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PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE FOURTEENTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 29 September 1986, at 10 a.m.

President:	Mr. CHOUDHURY	(Bangladesh)
later:	Mr. KNIPPING-VICTORIA	(Dominican Republic)
	(Vice-President)	
later:	Mr. HERREBERG	(Suriname)
	(Vice-President)	

- Appointments to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other appointments [18]
 - (a) Appointment of a member of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: report of the Fifth Committee
- Adoption of the agenda and organization of work: letter from the Chairman of the Committee on Conferences [8] (continued)
- General debate [9] (continued)

Address by The Right Honourable Dató Seri Mr. Mahathir bin Mohamad,
Prime Minister of Malaysia

Statements were made by:

Mr. Abdel Meguid (Egypt)
Mr. Consalvi (Venezuela)
Mr. Mahabir (Trinidad and Tobago)
Mr. Koroma (Sierra Leone)

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

AGENDA ITEM 18

APPOINTMENTS TO FILL VACANCIES IN SUBSIDIARY ORGANS AND OTHER APPOINTMENTS

- (a) APPOINTMENT OF A MEMBER OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY QUESTIONS: REPORT OF THE FIFTH COMMITTEE (Part I) (A/41/650)

The PRESIDENT: In paragraph 4 of its report (A/41/650) the Fifth Committee recommends the appointment of Mr. Ion Gorita of Romania to fill the vacancy for the unexpired portion of Mr. Traian Chebeleu's term of office, that is, until 31 December 1988.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to adopt that recommendation?

It was so decided.

AGENDA ITEM 8 (continued)

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK: LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE ON CONFERENCES (A/41/595/Add.1)

The PRESIDENT: I should like now to invite members to turn their attention to a letter dated 24 September 1986 addressed to the President of the Assembly by the Chairman of the Committee on Conferences (A/41/595/Add.1). As members are aware, the Assembly, in paragraph 34 of its decision 34/401, decided that no subsidiary organ of the General Assembly should be permitted to meet at United Nations Headquarters during a regular session of the Assembly unless explicitly authorized by the Assembly.

As indicated in the letter I have just mentioned, the Committee on Conferences has recommended that the Advisory Committee of the United Nations Educational and Training Programme for Southern Africa, the Committee of Trustees of the United Nations Trust Fund for South Africa and the Committee on Relations with the Host country should be authorized to meet during the current session of the General Assembly.

(The President)

May I take it that the General Assembly adopts that recommendation?

It was so decided.

AGENDA ITEM 9 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE

ADDRESS BY THE RIGHT HONOURABLE DATO SERI MR. MAHATHIR BIN MOHAMAD, PRIME MINISTER OF MALAYSIA

The PRESIDENT: This morning the Assembly will hear a statement by the Prime Minister of Malaysia, Mr. Mahathir.

Mr. Mahathir, Prime Minister of Malaysia, was escorted to the rostrum.

The PRESIDENT: I have great pleasure in welcoming the Prime Minister of Malaysia, the Right Honourable Dato Seri Dr. Mahathir bin Mohamad, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. MAHATHIR (Malaysia): Let me first extend to you, Sir, my delegation's most sincere and heartfelt congratulations on your election to the presidency of the forty-first session of the General Assembly. It is a source of pleasure and pride to have as President an eminent personality from a country with which Malaysia has always enjoyed warm and brotherly relations. Your unanimous election as President of this Assembly is a recognition of your skill and experience as an outstanding diplomat.

It is in the same spirit that I express our gratitude to the outgoing President, Ambassador Jaime de Piniés, for his invaluable contributions and the impartial and skilful way in which he conducted the fortieth session of the General Assembly. Ambassador de Piniés's presidency was also of special significance in that it coincided with the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations.

For the past several years we have witnessed with increasing concern the steady decline of the United Nations. Are we to stand by and watch this Organization sink into an irrelevance from which it may never recover from, or should we not act with the common objective of restoring life and meaning to the

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United Nations? If we are to judge by what was said by the many important and illustrious world leaders during the commemorative fortieth session held last year, we appear to be unanimous in our concern that this Organization should not be allowed to suffer a fate similar perhaps to that of its predecessor, the League of Nations. With the benefit of hindsight, we all know why the League failed and the consequences that followed. It is perhaps sobering for us to reflect upon the consequences of a United Nations that is so eroded that it becomes progressively more of a meaningless ritual for us to meet here once a year, say our piece, go back and forget about it all until the next session. Unless really constructive steps are taken to remedy the situation, this downward spiral will continue until the very existence of the United Nations is put in question. For, in the final analysis, if this Organization serves no one, why subscribe to it at all?

For the majority of us the small developing nations, a world without the United Nations is almost unthinkable. In fact, many nations here owe their independence to the work of the decolonization Committee of the United Nations. To us, the United Nations transcends mere symbolism. In the United Nations lies our hope for a better tomorrow, for justice, peace and stability and for prosperity for all mankind. Therefore it is imperative that the United Nations remain relevant, its role enhanced and not made subject to the interests of individual States or blocs. Despite misgivings that some may have about the United Nations, let us not forget that the United Nations can be only what we all want it to be. The reality is that a few wealthy and powerful nations have always, in spite of charges of "automatic majorities" and "extreme" and "useless" resolutions, had the edge in shaping the United Nations. If the Organization falls short of expectations, the responsibility rests heavily on the shoulders of those same powerful nations, which perhaps expect the United Nations to be a creature in their own image, serving only certain perceived ends, for certain perceived interests.

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To be sure, the responsibility also lies with the smaller developing nations. Considerations based purely on ideological or political lines cannot contribute to meaningful solutions. As small developing countries, we must remain sensitive to our responsibilities, just as we would wish the developed and powerful countries to base their decisions on the merits of a particular issue, governed by principles which are central to the ideals of the United Nations. There is a need for us to temper the majority we enjoy by what is relevant, practical and realistic. Most important, we should not allow ourselves to be proxies, basing our decisions on ideological attachments or bloc interests, without regard for the principles involved.

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There are also some among us who pay lip-service to these principles but who, when it suits them, remain strangely mute when they are trampled upon. A few among us also disregard principles, violating the territorial integrity and sovereignty of weaker, smaller States, seeking recourse through arms and military power. Let us - the small nations - as Members of this Organization exercise our responsibilities with maturity, sobriety and a sense of justice and fair play.

It is not coincidental that some of the nations that founded and pioneered the United Nations grew more disenchanted with this Organization in the wake of the increasing membership resulting from decolonization. It was then that talk about the "tyranny of the majority" and about "automatic" third-world majorities against the interests of certain nations began to emerge. At the same time it also became fashionable, as it were, in some quarters to malign and denigrate the United Nations with charges of "bloated budgets" and "extreme" and "useless" resolutions.

Indeed, it is simplistic and even damaging to the Organization to pretend that the United Nations needs no improvement and could not be made more effective. Certainly, over the years some "fat" has accumulated which needs to be trimmed. Its efficacy must be reviewed periodically in order to enhance its role, but the motive for improving the United Nations must always be premised on the precepts enshrined in the Charter. While the United Nations appears not to have escaped the effects of a world in recession, actually to attribute the current financial crisis to late payments by Member countries would be a gross distortion of facts.

The present cash-flow crisis has been the result of the withholding of regular contributions to the Organization on the one hand and an over-staffed Secretariat on the other. While we commend the efforts of the Group of 18 to reduce the staff levels in the Secretariat and to rationalize the Organization's administrative and

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budgetary procedures, we cannot agree with any rationale that obligatory contributions by any Member country can be withheld in order to force the acceptance of conditions unilaterally decided by a country's own national legislature. However unpalatable existing rules and procedures may appear to be to each Member country, any effort to amend such rules must be undertaken within agreed procedures and in accordance with the system in place. Any hint or suggestion that a Member country, however big or small, could unilaterally impose conditions would only bring about difficult precedents inconsistent with the spirit and the Charter upon which the United Nations was founded. Rules and procedures built around such a basic concept of the equality of States must not be tempered with, for that is one of the fundamental pillars upon which the United Nations was established.

Whatever our dissatisfaction may be with the United Nations, membership of the Organization requires us to accept certain basic principles and to operate in accordance with agreed ground rules. The issue is not control through majority voting rights: it is rather the time-consuming and painstaking process of seeking understanding and consensus to resolve problems that face the general membership.

While we hear so much criticism of the ineffectiveness of the United Nations from certain quarters, those quarters remain strangely mute on some issues where the United Nations has indeed failed - failed not due to lack of trying but simply because of obstacles which render many United Nations resolutions on those issues unimplementable. Simply put, it failed because of the attitude of the big Powers.

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We are outraged that in spite of our efforts for so many years to bring an end to the system of apartheid in South Africa it still exists, flouting every concept and principle of human decency. None of us denies that morally what is happening in South Africa is totally indefensible; yet it exists because a few rich and powerful nations that could do most to dismantle it will not participate in any meaningful way to end this diabolical system. Those nations, while on the one hand condemning apartheid, on the other continue to give it sustenance by refusing to abandon policies based on "constructive engagement" and "gentle persuasion", which have clearly failed; yet those same nations have been known to apply naval blockades when solving their own problems.

Apartheid is a system which has institutionalized racism for the purpose of establishing and maintaining the domination of a white minority over a black majority. Recent developments in South Africa prove beyond any doubt that Pretoria will not be persuaded to abandon its policy of apartheid. Indeed, the régime is categorically and adamantly committed to maintaining and enforcing apartheid, therefore to pursue further a policy such as "constructive engagement" will only mean sending the wrong signals to Pretoria.

The way forward now is to embark seriously on sanctions. There have been arguments from certain countries that sanctions are ineffective and will only impose economic hardships on the front-line States and worsen the situation for the blacks in South Africa. It is admitted that sanctions would not be painless for neighbouring African States and for the blacks in South Africa, but surely the indignities that they have suffered for so long under apartheid are incomparably more painful? Besides, if we are really determined there is much that we can do to alleviate this suffering and bring about quicker results.

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The blacks in South Africa and the front-line States realize what they are facing. The colonial Powers had so structured the economy of those States as to render them completely dependent on South Africa. Retaliation by the Pretoria régime is thus easy and effective. It is made even more effective by the willingness of South Africa to sabotage lines of communication, particularly of the land-locked States. In this South Africa is being helped by rebels nurtured by certain countries.

The non-aligned summit conference in Harare decided upon the setting up of a solidarity fund for southern Africa, but the support of the Western world and Japan is necessary if the aid is to have any substance or effect. During the Berlin blockade a vast airlift was organized to break the blockade. South Africa's counter-blockade must be broken in the same way and with the same determination by the rest of the freedom-loving world.

