 States. Today that membership stands at 159. The United Nations can take a great deal of credit for the movement of countries from colonialism to nationalism, from political dictation to political liberation. Many of those new Members are new to freedom and sovereignty, new to the demands of nationhood, and new to the inequities of the international system. Yet they are the most mindful of the value of this Organization and are deeply committed to its effectiveness. But these new and vulnerable nations, even with the support of groups the world over that proclaim the importance of the United Nations, cannot alone fulfil the promises held forth by the Charter. For, as the Secretary-General pointed out in his report at the start of this session of the Assembly,

"the essential political conditions, the sense of solidarity and mutual confidence, that could make international instruments work is largely lacking". (A/40/I, p. 3)

(Mr. Bird, Antigua and Barbuda)

And why are the political conditions lacking? Why is there this absence of a sense of solidarity and mutual confidence in international relations? I suspect that part of the answer lies in the desire of some States to maintain the edge over others - the desire to stay ahead of the rest even at the cost of war and the expense of human suffering.

Hence, despite a fundamental principle of the Charter that the nations of the world are determined

"to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women",

the majority of people in South Africa remain oppressed and repressed by a tyrannical régime which has enshrined racial discrimination and subjugation in law. In the 40 years since this Organization was created, we have seen the African National Congress, the first political organization in Africa, dating back to 1912, come to be described by some countries as a terrorist organization. On this issue, the world has retrogressed, it has not progressed. And the United Nations warrants no blame for this blemish on the face of humanity. The blame rests squarely with those nations which, in furtherance of their own self-interest, have helped to maintain the apartheid régime in power in South Africa.

It is a matter for shame that an organization which gave South Africa its first beneficiary of the Nobel Peace Prize should now be labelled a terrorist organization. When Albert John Luthuli received the Nobel Prize for Peace in 1961 for his unswerving opposition to racial violence in the face of repressive measures by the South African Government, he had served the African National Congress as its first President-General.

How, then, has that organization, which is doing no more than attempting to liberate its people from a system that is as vile as nazism was in Europe, become terrorist? Forty years ago the allied forces, among which my own country had

(Mr. Bird, Antigua and Barbuda)

representatives, were freedom fighters when they confronted Hitler's pogroms and excesses to liberate Europe from tyranny. Today the African National Congress is doing no more than that.

The question must be asked, and it must be answered: What do you expect of an organization which for 30 years practised non-violence while its people were brutalized and demoralized in the vain hope that better would come? What do you expect of an organization which for 30 years practised non-violence while its people were deprived of citizenship in the land of their birth and were compelled to carry passes in the streets of their own country in the hopeless expectation that things would change? What do you expect of an organization which for 30 years practised non-violence while conditions of repression intensified and its people confronted the reality of more of the same?

No one desires violence. No one wants it. But the majority of people in South Africa have endured violence for over a generation. And if those with power in the world to bring an end to such violence abstain from doing so, then they create the conditions for resistance, which leads ultimately to even more violence.

It is heartening to see that recently many of the world's nations have come forward with practical measures designed to take punitive economic action against the régime. But equally it is worrying to witness the unwillingness of a small but powerful number of South Africa's trading partners to make sacrifices, however short-term, at the national level for the international cause of ending the last bastion of institutionalized racism in the world. It is such selfish action, designed to serve only narrow national interests, even at the expense of human suffering, that has soured the celebrations of this Organization's fortieth anniversary.

(Mr. Bird, Antigua and Barbuda)

If we - all of us - are serious about the value of this Organization, if we are not to allow it to fall into disrepute as a sterile talk shop, we must match our affirmation for fundamental change in South Africa with the actions required to implement it.

Under the Charter of this Organization Member States pledged "to practise tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours". It is a measure of the failure to uphold that pledge that in his annual report the Secretary-General has had to observe that

"Without collective determination and the acknowledgement of a minimum common interest in survival, there can be no meaningful progress in disarmament."

(A/40/1, p. 7)

In other words, the Secretary-General is saying that there is no collective determination and no acknowledgement among nations that we share an interest in mankind's survival. Repeatedly, the Secretary-General and others have made the point that in the arms race the quest for advantage is illusory. But that message has fallen upon deaf ears, and increasingly the entire human race is being placed in jeopardy.

(Mr. Bird, Antigua and Barbuda)

Let us set aside the well-known arguments that precious economic resources are being squandered in the arms race. Let us put to one side the fact that over \$400 billion was spent last year on military equipment while people starved in Africa for want of food and died in Asia for need of simple vaccines, and that here in North America as well as Europe the number of unemployed and homeless increased. Let us, instead, consider the growing number of young people all over the world who are becoming so deeply concerned about the prospect of war, including nuclear confrontation, that they are demonstrating against the escalation in arms spending. Are we to wait until these young people become convinced that time is running out before we take heed of their protestations? Must they too become violent and face police in the streets before we take account of the legitimate concerns which they express?

Surely after 40 years, in which some Member States have successfully side-stepped the arrangements under the United Nations Charter for collective security, the time has come for those nations to acknowledge their failure and to allow United Nations arrangements an opportunity to work.