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Sooner or later this travesty of a Government that sits in Pretoria and its hateful apartheid policy must go. Let us all help to make it go sooner rather than later. Let us be determined to give all possible help by blockading South Africa and helping to ensure that supplies and aid reach the front-line States.

It is time for countries which profess lofty principles and which are always ready to condemn and even subvert third-world countries for alleged suppression of freedom to practise what they preach. South Africa must be freed. Namibia must be returned to its people on the basis of Security Council resolution 435 (1978) without any "linkage". It is unacceptable that Namibians should be held hostage because of the so-called misdeeds of a totally different nation.

The question of Palestine is another issue on which the United Nations has failed to make any impact, despite the fact that this subject has appeared regularly on the agenda almost since the founding of the Organization. Because of the failure to resolve this central issue, the whole of the Middle East region remains in a constant state of turmoil.

The problem of Palestine began with the creation of Israel, at the expense of dispossession of the people of Palestine. Since Israel owes its existence to a decision taken by the United Nations in 1948, and since that decision was honoured and upheld by the major Powers, it is incumbent upon those same Powers, if not upon Israel, to honour and uphold subsequent United Nations resolutions on the same issue.

The clock cannot be turned back and we have to accept the reality. So, too, are the Palestinian people a reality with their own history, their own traditions, culture and national identity. It is also a reality that the Palestinians have been reduced to a nation of refugees, who, for two generations, have been born in refugee camps, hounded, persecuted, bombed and vilified.

We are actually witnessing a holocaust inflicted on the Palestinian people. Israel, on the one hand, is given what amounts to carte blanche to do whatever it

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likes, because of the support and protection of the super-Powers, which are in a position to frustrate any attempt by the international community to find a solution based on justice. It is obvious that in the absence of an even-handed policy on the part of the super-Powers the United Nations will be unable to act. Israel's borders will continue to expand its borders, annexing Arab lands as it wishes, and any action that Israel takes, however horrendous, will be justified in terms of safeguarding its national security.

The Palestinian people, on the other hand, have no legitimate recourse, as does Israel, given the limited resources at their disposal. At the same time, they have to confront hostile news media, dominated by Zionists. The Palestinians, therefore, unlike the Israelis, have to fight against all odds in their struggle for their rights and identity. In the process, the Palestinians have always been condemned by the world while the fact is ignored that Israel itself is a product of terrorism, that its unceasing intimidation, harassment and victimization of Arabs in the occupied territories and elsewhere is purely and simply a policy based on terrorism.

While we are on the subject of terrorism, let me state categorically that my country joins the international community in condemning terrorism. It is indeed significant that the United Nations was able to adopt a resolution by consensus against terrorism. Our concern must also cover acts of terrorism by Governments. While we should not be selective in our condemnation of terrorism, let us not ignore the fact that policies such as those practised by Israel are based on terror and invite retaliation based on the same psychology of terror. If we are to condemn and act against terrorism, let us not be selective, nor must we resort to it as a countermeasure.

In many of the major crises that confront the world, the majority of States are reduced to the position of bystanders, powerless to act or influence, save

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perhaps by our moral outrage and our pleas and appeals. Even in some cases of seemingly limited and local conflicts the hand of a greater actor is thinly veiled, adding fuel to the fire. Our inability to act is even more circumscribed when a major Power is involved and openly ignores all the basic tenets of the Charter of the United Nations. But as small developing countries we must, nevertheless, continue to raise our voices against any instances in which important principles such as the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of States are violated and ignored. We, the small nations, are all potential victims.

The case of Afghanistan serves as an example. An independent, sovereign nation is invaded and occupied by one of the most powerful countries in the world. For the Soviet Union, a permanent member of the Security Council, one of the countries to which we are expected to entrust questions of world peace and security, to perpetrate such an act cannot but leave us all in a state of permanent fear. We can never accept what has happened in Afghanistan as a fait accompli. We must continue to condemn the Soviet action and that of its puppets just as the majority of the people of Afghanistan, despite the terrible odds, continue to fight and resist the aggression.

Similarly, the international community should never acquiesce to Viet Nam's invasion of Kampuchea. Indeed, the international community has repeatedly affirmed its condemnation of Viet Nam, but nevertheless that country persists in its intransigence in rejecting all efforts for a peaceful solution. This is indeed an arrogant attitude, made no less so because of the firm backing that Viet Nam has been getting from a super-Power. It is ironic that Viet Nam, which was itself subjected to a long struggle against foreign domination, should now seek to impose its domination on a small, weak neighbour.

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Just as we stand behind the Mujahideen in Afghanistan, so too must we stand by the people of Kampuchea in their valiant struggle. While Malaysia and the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries hail the efforts of the Kampuchean resistance under the leadership of Prince Norodom Sihanouk, we have always encouraged a negotiated solution. It is in this context that we urge Viet Nam to reconsider its rejection of the eight-point proposal put forward by the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea.

Malaysia believes the eight-point proposal contains the elements of a constructive framework for negotiations that could lead to a comprehensive and peaceful solution inasmuch as it is based on a policy of national reconciliation that includes all parties. The proposal also provides for free elections in which all parties can take part. Surely this is a just and workable proposal in consonance with the principles of self-determination and of the United Nations. However, Viet Nam seems intent on rejecting everything other than its own military solution.

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In Central America, the super-Powers and their proxies are just as active, trying to shape governments and countries in their own images through subversion and through provoking and directing rebellions. Is the majority in this Organization wrong when it condemns such acts? If there is an "automatic majority", is there not also a tendency on the part of the big Powers to automatically use their brute strength when they dislike the stand of the majority.

One of the many intractable issues confronting us is that of disarmament, an issue which this Organization has been grappling with for many years. It is obvious that the problem of disarmament cannot be addressed effectively unless major Powers are resolved to negotiate a halt to the proliferation and the eventual elimination of nuclear arsenals. Already we have accumulated enough nuclear devices to destroy the world. Even if we decide to dispose of them, we cannot. We have already condemned ourselves to permanent fear of radiation and destruction. Doomsday may be nearer than we think.

It is indeed a horrifying prospect that the survival of mankind should be dependent on a "balance of terror". Malaysians are called "barbarians" because we hang convicted white criminals for drug offences, as we hang others for the same crime. What do we call people who threaten to wipe out the whole human race in fulfilment of their war strategy?

The cause of peace cannot be served by wasting scarce resources on nuclear arms. If the super-Powers stop their nuclear build-up we will not ask them to spend their savings on eradicating poverty, hunger and disease. They can spend it on themselves, by all means, for even that is better than the useless manufacture of these terrible indestructible weapons.

Since our last United Nations General Assembly session in 1985, the world economic situation has deteriorated tremendously. We are meeting in New York today at a time of severe adversity in the economic field for almost all developing

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countries. The undermining of the economies of developing countries, in recent months, is unprecedented in scope. The debt burdens of developing countries is now at its highest level while the terms of trade for us are getting worse and worse.

We do not want to blame the rich countries for all our woes, but the fact remains that it is their action that is at the bottom of our unprecedented economic crisis.

Let us take the national debts as an example. When the seven rich countries had trade imbalances, their solution was to force the revaluation of the yen and the deutschmark. Many countries of South-East Asia borrow yen extensively. The appreciation of the yen alone has increased Malaysia's Japanese debts by 60 per cent. Other countries are even worse off.

If the problem is massive Japanese imports into North America and Europe, it would have caused less damage to the poor countries if very high import duties are imposed. But yen revaluation which has caused havoc to our economy has done nothing to limit imports of Japanese goods into North America or Europe.

The developing countries all depend on commodity exports to earn foreign exchange. Now all commodities are experiencing very low prices, some falling by more than 60 per cent. A combination of factors has brought about this across-the-board price depression.

First, new technology has rendered the traditional raw materials irrelevant. Either new and cheaper materials are substituted, as when glass fibre replaces copper wire in telecommunications, or the quantities used are so much reduced that the raw material as an input is irrelevant. At the same time, new technology has also immensely increased production of raw materials.

A glut situation then arises and becomes aggravated when the rich countries subsidize the production and sale of their commodities. The poor countries can never subsidize to the level of the rich and they lose all their traditional markets.

(Mr. Mahathir, Malaysia)

If, in the past, the terms of trade were such that we had to sell more and more commodities in order to pay for less and less manufactured goods, now we cannot even sell more commodities to pay for even more expensive manufactured goods. And governments find it increasingly difficult to earn sufficient foreign currency to pay their debts.

The collapse of commodity prices results in a chain reaction whereby all economic activities are slowed or forced to a standstill. As usual, it is at such times that creditors become predators.

How then can we honestly say that the rich developed countries are not to be blamed for our economic miseries? How can we look at future meetings of the seven richest industrialized nations with equanimity?

There is also at the moment an inadequate international monetary and financial system. Sovereign nations are no longer masters of their own currency. Speculators, including banks, can push currencies up or down at will. Indeed, trading in goods has been displaced by trading in currencies. The situation is anarchic, and serious-minded people must find a new monetary system that is more orderly if the problems of the debtor and creditor nations are to be resolved.

In the first place, creditor countries should assist in increasing the rate of growth in the indebted countries. There should be a reduction of interest rates, stabilization of the exchange rates, reduction of budget deficits, planned recovery in the major developed countries and increasing market access for exports of developing countries.

In addition, international financial institutions should provide the funds to meet the requirements of long-term development projects in developing countries besides short-term financing. It is here that the United Nations and its agencies have a major role to play.

(Mr. Mahathir, Malaysia)

Malaysia has very recently taken the initiative in promoting economic co-operation among developing countries by hosting the Second International South-South Conference or South-South II, in Kuala Lumpur. Many third world economists, scholars and statesmen met and discussed the world economic situation and the approach towards improving the economic situation of developing countries. We cannot accept that the rich seven should have the exclusive right to impose their own solutions to the world's economic problems. Already their exchange rate approach has impoverished us further. An Independent Commission of the South has therefore been set up under the chairmanship of former President Julius Nyerere to examine and propose practical measures for us to take. We hope the United Nations and Member countries will help this Commission in every way possible.

Malaysia wishes to join other developing countries in calling upon the developed countries to address in a just and equitable manner the various issues facing the international economy so as to ensure stable and sustained international economic growth, as well as to foster an international trading and financial system responsive to the needs of - and be of benefit to - all nations. It is in this spirit that Malaysia welcomed the recent launching of the new round of multilateral trade negotiations in Punta del Este this September.

(Mr. Mahathir, Malaysia)

A major issue that confronts us and requires urgent attention is the international drug problem. The modern-day manifestations of that threat, including the subjugation of whole nations, amplifies the need for concrete and decisive international action to overcome it. Malaysia therefore welcomes the convening of the International Conference on Drug Abuse and Drug Trafficking in June of next year. That opportunity should not be wasted. We should pool all our resources and combine all our efforts to remove this scourge that is sapping the vitality of our nations.

In Malaysia, we are fully committed to combating the drug menace in all its manifestations and with every resource available to us. We have hanged and will continue to hang pushers and traffickers in accordance with our laws, irrespective of colour or creed. We would rather be unpopular in certain quarters than be hypocritical. It is only when such criminals know that they will not live to enjoy their ill-gotten gains that they will stop. The death penalty is an eminently just punishment for such criminals, for only death will stop those purveyors of misery and death.

For us, the battle has barely begun. The international community must declare an all-out war against drug abuses and trafficking in deadly substances. The International Conference on drugs should come out not only with a definite plan of action but also with a firm political commitment by all participating nations, at the highest political level, to do their utmost. No stone should be left unturned and no avenues left unexplored in our war against this menace. We would like to see such political commitment expressed in a joint statement or declaration. That would be above and in addition to the Comprehensive Multidisciplinary Outline of Actions. We view such an expression of political willingness as essential for a successful implementation of the actions we have mapped out.

(Mr. Mahathir, Malaysia)

Once there is political commitment, then the source of drugs must be attacked with every available weapon, wherever that source may be. A full-scale war must be waged, and that war must be internationalized. The fight to destroy production is too big and too costly for any of the producer countries to wage alone.

I am pleased by the interest shown by you, Mr. President, and the support given by the Assembly on the issue of Antarctica. That positive commitment by the United Nations strengthens the will of Malaysia and other like-minded countries to continue to pursue the objective of an Antarctica that is for all mankind and not for an exclusive few.

The importance of Antarctica to mankind is beyond dispute. It is for that reason that we can never yield to the pressure mounted by certain quarters to bring us to relent and renege on our commitment. Antarctica should be under an internationally accepted régime and managed for the benefit of all mankind. We remain committed to working towards those objectives with all interested parties, including the Consultative Parties to the Antarctic Treaty. Last year, there was no consensus, in spite of our efforts. The Consultative Parties chose to remain adamant and indifferent to the sincere wishes of the majority.

What we sought was merely more information and an updated and expanded study of Antarctica, more information on the mineral-régime negotiations and a follow-up response from the Consultative Parties concerning the call by the General Assembly for the exclusion of South Africa from participation in the group of Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties. Yet that reasonableness and moderation proved unacceptable.

We do not seek confrontation. We do not desire to threaten the security and interests of the Consultative Parties, nor do we wish to destroy the framework that the Consultative Parties have built. What we want is an internationally accepted

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system of management over Antarctica that caters to the interest of mankind as a whole. What we are after is improvement over the present situation, which is deficient and inclined towards exclusivity and therefore not in harmony with international aspirations.

We are very clear about our commitment and very conscious of it. We should not falter in seeking out the objectives with which we began in 1982. Non-co-operation and non-participation by the Consultative Parties will not deter us from pursuing those objectives. It is the prerogative of the Consultative Parties either to opt in or opt out, but, for us, the decision is made. We therefore call upon the Consultative Parties to work with us towards attaining those universal objectives.

In conclusion, I wish to reaffirm Malaysia's support of and commitment to the United Nations. If the Organization is to continue to contribute to world peace and the progress of all nations, big and small, we must live up to our obligations and responsibilities to the United Nations. Just as the major Powers must not expect the United Nations merely to serve them, so must the developing countries be guided by the same principle. The Organization must be revitalized and allowed to serve all mankind. The major Powers have a particular responsibility for preserving the role of the United Nations, for they will always have the edge in making or breaking the United Nations. Even for them, what alternative is there? Perhaps only a return to unilateralism and an alliance system, with its attendant dangers.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of Malaysia for the important statement he has just made.

Mr. Mahathir, Prime Minister of Malaysia, was escorted from the rostrum.

Mr. ABDEL MEGUID (Egypt) (interpretation from Arabic): It gives me pleasure at the outset to convey to you, Sir, our heartfelt congratulations on your election as President of the forty-first session of the General Assembly of the United Nations. Your election is recognition of your constructive efforts and your great diplomatic skills. It is also an expression of appreciation by the international community for the leading role played by Bangladesh in promoting the cause of international peace and security.

(Mr. Abdel Meguid, Egypt)

More than a quarter of a century has elapsed since the General Assembly adopted its resolution 1378 (XIV) of 20 November 1959, which affirms that the goal of general and complete disarmament is the most important and urgent question facing our world. Nevertheless, and in spite of the repeated calls of the international community for the achievement of that goal, very little has been achieved.

The danger of nuclear war is ever present, fuelled by rivalry and lack of confidence between the two super-Powers and the possibility of miscalculation as well as the increase in the stockpile of nuclear warheads, which has reached the awesome total of 80,000, sufficient to destroy the world many times over.

As a member of the Non-Aligned Movement, Egypt welcomes the resumption of dialogue between the USSR and the United States on the numerous proposals aimed at concluding new agreements on the limitation of nuclear armaments, extending the validity of existing agreements, or ratifying those that have not yet been ratified. This is a hopeful sign, and it is our sincere hope that a constructive dialogue will ensue and that discussions will culminate in the adoption of an agreement or agreements to limit the level of nuclear armaments of the two super-Powers. We attach great importance to the convening of the next summit meeting between the American and Soviet leaders, a meeting which can give a new tangible impetus to the efforts aimed at halting the arms race.

The Third Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons last year succeeded in adopting by consensus a final document embodying the political will of the international community. We look forward to giving a new thrust to the non-proliferation régime. The nuclear-weapon States, in particular the two super-Powers with the largest nuclear arsenals, have a special responsibility for nuclear disarmament.

(Mr. Abdel Meguid, Egypt)

Egypt believes that, as a binding international document, the Non-Proliferation Treaty is insufficient in itself to ensure the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons horizontally and vertically. The Non-Proliferation Treaty must be accompanied by parallel arrangements to direct the nuclear threat away from mankind. Among such arrangements should be the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones. Since 1974 Egypt has taken the initiative in calling for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. It has also sponsored all the draft resolutions adopted by the General Assembly at its successive sessions with a view to achieving that goal.

Recently the world has been plagued by a series of terrorist acts that have taken a heavy toll in innocent civilian lives and instilled a sense of horror and concern in the hearts of all. Faced with such a blatant threat to human rights and the movement of trade and tourism, we believe that the international community is duty-bound to adopt collective measures, whether political or legal, to face up to and deter that phenomenon so as to ensure the personal and economic security of all the countries of the world and their citizens.

At its fortieth session the General Assembly adopted by consensus its resolution 40/61, in which it affirmed the importance of the accession of States to the relevant agreements as one of the legal measures that would ensure international co-operation in resolving that problem. The resolution also urged Member States to adopt individual and collective measures within the framework of political co-operation to do away with the causes underlying that phenomenon. Nevertheless close scrutiny of the provisions that have actually been implemented makes it abundantly clear that there still exists an urgent need to take more effective, collective action.

Proceeding from Egypt's belief in the importance of an effective policy with solid legal foundations to fight that scourge, in his address before the

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Parliamentary Assembly of the European Council, President Mohamed Hosni Mubarak proposed the convening of an international conference under the auspices of the United Nations to conclude an international agreement that would regulate co-operation among States to combat and deter terrorism, an agreement that would remove loopholes in existing relevant international instruments. The proposed agreement should take into account, on the one hand, the close link between finding just solutions for the underlying causes of the problem and, on the other, the adoption of the necessary measures to fight it. The Egyptian Government is currently conducting consultations on that proposal with a view to determining the major acceptable elements to be incorporated in the proposed agreement and the appropriate timing for formally putting the matter before the General Assembly.

For more than 30 years the Middle East region has been an arena of war and destruction as a result of the continuation of the Arab-Israeli conflict and the emergence of the Palestinian problem, which is almost as old as this international Organization itself. This conflict has claimed thousands of lives and has led to the depletion of valuable resources. It has also plunged the region into a maze of international polarization, cold war and direct and indirect interference.

Having experienced the various stages of that conflict in war and peace, our knowledge of its elements and dimensions further deepens our conviction that the question of the Palestinian people is at the crux of the conflict.

Egypt's unique historical experience in waging the battles of war and peace strengthens our belief that dialogue and negotiation offer the best way to achieve a just, comprehensive and lasting settlement to the conflict, away from the spirit of confrontation and violence which has thrust the region and its peoples into stalemate.

This path is not an easy path, yet undoubtedly it is the sound option and correct method for the peaceful settlement of disputes without relinquishing rights

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or compromising on matters of principle. The agreement achieved between Egypt and Israel on the terms of arbitration concerning the location of some disputed boundary posts serves as an example of abidance by international legitimacy, the provisions of the Charter and the rules of international law. It is Egypt's hope that this approach will testify to the fact that those who have a legitimate right to the land should never hesitate or fear negotiations and dialogue as long as they are confident of their arguments and evidence and of the support that international legitimacy lends to their rights.

The need is greater now than ever before to achieve peace among the peoples and States of the region and to lay the foundations for the long awaited historical reconciliation between the Arab countries and Israel, a reconciliation that would render possible the achievement of a peaceful settlement to the conflict, including the solution of the Palestinian problem in all its aspects. One of the most disturbing aspects of the situation is the inertia that has beset the peace process in recent years, since it portends the possibility of a relapse.

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In its serious endeavour to revive the peace process, Egypt views the Alexandria summit, held this September between President Muhammad Hosni Mubarak and the Prime Minister of Israel, as a step towards increased flexibility, a deeper awareness of the centrality of the Palestinian question and a key to a comprehensive tackling of the Arab-Israeli conflict. That can be achieved through the acceptance of an international conference on peace in the Middle East as the framework for negotiations in which all parties directly concerned with the dispute, including the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), would participate on an equal footing. A thorough preparation for those negotiations should be carried out, with the Security Council playing its primary role as the organ entrusted with the maintenance of international peace and security.

By virtue of its location, relations, and long association with the Palestinian question, Egypt is best equipped to act as a direct party to that dispute with all the other parties with a view to achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the conflict in the Middle East, and in particular the Palestinian question. Therefore, Egypt has called for 1987 to be the year of negotiations for peace in the Middle East.

In the Arab region, Egypt has been acting with a sense of seriousness and responsibility. It has been calling for the co-ordination of positions, the renunciation of differences and the adoption of a peaceful strategy which would ensure the launching of a new stage of international collective action for peace in the region.

By virtue of its balanced relations with all the permanent members of the Security Council, Egypt is in a position to engage in a responsible dialogue to create the best conditions for the convening of the international conference on peace in the Middle East.

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Egypt is aware of the fact that a new phase of international diplomatic action is about to start to give a new momentum to the historical peace process in order to achieve its goals. Undoubtedly, that new drive reaffirms the validity of Egypt's approach to move the region from a stage of war to one of peace and co-existence through the recognition of rights, the elimination of injustice and the healing of wounds.