We are all hopeful that the bilateral negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union will prove successful, but if they continue to be paralysed we earnestly hope those two nations will give the United Nations a chance. In the view of those who have become cynical and self-serving, I may be assuming the role of Don Quixote and I may be chasing windmills, but I remain convinced by the framers of the United Nations Charter that the world has a greater opening for peace and security through multilateral arrangements than it does through limited bilateral agreements. The experience of the last 40 years has done nothing to dispel that conviction.

(Mr. Bird, Antigua and Barbuda)

Mr. President, when your predecessor, Mr. Paul Lusaka, closed the thirty-ninth session of the General Assembly last month, he lamented the fact that

"we have not yet been able to reach the stage where we can say with confidence"

that global negotiations on international economic co-operation for development will be launched on a specific date. He acknowledged that

"the Assembly did not solve the serious debt and foreign exchange problems which are crippling the economies of a large number of States". (A/39/PV.108, p. 28)

Of course, he did point to some limited areas of success for the Organization. But neither he nor any of us could proudly acclaim the willingness of Member States to satisfy one of the principal purposes of this Organization, which is, inter alia,

"To achieve international co-operation in solving international problems of an economic ... character".

The truth is that major industrial countries have resisted engagements in meaningful discussion with developing countries to evolve a more equitable system of international economic relationships. Moreover, they have steadfastly opposed any attempts to promote such discussions within the United Nations.

I would be less than candid if I did not admit that for small countries such as mine an increasing feeling of frustration has been simmering for some time. It has almost reached the boiling point, and the resulting inclination is to turn away from internationalism and multilateralism, to discard participation in international life as a loser's game for small and weak States such as my own.

This sense of frustration has been fed by the policies of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, which appear unminifful of the difficult economic conditions which confront small States. The recent decision to "graduate" small

(Mr. Bird, Antigua and Barbuda)

island States such as mine from opportunities to secure soft loans has served only to underscore the feeling that we are victims of and not participants in the international system.

Small States, such as mine, have been overlooked in the debt crisis as the banks of major industrial countries have focused their rescheduling efforts on their big debtors. But our problems are, by comparison to our size and resources, no less worrying. Our capacity for servicing our debts has been adversely affected by arrears on trade transactions which have caused the loss of credit lines and disrupted normal trade credit. We are forced to dig holes to fill holes by borrowing at commercial rates of interest which will burden us for some time to come.

But what are our alternatives? We could follow the advice of some and repudiate our debts or we could attempt to maintain our people's standard of living by borrowing even more to finance urgent development needs. In either option we are caught in a merciless vice, for the consequences of both are dire.

Why does a country such as mine, against the background I have just described, remain in the United Nations? Why do we continue to uphold its principles and honour its Charter? We do so because we fervently believe in the principles and precepts of the Charter as a means of regulating international relations for the benefit of humanity as a whole. Notwithstanding the deliberate efforts by some nations to ignore its obligations, the Charter itself remains without blemish. Further, we acknowledge that in our support for the Charter, we are joined by the majority of nations in this Assembly. In this context, therefore, we are convinced that mankind still has a chance to fulfil the promise held out by the Charter in San Francisco in June 1945 of a secure and stable world.

It is at the moments when we are close to despair in our perception of man's attitude to his fellow man that events occur to renew our faith in humanity.

(Mr. Bird, Antigua and Barbuda)

In this year alone, we have witnessed man's capacity to rise above governmental preference and national preoccupation to reach out a helping hand to his brother. The "Live Aid" concerts and other efforts by musicians in the industrialized countries to bring relief to the starving in parts of Africa constituted one such dramatic moment. The deep concern and unprompted willingness to rush to the aid of Mexico after the devastating earthquakes last month was another.

Those were spontaneous outpourings of human kindness that were completely divorced from governmental dictate, and in some cases were at odds with governmental desire. In these events, which underline man's concern for his fellow man, lie the greatest hope for the success of this Organization. For they prove that when it counts people will respond positively to their basic human instincts in their relationship with other peoples. In this regard my country, for one, remains optimistic that this United Nations will ultimately prosper.

## ORGANIZATION OF WORK

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): Before adjourning the meeting, I should like to draw the attention of all delegations to the recommendations of the Preparatory Committee for the Fortieth Anniversary of the United Nations adopted by the General Assembly at its third meeting on 20 September 1985, which read, inter alia:

"Delegations should be informed that the number of speakers per day on 21, 22 and 23 October could not exceed 21 during regular morning and afternoon meetings, that this number could only be accommodated on the assumption that statements do not exceed 15 minutes and that any additional speakers on those days would have to be heard at an extended afternoon meeting or at a night meeting." (A/40/49, p. 12)

Such a situation will occur on Friday, 18 October. In view of the great number of speakers on the list to participate in the commemorative meetings, I would ask all delegations to look into this question very carefully and to comply strictly with the guidelines on time limits set forth in the recommendations. Otherwise we shall have to hold evening meetings, with the concomitant problems that will cause for the social events that are to be held in view of the presence here of so many eminent individuals in connection with the fortieth anniversary.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.