International legitimacy, as spelt out in the Charter of this international Organization, ensures the inalienable right to self-determination for all peoples of the world, without exception. That is the proper framework for our forthcoming collective international action. The United Nations resolutions pertaining to the Arab-Israeli conflict over its long years, and in particular the resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly, which enjoy a constant international consensus, constitute the foundation of this international legitimacy, through which we seek to implement the provisions contained therein.

Tirelessly, Egyptian diplomacy has striven and continues to strive to create the international and regional conditions which provide the best atmosphere for the preparation of the international conference on peace in the Middle East as a framework for negotiations and dialogue in which all parties to the conflict would participate. Egypt co-ordinates its actions with international Powers and with various Arab parties, and in particular with its sister State Jordan and the PLO, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. Among the basic elements in the creation of such a climate is the adoption of a solid Arab position based on the commitment to the legitimate rights of the Arab and Palestinian peoples, to the restoration of their occupied territories in the West Bank, including Arab Jerusalem, Gaza, and the Syrian Golan Heights, and the commitment to the exercise by the Palestinian people of their right to self-determination and the establishment of their own State on their land in co-ordination with Jordan.

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Egyptian diplomacy has always maintained that the achievement of an acceptable formula for co-operation between Jordan and the PLO, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, is an indispensable and vital factor for movement in the right direction.

Thus, Egyptian diplomacy believes that the Jordanian-Palestinian Accord of February 1985 constitutes not only one of the bases of co-ordinated action but also an additional safeguard for the strength of the Palestinian and Arab position during and beyond the stage of negotiations.

The establishment of the edifice of a comprehensive and just peace would end the suffering of the Palestinian masses in the occupied territories. It would also put an end to the Israeli policies and practices affecting their human rights which have been violated during long years of continued Israeli military occupation.

Egypt's firm, principled position concerning the situation in Lebanon has been to support its legitimate Government and to call upon all the Lebanese, whatever their creed, belief or affiliation, to close ranks and to unite their country so as to restore stability to Lebanon and to close the door before the possibilities of foreign interference and to achieve their freedom by Lebanese decision. Egypt calls for the withdrawal of all foreign troops from Lebanon and for the respect of its stability, sovereignty and territorial integrity. Egypt pays tribute to the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) for its constructive role in the maintenance of peace in that country. Egypt calls upon all parties to respect that important international presence.

The situation in the Gulf remains volatile. The continued armed conflict between Iraq and Iran threatens security, peace and stability in the whole region. Therefore, it has become imperative for the international community to redouble its efforts to stop the bloodshed of that destructive war. The gravity of the

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situation lies in the continued and increased aggravation of the conflict year after year between two neighbouring Muslim peoples linked by the bonds of Islam. Egypt's position concerning that dispute has been clear, consistent and a matter of public record. Egypt has done, and continues to do, its utmost to reach a peaceful settlement to the conflict, a settlement that would restore the rights of both parties within the framework of respect for the provisions of international law, the United Nations Charter, and the principles of the Non-Aligned Movement. The foundering of the efforts aimed at achieving that desired goal must not dissuade us from continuing to strive to put an end to the war and to achieve peace and stability.*

*Mr. Knipping-Victoria (Dominican Republic), Vice-President, took the Chair.

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In that regard, we cannot fail to express our appreciation to, and support for, the Secretary-General, Mr. Perez de Cuellar, in his tireless efforts. We hope that they will be crowned with success in the near future.

Iraq has shown and affirmed its sincere desire to end that bloody conflict. It has declared its readiness to respond to the efforts made within and outside the United Nations to bring about the cessation of hostilities. It has welcomed the idea of engaging in negotiations to achieve a comprehensive settlement of the dispute. Moreover, it has also put forward initiatives and accepted proposals directed towards halting the bloodshed.

Egypt hopes that the positive and co-operative position taken by Iraq since the beginning of the conflict will be reciprocated by a similar position on the part of Iran, particularly because Egypt is convinced that the Iranian threats are not confined to the territory of Iraq, that sister Arab country, but extend to the security and stability of other Arab peoples in the Gulf region. Egypt can neither accept nor condone such threats.

The southern African region is witnessing a dangerous escalation of tension and violence, which have characterized the course of events in the region over recent years as a result of the racist policies of the Pretoria régime and its military adventurism. Within South Africa itself the racist Government has reacted to the uprising of the black majority and its demands for equality and human dignity with further acts of repression and intimidation. Hundreds of black citizens have fallen victim to those acts.

The racist régime of Pretoria continues its illegal occupation of the territory of Namibia, with total disregard for the resolutions of this international Organization on that matter, foremost among which is Security Council resolution 435 (1978), containing the United Nations plan for Namibia's

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independence. The Pretoria régime continues to insist on linking the implementation of that resolution with other matters extraneous to it, matters which fall well beyond the control of the parties directly concerned with the problem.

The arrogance of the Pretoria régime reached its peak in its military attack on the capitals of three neighbouring African States. All the countries of the world, represented in the Security Council, were unanimous in deploring and denouncing that act.

In the light of those acts on the part of the Pretoria régime and the resultant rapid and dangerous deterioration of the situation in southern Africa, the only way to avoid a catastrophe of unpredictable dimensions in the region is to force the régime to abide by the rules of civilized conduct, the provisions of international law and United Nations resolutions. That can best be achieved through the adoption by the Security Council, in accordance with its responsibilities under the Charter, of comprehensive mandatory sanctions against the Pretoria régime.

Egypt's participation with other African States in the deliberations of the special session on Namibia at the ministerial level, not only reflects its firm historical commitment to the cause of African liberation, but also expresses our conviction that there is a need to intensify collective international action to expedite the attainment of independence by that struggling African people and its assumption of its rightful place in the international community and in this Organization.

The establishment of a special fund to help the front-line States cope with the consequences of the imposition of comprehensive mandatory sanctions with against the Pretoria régime is an act of true solidarity. It gives expression

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to the unity of the struggle for the elimination of the remnants of colonialism and racism in that part of the world. Egypt also believes that the policy of dialogue and persuasion followed by the non-aligned countries at the summit meeting held at Harare will help open up new channels of understanding between the non-aligned and African countries on the one hand and the industrialized countries on the other, with a view to reaching basic solutions to the situation in southern Africa.

Egypt expresses its support for the unflagging efforts made by the Secretary-General to reach a just settlement of the situation in Afghanistan, a settlement that would ensure for that brotherly people its right to peace, freedom and stability. We welcome all initiatives to expedite the withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan.

We are also hopeful that the Secretary-General's efforts to resolve the question of Cyprus will meet with success. The solution should realize the hopes of the Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities to solve their problems and reach an appropriate formula for co-existence and co-operation. We reaffirm the importance of respect for the civil and political rights of the members of the two communities, as well as the importance of harmonizing their legitimate interests within a framework of national unity and brotherhood. We also reaffirm the importance of the maintenance of the unity, independence, territorial integrity and non-aligned status of Cyprus.

The withdrawal of foreign troops from Kampuchea and the peaceful settlement of disputes in that part of the world are an essential conditions for the restoration of peace and good-neighbourly relations. The peaceful reunification of the Korean peninsula, in accordance with the popular will, is one of the elements that should contribute to security and stability and the reduction of the risks inherent in the prevailing regional tension.

(Mr. Abdel Meguid, Egypt)

Egypt supports the efforts of the Contadora Group and its Support Group to achieve peace, stability and economic development in Central America. Egypt calls for an end to attempts to interfere in the internal affairs of that important part of the world. It also calls for respect for good-neighbourly relations and for the inviolability of borders between the States of the region. Egypt also calls for keeping the region free of polarization and international competition between the great Powers, in the interest of the well-being of its peoples.

Egypt's responsibility as a developing country dictates that we pause to mention a major problem that concerns us all, individually and collectively, rich and poor, developed and developing alike: the exacerbation of the problem of indebtedness, high interest rates, continued fluctuations in exchange rates, the spread of protectionist practices in the developed countries, the sharp fall in the prices of developing countries' exports of raw materials and commodities and the deterioration in their terms of trade.

In that regard, I pay a tribute to the responsible position adopted by the eighth summit meeting of the non-aligned countries at Harare in dealing with the debt problem. The debtor countries have confirmed that they will honour the obligations they have contracted, while setting a framework for those obligations - namely the framework of co-responsibility, which requires the co-operation of the creditor countries and the monetary and financial institutions with the debtor developing countries in coping with the problem, which threatens the international economy as a whole.

(Mr. Abdel Meguid, Egypt)

The endeavours of the international community to contain the economic crisis in Africa in both the short and the long terms must of course command our encouragement and appreciation. Whatever our assessment of the outcome of the special session of the General Assembly, it has created a moral obligation on the donor countries to assist in the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery, 1986-1990.

While the special session reaffirmed the determination by the African countries to assume the primary responsibility for economic reform, it also showed that the developed countries cannot shirk the task of assisting the African continent to develop its economies through specific measures to support and complement African efforts. The international community has therefore recognized the necessity to provide the additional financial resources required to fill the gap for the full implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action. It has also recognized the necessity to undertake measures to alleviate Africa's external debt-servicing burdens in order to enable the continent to direct its resources and potential towards growth and development.

We emphasize that this cannot be the limit of the international community's task. Rather, we should pursue this obligation through concrete steps to follow up on the results of the special session, both at the political and at the technical levels.

We equally appeal to the Governments of creditor countries and the international monetary, financial and banking institutions to co-ordinate and co-operate with the debtor countries with a view to reaching a lasting solution to the problems of indebtedness, while safeguarding the rights of peoples and ensuring their political, economic and social stability.

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Economic co-operation among developing countries has gone through a number of important developments during the past 20 years. New concepts and goals for this co-operation have evolved in the Group of 77 and in the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. These concepts are based on the philosophy of collective self-reliance and have been translated into tangible objectives and detailed programmes and projects contained in the programmes of action for co-operation among the States members of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of 77.

The Cairo high-level meeting on economic co-operation among developing countries members of the Group of 77, held last August, afforded a favourable opportunity to take stock of the experience of that co-operation and to establish an integrated programme for the future strategy of action on a realistic basis. As such, it ensures the optimum use of resources and the implementation of economically feasible projects in which countries participate on a basis of mutual benefit, and it also ensures the optimum use of the complementarity of the economies of the developing countries and the expertise available to them. The Cairo Declaration on Economic Co-operation among Developing Countries which was adopted contains realistic bases for a future strategy of action that would ensure the credibility, effectiveness and mutual benefit of such co-operation.

The developed countries have constantly supported economic co-operation among developing countries. We hope that special attention will be given to the matter during this session so that the follow-up of the important results achieved at the Cairo meeting will be ensured, and effective measures to enhance economic and technical co-operation among developing countries will be adopted, within the United Nations system.

(Mr. Abdel Meguid, Egypt)

Recently the relevance of the United Nations has been called into question. For our part, we believe that this question is baseless and absolutely irrelevant. The establishment of the Organization more than 40 years ago reflected the international community's need of it. Its survival and strength, in this era of increased international interaction, at times of war and peace alike, serve the interests of all States, big and small, developed and developing.

During the fortieth session of the General Assembly, Member States reaffirmed their commitment to the Charter and their continued support for the Organization as an expression of their belief in the role it plays. It is truly regrettable that the positions adopted by some Member States, whatever their justifications may be, do not help in reaching that goal.

Any effort aimed at increasing the effectiveness of the Organization must stem first and foremost from the necessary political will. Naturally, it must be a joint effort characterized by continuity. When we talk of concerted efforts we have in mind the need for all Member States to co-operate fully and in good faith with the Secretary-General as the chief administrative officer of the Organization. In that regard, we welcome the important role played by the Group of 18 throughout the past year. We believe that it is important for delegations and Member States to discharge their full responsibility to discuss the report of the Group as well as the comments of the Secretary-General thereon.

The participation in this effort in good faith requires that an opportunity be given to bring about the reforms necessary for the Organization in the light of an objective assessment of its activities. Therefore, an end must be put to the practice of bringing financial pressure to bear on the Organization, and to the attempt to channel reforms towards predetermined goals that express only short-term interests.

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Last but not least, the rationalization of the work of the United Nations must take into account the special nature of the Organization and the changing circumstances in the international arena, as well as the interests of all the peoples of the world.

Mr. CONSALVI (Venezuela) (interpretation from Spanish): I extend Venezuela's congratulations to Ambassador Choudhury on his election as President of this session of the General Assembly, and to reiterate our pleasure at the intelligent and expert manner in which Ambassador Jaime de Piniés guided the work of the Assembly during a year that was significant for the United Nations in so many ways.

Venezuela is once again addressing the General Assembly to confirm its commitment to the fundamental principles of the United Nations and to make its voice heard in defence of the ideals of peace and international coexistence, which warranted the Organization's coming into being in historical circumstances.

It is not idle to stress that mankind is living through a period characterized by difficulties and challenges of every kind. We are living in a period of confusion and undeniable risks. At times such as these, one can easily lose faith in human beings and in their potential to build and maintain an international order free from violence and the urge for hegemony in inter-State relations. As Saint-John Perse said: "After all, it is man who is at stake" (mais c'est de l'homme qu'il s'agit).

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Despite every obstacle and the innumerable pitfalls facing the United Nations during its relatively brief history, the Organization still represents a crucial factor in the struggle for reason in the present international context. The criticisms that are sometimes levelled at it often lose sight of the deep meaning of the existence of an organization in which it is still possible to convene the overwhelming majority of States in order to urge them to face their problems by means of dialogue and civilized debate.

While it is true that since the Second World War there has not been another general conflagration, it is likewise undeniable that the precarious "nuclear peace" is not a voluntary arrangement, and much less is it reassuring. Rather, it is the result of an endless rivalry for power rooted in fear, insecurity and the quest for domination by some States over others. In the present international context it would seem that we have no choice but to conceive of peace merely as a balance of power - which is at all times threatened. It is true, the balance of power does contribute to peace, but in no way does it guarantee it.

If we recall the origins of the two most ruinous military confrontations of this century, we see that although the most recent world war broke out because of the imbalance of power in Europe the first of those wars was unleashed despite the existence of what was at the time seen as a stable balance of power.

Those thoughts point in a clear direction: in our nuclear age, when mankind can see the risk of self-destruction with frightening clarity, we cannot rely exclusively on the balance of power to maintain peace; It is essential to go beyond this narrow approach and build more genuinely solid foundations for peace.

We are speaking of a peace based on the principles of a deeply humanistic ethic, on the values of tolerance, dialogue and international co-operation. This is how we see the mission of the United Nations - as an effort that is for ever

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renewed to give peace the support of ethnical values, of agreements freely entered into, which will make it possible to coexist free from hegemony. We do not believe that to be an illusion.

Venezuela views with deep concern the alarming pace of the nuclear and conventional arms race, which seems to be a paranoid advance and, worse yet, one in constant acceleration.

We feel duty bound to confirm our commitment to the goals of disarmament and arms control, and our hope that negotiations under way in various forums on these matters will move forward steadily. We, the small and medium-sized nations, have the duty and the right to raise our voices as many times as may be necessary to give warning of the dangers that loom on the horizon and concern us all.

We object to any attempt to militarize outer space, which some seek to present as a panacea and the definitive course for the future elimination of the nuclear threat; but which, in fact, is nothing more than a new attempt to escape from the political and ethical dilemmas of our times with ever more advanced, complex, illusory and costly technological formulas.

In this respect, it is fitting to point out that the technological obsession, as revealed by the production of increasingly sophisticated and destructive arms systems, is little by little becoming an end in itself, while seriously weakening the political and ethical controls which should guide relations among States. We therefore insist that the arms race continues to subject us to grave and immeasurable threats to our species and planet. We shall never stop denouncing those threats as being absurd. Quite simply, we cannot be resigned to a precarious and uncontrollable situation.

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Heightened East-West tensions, based on the overflow of nuclear arsenals, the growing use of military force, and great-Power intervention in various regional scenarios - these are other symptoms of deterioration which augur ill for world peace and stability.

Given this persistence of interests seeking to restore the rigidity of a bipolar world, those countries that wish to maintain a position of critical independence, diplomatic flexibility and political autonomy affirm the principles of genuine non-alignment before this Assembly.

During the past decade the countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America had many expectations of the global North-South process of negotiations, intended progressively to lessen the vast disparities between the economies of the industrialized countries and those of the less privileged peoples. The present situation has become extremely paradoxical: the economic and social crisis besetting the developing countries is perhaps more serious than ever before, and yet the political will of the most powerful to help tackle that crisis is in a state of constant decline.

Apparently there is no perception whatsoever of the risks of this spectacle of impoverishment and socio-economic backwardness. What is at issue here is a threat to world peace, arising from the clamour and anguish of vast sectors of mankind for whom the future seems to hold no promise and who are left with a sense of uncertainty.

We would violate an elementary rule of balance were we not to point out the positive changes that have occurred in the global context. As Latin Americans, we feel that one of the most encouraging changes in recent years has been the return to democracy, which has happened gradually over almost all of Latin America.

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For years it was Venezuela's fate to live in a continent where authoritarian régimes were predominant. We can still see tragic realities of dictatorships on the map of Latin America. Repressions and mass violations of fundamental human rights have become the distinctive features of those Governments. Nevertheless, the surge towards democracy has an irrepressible impetus.

We are aware that it will not be easy to maintain democracy in our region, because the authoritarian régimes left behind a legacy of deep political wounds and grave socio-economic crises. Nevertheless, Venezuela trusts that this time the democratic process will prove to be lasting and irreversible. As the President of Venezuela recently said:

"The democratic Governments of Latin America must now strengthen their societies, their economies and their rules of the game in politics, in conditions that are hardly favourable. Venezuela is deeply committed to the process of building a hemisphere where freedom flourishes, and moving towards development with a social content. Our solidarity with the best Latin American causes is beyond question."

It is this feeling of solidarity which prompts us to bring before this Assembly the distressing and conflicting economic reality which overwhelms Latin America, severely obstructing any hope that our peoples may reach better standards of living.

The diagnosis of experts and specialized agencies gives us a precise idea of the situation. Most of our countries are undergoing the worst economic crisis since the 1930s. Per capita income in the region has declined by approximately 9 per cent since 1980 down to the 1977 levels, and in some countries to those of 1960. Unemployment and underemployment have risen to 50 per cent in some

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areas. There is galloping inflation of almost 50 per cent in the region as a whole. The external debt is estimated at between \$380 billion and \$400 billion - an outrageous amount, which stifles our possibilities for development, particularly bearing in mind that close to 50 per cent of Latin America's export earnings is used for the payment of interest. In fact, recent years, our countries transferred about \$106 billion to the industrialized countries - a burden which, in relative terms, is double the war reparations that Germany had to pay during the 1920s, as was pointed out recently by a United States expert.

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The strange reverse net transfer of resources from South to North, that is to say, from developing to developed countries, is analysed in detail in the 1986 United Nations World Economic Survey. It was emphasized at the last session of the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 1986/56, which refers consideration of this distressing and untenable phenomenon to this Assembly. As Willi Brandt says in his recent book, Weapons and Hunger, this is a "blood transfusion from the sick to the healthy".

Therefore it is obvious that we are facing a potentially explosive situation, one that will require an unusual effort of joint action. The Latin American democracies have borne their share of the responsibility for finding a way out of this crisis. Indeed, in our countries, even though faced with extremely severe conditions, we have been implementing policies for a rational and well-thought-out management of economic life.

We must repeat: the external debt burden and the rising tide of economic protectionism, which has now become almost the rule of conduct among the industrialized countries, are curtailing the capacity for progress of the nations of the developing world. This situation must and inevitably will change. It is our hope that these changes will take place on the basis of dialogue and concerted action, guided by a positive realization of the common destiny of mankind.

It is in this spirit that the countries of the Group of 77 have brought before this forum the need to give priority consideration to the item "Interrelated areas of money, finance, debt, flow of resources, trade and development", including the preparation of an international conference on money and finance for development, with full participation.

We trust that the recently approved new round of trade negotiations will make it possible to restore the multilateral character which a system of international trade should have and which, as is well known, has been seriously eroded in recent years. The drafting of multilateral principles and norms to broaden the area of

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trade to include new areas, such as services, should not condition or delay a solution to the immediate problem of evergrowing protectionism, which detracts from the credibility of the system and constantly affects the prospects for growth and diversification of the developing countries, through their exports.

Venezuela regrets that the new round will not be open and unconditional for the developing countries, as was to be expected of an international effort to bring constructive solutions to current problems and to draw up a trade system that would respond to the collective interest.

The United Nations has repeatedly given development priority among its considerations. We believe the time has come to stress further the importance of this key problem, as it is a fundamental challenge of our times. We must, through this Organization, discover new ways to make it possible to resume the multilateral efforts which only a few years ago were on the verge of providing promising results. Venezuela will be prepared to co-operate without hesitation in advancing plans for joint North-South and South-South action, which we have supported in the past and shall continue to support.

Tensions in Central America have been and are the subject of the most careful scrutiny by the democratic States of Latin America. The persevering, patient and resolute action for peace by the Contadora Group and the Support Group prove that we are able to find a Latin American response to crucial problems in the region.

Venezuela is part of the initiative of the Contadora Group, being convinced that we must be prepared to explore every avenue to find peaceful outcomes to conflicts in the area and that every type of effort must be made to do away with the hostile atmosphere, which could lead to a general and fratricidal war in that long-suffering region.

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What the Contadora Group and the Support Group are doing constitutes political action the merit of which has been to keep alive the possibility of dialogue. We are firmly convinced of the value of this instrument for bringing about an atmosphere of mutual trust and ensuring that there is the political will on all sides to reach the final objective: to sign and implement the Contadora Act for Peace and Co-operation in Central America. We shall not tire in our steadfast efforts.

We believe that there are sufficient reasons to persist along this path, provided that there is an end to the obstinate attitude of those interests which are determined to prolong the atmosphere of confrontation prevailing in the area, spurred on by the intervention of outside factors that obstruct the attainment of a negotiated settlement of the crisis.

Peace in Central America will not become a reality unless the States of the region themselves, not acting under external pressures, reach agreements that make coexistence possible, with a pluralistic democracy, on the basis of respect for the self-determination of peoples.

Venezuela is unreservedly committed to the protection of fundamental human rights, and it has been a primary objective of the Government of Venezuela to give due guarantees for freedom and for human dignity in every sphere. This is not a circumstantial posture to be maintained for a limited time or in a given area. On the contrary, it is an irrevocable conviction and a constitutional mandate of our democratic system, which in turn encourages and improves the equality and justice of Venezuelan democracy.

In accordance with its principles, Venezuela participates with great interest in the United Nations organs dealing with human rights, so as to give impetus to and support all actions aimed at bringing about positive changes in countries which present scenarios of persistent violations of such rights. At the same time, we have given a vote of confidence to countries which have finally succeeded in

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crossing the threshold to freedom and have taken a democratic course; for, as we see it, the defence and consolidation of this way of life is the ideal and practical formula for ensuring full respect for human rights.

During 1986 several international meetings were held on what remains a formidable challenge for the United Nations. I am referring to the persistence of the policy of apartheid and to one of its external manifestations: the illegal occupation of Namibia. I had the opportunity to participate in the International Conference for the Immediate Independence of Namibia, which was held in Vienna in June of this year. The final Declaration of that Conference reaffirms, once again, that the only basis for the peaceful settlement of the problem is the United Nations plan for the independence of Namibia contained in Security Council resolution 435 (1978). At the time Venezuela, as a member of the Security Council, gave its full support to the adoption of that resolution. Venezuela has requested and resolutely supported the application of mandatory sanctions as provided for in Chapter VII of the Charter, so that the constant threat of South African policies to world peace will not continue and become more acute.

We are witnessing a situation of deep-rooted upheaval which jeopardizes international peace and security and which is becoming increasingly alarming. The escalation of terrorist acts indiscriminately endangers fundamental human values, such as the right to life, to peace, to freedom and to confidence. There is no reason or goal that can justify the use of terror in desperate attempts to achieve certain objectives. We are convinced that international solidarity can lead to joint efforts aimed at promoting an atmosphere of confidence that will make it possible to eliminate such criminal manifestations.

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Every day the problem of drug abuse and illicit traffic in drugs demands more and more careful attention by Governments. It requires firm policies and effective acts of international co-operation, that are appropriate to the challenge we face.

Mankind is threatened and we must have an international instrument to enable us to punish the crime and focus on the social and economic roots of the problem. At the thirty-ninth session of the General Assembly President Lusinchi warned of the dangers for the internal and external security of countries created by the illicit traffic in drugs which has even altered relations among them. To quote the President of Venezuela, these dangers include attempts to "destabilize Governments through corruption, making use of all kinds of criminal elements, tying them into an intricate network of operations, conspiracies and complicities which involve all levels of society, from subversives of the left and right to the most affluent and most impoverished of our citizenry, striking at the very heart of public life. ... its penetration ... has reached such a magnitude that ... drug trafficking not only represents a threat to the national security and sovereignty of several countries but is also turning into a dangerous agent of international conflicts." (A/39/PV.6, p. 21)

In this connection, I should like to express the appreciation of my Government to the Secretary-General and his supporting staff for the preparation of the draft international convention against illicit traffic in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. This will enable us to have in a very short time a comprehensive text with the observations of many Member States, in particular those where the problem of the illicit traffic in and use of drugs is of major importance. As will be recalled, in 1984 Guatemala advocated the idea of a new convention to cover aspects which had not been anticipated in the international instruments now in force.

(Mr. Consalvi, Venezuela)

The International Conference on Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking is to be held in 1987. It has been convened by the Secretary-General for the purpose of generating universal action to combat the drug problem in all its forms and at all levels and to approve a plan for future action on the problem. Both initiatives have the support of the Government of Venezuela.

Venezuela is committed to the strengthening of the United Nations and will decisively challenge any attempts to make it inoperative or set it aside as one more symbol of lost illusions. We reaffirm this commitment especially at this time of crisis and downgrading of the programmes of multilateral action established to find solutions to the grave problems that afflict so many countries.

In our view, rationalization criteria are necessary to enable the United Nations to make the best use of both its financial and its human resources, and of the effective support of Member States in this joint effort.

In signing the San Francisco Charter we entered into commitments which we have invariably complied with, even in the worst times; these have never been an excuse to fail to comply with our budgetary responsibilities as far as the United Nations is concerned.

Since January of this year Venezuela has been a non-permanent member of the Security Council for the third time. We have played our part in dealing with the delicate matters considered by it, guided by principles of balance, moderation and harmonious coexistence, in the search for possible solutions and a lessening of tensions throughout the world.

On reviewing the Secretary-General's report to this session we find statements made with authority and common sense. Its more general outlines on the possibilities of solving world conflicts give us much food for thought. We

(Mr. Consalvi, Venezuela)

find particularly striking a paragraph which sums up the whole significance of the role that multilateralism should play in our times, and I shall quote it: It reads:

"The strengthening and revitalization of the present structure of multilateral institutions is critical to the resolution of problems confronting the international community relating to peace, security and development. To ignore this necessity is to imperil the future prospects of a better world."

(A/41/1, p.2)

We support the Secretary-General's guidelines with the same conviction. Their implementation would strengthen the ability of the United Nations to give clear leadership in the economic field. We must remember the self-evident truth that the solution of many economic problems would bring with it a lessening of tensions.

On the fifth anniversary of the mandate given to Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar as Secretary-General of the United Nations we wish to convey our appreciation to him for his outstanding work, in which he has clearly shown his ability to handle with dignity and dedication the setbacks which our supreme multilateral forum has been facing.

In this International Year of Peace, we reaffirm our confidence in a more promising future for all the peoples of the world. We shall not falter in our efforts, as a country which yearns for peace and development and is struggling to achieve them, in the firm conviction that peace and development are indivisible.

Mr. MAHABIR (Trinidad and Tobago): I take great pleasure in extending to Mr. Choudhury the warmest congratulations of the delegation of Trinidad and Tobago on his election as President of this forty-first session of the General Assembly. It is a tribute to his personal experience and diplomatic skill and to the international esteem in which his country is held. This session is called upon to take certain major decisions which will guide our Organization for years to come

(Mr. Mahabir, Trinidad and Tobago)

and we feel assured that his presidency of this Assembly will contribute greatly to the successful conclusion of our deliberations.

My delegation joins other delegations in commending Ambassador Jaime de Piniés, who so ably presided over the last session of the General Assembly and the historic special session on the critical economic situation in Africa.

We also wish to express once more our deep appreciation to the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, for his continued devotion to the cause of peace and his untiring efforts in promoting the role and the effectiveness of the United Nations.

Trinidad and Tobago has now entered upon its twenty-fifth year as an independent sovereign State and recently celebrated the tenth anniversary of its status as a republic. It is in this context, as a relatively new State and against the background of recent developments in the conduct of international relations which threaten the sovereignty, security and economic independence of small States, that we address the General Assembly today.

(Mr. Mahabir, Trinidad and Tobago)

Last year, during the commemoration of the fortieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations, all Member States of the Organization pledged to do their utmost to strengthen our institution. One year later, the Assembly is taking place under the threatening shadow of a financial crisis which is endangering the viability of the United Nations. This crisis is but one aspect of a much deeper malaise which could ultimately unravel the very fabric of international political and economic relationships and co-operation so painstakingly woven over the past four decades.

Evidence of this malaise is manifested by the increasing efforts to subordinate the sovereignty of the weak to the might of the strong; by the growing trend towards unilateralism with the concomitant undermining of multilateral institutions; by the selective interpretation and application of international law to justify narrow national interests; by the frequent recourse to the threat or use of force in international relations; and by non-respect for the principle of the peaceful resolution of disputes.

Meanwhile, trade is impeded by the creation of protectionist barriers; the international economic system is disrupted by the disregard of the key currency nations for the far-reaching effects of their domestic monetary and financial policies; growth and development are inhibited by the inadequacies of the international financial institutions; and developing countries continue to be overwhelmed by external debt.

It is paradoxical that all this is taking place at a time when the world has become increasingly interdependent as a result of social, economic, political and technological change. Indeed, now, more than ever, we need to strengthen multilateral institutions, the cornerstones of the international system, which were designed to promote international relations based on the principles of sovereignty, equality, economic justice and the rule of international law.

(Mr. Mahabir, Trinidad and Tobago)

Today, the defiance of the rule of international law, the disregard for resolutions of the United Nations and the imposition of unilateral solutions have only compounded the difficulties of resolving the major issues relating to peace and security in our global society. It is therefore not surprising that so many problems persist and continue to appear on the international agenda, becoming less and less amenable to peaceful solution. Failure to bring these matters to an end must be a source of great concern to all of us in the Organization.

Nowhere is this deplorable state of affairs more evident than in South Africa. The degradation and subjugation imposed on millions of South Africans by the racist Pretoria régime have been repeatedly condemned by the international community and the abhorrent practice of apartheid has been declared a crime against humanity. The increasing bloodshed and violence brought about by the ruthless and repressive measures imposed by the Pretoria régime in an attempt to stifle all internal opposition to apartheid have now resulted in an almost universal sense of outrage.

Peaceful demonstrations, campaigns of civil disobedience and non-violent action by the oppressed majority in South Africa have been met by ever-increasing repression and brutality. All forms of diplomatic approaches have been rebuffed by Pretoria. Yet resolutions of the United Nations continue to be ignored and the will of the international community flouted with impunity.

How many more must die before apartheid is abolished? How many more must die before those countries with the most influence on the Pretoria régime accept that comprehensive mandatory economic sanctions now remain the only effective peaceful means of hastening the demise of apartheid? How many more must die before those States cease to consider as "immoral and utterly repugnant" punitive sanctions in eradicating a system which they publicly acknowledge to be "morally wrong and politically unacceptable"? How many more must die?

(Mr. Mahabir, Trinidad and Tobago)

The gravity of the situation in South Africa brings sharply into focus the issue of Namibia's independence. Here is another glaring example of the lack of political will of Member States to implement the resolutions of the United Nations. The overwhelming majority of the members of the international community is convinced that the régime in South Africa will not negotiate in good faith over the independence of Namibia.

The United Nations, during its early years of existence, moved with alacrity in the face of aggression to establish a presence in troubled regions of the world. Even today, the Organization has peace-keeping forces in various areas, yet we seem unwilling to take the same action in a Territory which is the direct responsibility of the United Nations. What is more, a plan has already been approved by the Security Council in resolution 435 (1978) for ensuring the independence of Namibia through the holding of free elections under United Nations supervision and control and including the establishment of the United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG). Instead, what do we find? A puppet régime has been installed by racist South Africa and we, the Members of the Organization, stand by seemingly helpless. This is a blemish on the proud record of the United Nations in the area of decolonization which we must act with dispatch to erase.

In other regions of the world the increasing unwillingness of States to heed the basic tenets of international relations has led to protracted regional conflicts which appear to be more and more intractable. The tragic conflict between Iran and Iraq continues unabated, decimating the fine flower of youth of both nations, ravaging innocent civilian communities and threatening to spill beyond its present confines thus creating a potentially even more explosive situation. Surely, it is time for a peaceful settlement of this conflict.

(Mr. Mahabir, Trinidad and Tobago)

The situation in the Middle East has not improved and continues to take a course which not only heightens tension and increases instability in that area, but also threatens international peace and security. The problem has been further aggravated by the fact that the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) has now become the target of attack. This grave development has incalculable consequences for United Nations peace-keeping efforts. UNIFIL must be allowed to discharge its mandate in southern Lebanon in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions.

With regard to the Palestinian problem, my Government continues to believe that only a negotiated solution which respects the rights of all States in the region to secure boundaries and recognizes the inalienable rights of the Palestinians to a homeland will bring a just and lasting solution to the problems of this region.*

*Mr. Herrenberg (Suriname), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Mahabir, Trinidad and Tobago)

Persistent instability in Central America continues to be a matter of grave concern to the region. We are convinced that increasing armed conflict will only serve to aggravate the situation. We therefore urge that the process of peaceful negotiation and dialogue be pursued, and in this regard my Government continues to give its unswerving support to the Contadora peace process which we see as the most effective instrument for securing enduring peace in the region.

Trinidad and Tobago continues to believe that the basis for a negotiated settlement in Afghanistan and Kampuchea is the withdrawal of all foreign forces from both countries. In this connection, we support the efforts undertaken by the United Nations to contribute to a settlement of the problems affecting these countries. We also endorse the premise that the peaceful resolution of the Korean problem and the relaxation of tension can result only from direct talks between the two parties. Trinidad and Tobago therefore hopes that substantive dialogue between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea will soon resume and continue until a solution to the problem is found.

In designating 1986 as "International Year of Peace," with the theme "To Safeguard Peace and the Future of Humanity," the United Nations recognized not only that the attainment of durable peace required the contribution of every State, but also that it was the responsibility of all States to help to safeguard the future of humanity by reducing the threat of nuclear devastation. However, the two super-Powers have a special responsibility for bringing an end to the senseless arms race and for concluding agreements which will ultimately lead to arms control and nuclear disarmament. My Government expresses the hope that there will soon be substantial improvement in the climate and the spirit of co-operation between the two super-Powers so that progress can be made on these issues.

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The overriding importance of nuclear disarmament should not divert our attention from the issue of conventional weapons, the proliferation and sophistication of which have resulted in untold destruction and suffering during the course of local and regional conflicts in the developing world. Experience has shown that the accumulation of weapons does not provide the security it purports to attain, but rather escalates tension, promotes distrust and precipitates conflicts. In a world of increasing material needs and finite resources, man's technological advances should be better utilized to promote development and to eliminate hunger, suffering and want. We look forward to the convening of the International Conference on the Relationship Between Disarmament and Development in 1987, which, we hope, will lead to a clear definition of all aspects of this issue and elaborate measures which will promote the welfare of all peoples.

There is a growing awareness of the links between development and peace and security. However, what is needed is the recognition by the developed countries that in an increasingly interdependent world the efforts of all countries will have to be concerted in order to overcome the structural imbalances and inequities of the global economy and that the multilateral institutions have an important role to play in attaining this objective.

The present world economic system, which has historically been structured to meet the requirements of the industrialized nations, continues to operate to the disadvantage of the developing countries. These countries, which are still in the main primary producers, now find themselves faced not only with the unprecedented collapse in the prices of nearly all commodities but also with the economic consequences of the fundamental changes that are taking place in the nature of, and demand for, materials in the industrialized countries. Technological advances are making possible not only new materials in substitution for many of the primary

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products of developing countries but also new uses for these materials in processes to which the primary products cannot readily be adopted. These new materials are already displacing minerals upon which the economies of some developing countries depend for the means of achieving the much desired improvements in the economic and social condition of their peoples.

The recent dramatic fall in the price of crude oil has had a devastating effect on the economic situation of oil-producing countries everywhere, forcing many of them to make drastic adjustments in their economies in order to cope with their straitened circumstances. Further, although the lower oil prices may have eased the balance-of-payments position of some developing countries, that benefit has been largely offset by a sharp drop in the transfer of financial resources and in the level of concessional assistance.

The developed countries themselves have not escaped the effects of petroleum prices in dramatic decline. Whole regions and cities that at one time prospered, directly or indirectly, through the oil industry, have found themselves faced with serious economic problems. Business enterprises, even banks, have gone bankrupt; unemployment has risen; and governmental and other activities have been adversely affected by declining revenues. It must now, therefore, be generally recognized that a gradual increase in prices to reasonably remunerative levels, not only of oil but also of other primary products, is an essential ingredient in the recovery and stability of the world economy.

Efforts made by developing countries to reduce dependence on income from primary products by diversifying their economies and by developing an industrial base have been frustrated by the increasing tendency of developed countries to restrict access to their markets for a wide range of manufactured and semi-manufactured products. My delegation wishes to stress that access to the

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markets of the industrialized countries remains crucial to the development prospects of the developing countries. The recent agreement in Punta del Este to convene a new round of multilateral trade negotiations is therefore most welcome. We hope that this new round will result in the removal of protectionist barriers and restrictions which now bedevil international trade.

The proper functioning of the international trading system is a necessary condition for monetary and financial stability. The distortion of this system has surfaced as currency misalignments, volatile capital movements and a general failure of the régime of floating exchange rates to establish stability.

The key currency countries need to become more aware of their role and, more important, of their responsibility, given the effects of their domestic policies upon the international economic system. For far too long, these countries have adopted policies which have impaired the proper functioning of the international economic system.

There is growing recognition that co-ordination and harmonization of interests are crucial to the long-term coherence, viability and vitality of the international economic system. Last year there were signs of a new commitment to growth-oriented policies, lower interest rates, realignment of currencies and closer co-ordination of national policies. Summitry and declarations of intent, however, are not enough.

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Trinidad and Tobago is of the view that the linkage within the international system demands that existing arrangements be improved and new mechanisms devised to mobilize the participation of all States. Such mechanisms should give full recognition and effect to the reality of interdependence. The international financial institutions, particularly the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, must play a more progressive role in the international economic system. Those institutions must be equipped with sufficient financial resources and the requisite flexibility to foster the resumption of growth and investment and the reactivation of the development process. This is even more important at this time when access to concessional assistance and other transfers of financial resources have become increasingly difficult. It is imperative, however, that those institutions, while not abandoning short-term solutions, adopt an approach more responsive to the long-term needs of developing countries.

There is no more striking illustration of the inequities and imbalances of the international economic system than the staggering dimensions of the external debt of the developing countries, which is now in excess of \$700 billion. The most important factor influencing the dramatic and inexorable growth in indebtedness has been exorbitant rates of interest unilaterally imposed. Each debtor nation thus finds itself cast in the role of a modern-day Sisyphus, even more overwhelmed today by a debt which it thought it had lessened the day before.

Developing countries, labouring under the harsh measures of internal adjustments necessary to settlement their external debt commitments, now find themselves in the paradoxical position of being net exporters of capital to the developed creditor countries. Should such an anomalous situation be allowed to persist, it will impede growth and development in the developing countries and will

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result in political and economic instability, the ripple effect of which would be felt across the entire international spectrum.

The adjustment of national economies and the rescheduling of debts, however innovative, will not provide a lasting solution but will only cause the system to muddle from crisis to crisis. That seemed to have been sensed last September at the annual meeting of the World Bank and the Fund at Seoul, when the need for a new and comprehensive approach to the problem of external indebtedness was identified. Trinidad and Tobago will therefore support any effort or initiative to promote a structured intergovernmental dialogue which will involve commercial banks and the international financial institutions.

Declining economic activity in developing nations has created a number of serious human problems. In most developing countries the youth constitute the largest percentage of the population. There must be adequate opportunities and options for their creative energies, aspirations and idealism. Depressed economies inhibit opportunities for the young and frustrate their potential. Only a vibrant, expanding world economy and an orderly international political system can contribute to the full realization of the hopes and aspirations of our future generations.

The United Nations has a crucial role to play in the resolution of social, political and economic problems which beset the international community. It is therefore necessary to strengthen its structure and its mechanisms and to review continually the programmes and activities of the Organization to ensure that it keeps pace with the demands of a constantly changing global society while retaining its effectiveness. The report of the Group of 18 has raised many fundamental and sensitive issues. In its report, the Group attempts to provide a frank appraisal of the factors that have led our Organization into its present difficulties and to

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provide a range of far-reaching measures that could undoubtedly enhance its efficiency and integrity.

My delegation will participate fully at the appropriate time in the deliberations on the recommendations made by that Group. However, we wish to sound a note of caution. In seeking the necessary improvements, we must ensure that we do not impair the structure and mechanisms we have nurtured to achieve the goals of the United Nations. That is the spirit in which Trinidad and Tobago will approach the search for greater financial and administrative efficiency. We must emphasize, however, that the decision-making process of the United Nations must not be vested only in those who desire to preserve their political and economic preeminence. It must accord with and give full recognition to the principle of the sovereign equality of all States.

There are difficult times ahead of us. In addressing the question of the responsibility of the United Nations in maintaining international peace and security, it has become fashionable to assert that the Organization must be made more effective if its credibility is to be maintained. We must recognize, however, that it is we, the Member States, who constitute the United Nations. The responsibility for the effectiveness of the Organization devolves upon every single one of us. It is in the discharge of that collective responsibility that the strength and effectiveness of our Organization will be enhanced. It is upon a strong and effective United Nations that States, particularly small States, rely as a guarantor and protector of their sovereignty and independence. Member States must therefore comply with the obligations of the Charter, observe scrupulously the fundamental tenets of international relations and respect unreservedly the equality and sovereignty of all Members of our international community. If we do not, the

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United Nations system will weaken and collapse, parochial interests based on force will become paramount and anarchy and chaos will be the order of the day.

Last year the special session to commemorate the first 40 years of the Organization provided a welcome opportunity for us to pause in our annual deliberations as an Assembly, to reflect upon our achievements and our failures. It was a salutary pause that should both have refreshed and reinvigorated our Organization, enabling us as it did to draw encouragement and inspiration from the achievements and to profit from and take to heart the lessons of the failures, in preparation for the greater tasks that still lie ahead of us.

As we move towards the twenty-first century, let us not do so with our minds and eyes focused on the past. Let us, rather, drawing upon the wisdom and experience of the past and ever conscious of the awesome responsibility that history has entrusted to us as Members of this Organization, press forward confidently, but with humility, with our efforts to help shape a better, brighter and safer future for mankind and, in particular, for our youth, to whom we must in due course pass on the torch of the preservation of this planet and of the welfare and progress of its peoples.

Mr. KOROMA (Sierra Leone): It is an honour for me, on behalf of the delegation of Sierra Leone, to extend to the President our congratulations on his election to preside over the United Nations General Assembly at its forty-first session. Assured, as we are, of the commitment of his great country, Bangladesh, to the noble ideals of this Organization, and given his own personal qualities as a statesman and diplomat of distinction, we have every confidence that he will guide the deliberations at the forty-first session to a successful conclusion.

We would also register our appreciation and gratitude to his distinguished predecessor, Mr. Jaime de Pinies of Spain, who successfully presided over the historic and truly memorable fortieth session.

As we commence the fifth decade of our Organization's existence we continue to face enduring threats to international peace and security. The continued accumulation of massive nuclear and conventional arsenals, the persistence of terrorism within States and across State frontiers, inter-State aggression with sophisticated weaponry and massive forces, and the continued polarization of the world into ideological and military blocs have consistently raised the spectre of a dangerous world on the brink of catastrophe. Despite the endless speeches and the numerous resolutions of this Assembly, peace remains a dream and a faint hope to the peoples of Central America, parts of Africa, Kampuchea, Afghanistan and the Middle East. For many, parochial and selfish national interests remain the corner-stone of policy and international behaviour contrary to the principles of our Organization, the pleas and supplications of concerned humanity and simple ethical rules of conduct.

Perhaps nowhere else today are those ethical principals more violated, nowhere else the conscience of humanity more called into question and nowhere else urgent action more demanded than in South Africa. The tragedy of South Africa continues to be perpetuated with painful consistency. Never in the course of political

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history has a régime been so utterly callous and insensitive to the fundamental rights and needs of the majority of its citizens.

In view of the sensitivity and importance of this issue and the increasing urgency with which the international community must now deal with South Africa, permit me to deal a little extensively with the subject.

The evil character of the South African régime is vividly portrayed in the report of the Commonwealth Group of Eminent Persons on South Africa, which made the following observation about apartheid:

"As a contrivance of social engineering, it is awesome in its cruelty. It is achieved and sustained only through force, creating human misery and deprivation and blighting the lives of millions."

While much of the world is in agreement about the abhorrence of that régime, some controversy still exists about how to deal with it. Because of South Africa's proven aversion to reason over several decades of negotiations with it, the great majority of the international community is now firmly convinced that one of the few remaining options for ending apartheid and the atrocities it embodies is the imposition of effective comprehensive and mandatory sanctions against that régime.

It is regrettable, however, that after several years of intense efforts by the international community the struggle against apartheid is still in a state of ferment, not due so much to credible resistance by South Africa to international pressures as to the apparent existence of a conspiracy by a section of the international community which, for mostly cynical reasons, has directly or indirectly undermined those pressures.

Those collaborators with apartheid have spawned dozens of reasons for their reluctance to fulfil their obligation under the United Nations Charter and as members of the human race. We have been told, for example, that the imposition of comprehensive sanctions against South Africa is immoral as such sanctions impose

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hardships on the lives of ordinary people, in particular black people, and that in any case sanctions could not bring about the desired political changes in southern Africa as they have historically been proven to be ineffective in these circumstances. At other times we are told that South Africa has already embarked upon a process of significant political change and that sanctions could only scuttle that process.

It would hardly have been worth the time and effort for me to attempt to rebut those fallacies had they been confined to the traditional fringes of society. In the circumstances it has to be pointed out that whatever adverse effects sanctions might have on the oppressed people of South Africa, such effects would pale into insignificance when compared to the immorality of apartheid. Therefore to choose for the South African people the immorality of apartheid over the so-called immorality of sanctions is not only logically absurd but morally indefensible. Predictably, the oppressed people of South Africa have shown their contempt for such faulty reasoning and hypocritical concern by overwhelmingly supporting the call for sanctions, the effects of which upon them could make very little difference to their already subhuman existence.

The effects of sanctions on South Africa can be gauged from the paranoia with which the South African Government is reacting to the issue and the elaborate machinery it is now assembling to circumvent them. Recently South Africa's Manpower Minister, Pieter du Plessis, gave Archbishop Desmond Tutu what he called a friendly warning that the Archbishop's calls for sanctions against South Africa bordered on "high treason". Not too long ago the head of the South African Reserve Bank, Dr. Gerhard Kock, after reporting a one billion dollar capital outflow from South Africa in the first half of this year, explained that perceived threats of intensified economic sanctions and news of continued social unrest were the main factors behind the outflow.

(Mr. Koroma, Sierra Leone)

Those who try to justify apartheid by arguing that Africans in South Africa and Namibia are better off than their counterparts in other African countries succeed only in deluding themselves. The rest of us know that in Namibia, for instance, while the per capita income for whites is estimated at over \$8,000, the average income for Africans, who constitute 92 per cent of the population, is only \$188. A recent survey by the Carnegie Foundation revealed that the incidence of disease associated with malnutrition among rural blacks in South Africa is among the world's highest and that nearly half of the black population lives below the minimum subsistence level. In addition, the South African journalist Donald Woods, in a study for the Commonwealth secretariat, calculates that South African blacks are materially worse off than citizens in at least 12 other African countries. And all this is happening in one of the world's richest countries.

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We also know that in July this year, after a South African court overturned part of the emergency decree imposed by the régime, Prime Minister Botha simply issued an executive order annulling the Court's ruling, making nonsense of any argument that South Africa offers a vision of judicial liberty unparalleled on the continent.

My delegation wishes to reiterate its conviction that the imposition of comprehensive mandatory sanctions against South Africa is now necessary. In doing so, I do not intend to underestimate the size of the resources required for such an undertaking in terms of fighting sanctions-breaking activities as well as ensuring that the front-line States are provided adequate assistance by the international community to enable them withstand South Africa's reprisals.

Namibia presents one of the most glaring examples of South Africa's violation of international law and our Organization's inability to uphold its own legal prescriptions. Aside from this, Namibia's independence is further delayed by unjustifiably linking it with the withdrawal of Cuban forces from Angola. It must be clear to all by now that the presence of Cuban troops in Angola is entirely the sovereign decision of the Government of Angola, which is free to formulate and pursue its own independent foreign policy objectives and work out its own national destiny. The withdrawal of Cuban forces is a matter for the Governments of Angola and Cuba, and we believe that this process can only begin when Security Council resolution 435 (1978), on Namibia, is implemented and the threat to the internal and external security of Angola is eliminated. Meanwhile, the struggle for Namibian emancipation from colonialism and illegal occupation will go on under the sole and authentic leadership of the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) and the support of concerned nations.

(Mr. Koroma, Sierra Leone)

The question of Western Sahara and the continuing stalemate can only be brought to a final conclusion through negotiation. In the light of this, we wish to echo the call for the withdrawal of foreign troops and a referendum on the Territory, in order to give the people of Western Sahara the opportunity to work out their destiny. It is in this respect that we restate and reaffirm our support for General Assembly resolution 40/50, on Western Sahara, as offering the desired and appropriate process for a peaceful resolution of the problem.

The impasse that now exists in the Middle East peace process is a consequence of the aggression against the Palestinian people and the denial of their right to a homeland. That situation can persist only at the cost of the continued suffering of the Palestinian people under occupation and mistreatment and the risk of another outbreak of hostilities in the region. We consider any efforts based on a policy of extracting unreasonable concessions from the Palestinian people to contain no prospects of yielding enduring stability. Similarly, the policy of substituting unrepresentative Palestinians for the Palestine Liberation Organization, the sole authentic representative of the Palestinian people, as negotiating partners is short-sighted and succeeds only in further clouding the prospects for peace in the region.

Along with the vast majority of the international community, we condemn the cruel Israeli practices in the occupied Palestinian territories and urge the occupying authorities to take an enlightened view of their need for security by recognizing that an oppressive and cruel neighbour never endears himself to anyone.

My delegation continues to oppose the presence of foreign troops in Kampuchea and regrets that previous appeals by this Assembly in numerous resolutions for the complete withdrawal of foreign forces from that country have not been heeded.

(Mr. Koroma, Sierra Leone)

We pay a tribute to the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea for significantly furthering the peace process by presenting in March this year an eight-point peace plan for a political settlement of the Kampuchean problem. In reaffirming our solidarity with the people of Kampuchea in their struggle for self-determination, we urge that the other parties to the conflict participate in discussions on the implementation of the eight-point peace plan, which has already won substantial support.

The solution to many of today's world problems and the enhancement of peace and security cannot be achieved with passionate slogans, pious and self-righteous speeches and tiresome resolutions, many of which have remained unimplemented. The people of South Africa, Namibia, Western Sahara, Afghanistan, Palestine, Kampuchea and the Koreans, the representatives of the last of which should be sitting here with us, are sick and tired of these. They need action, and, as we enter the fifth decade of our Organization's existence, we can enhance its credibility by the decisive measures we bring to bear on the crises that threaten peace, security and socio-economic progress. But what we see in our time is that certain States, in pursuit of their separate interests, are not doing much to ensure the success of our Organization and further the progress of the rest of the human community.

The problems of our Organization are further compounded by the fact that only a year after we reaffirmed our faith and continued support for it, the United Nations is facing a grave financial situation. The Secretary-General has reacted courageously and promptly to that crisis, a report on which was submitted, discussed and partially acted upon at the resumed session of the fortieth General Assembly in May this year. Such action appropriately sets the tone and the mode for the extensive and detailed discussion necessary for an accurate diagnosis and solution of the Organization's problems.

(Mr. Koroma, Sierra Leone)

My delegation acknowledges in an equally hopeful spirit, the report of the Group of 18 on the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations. The report requires careful study to ensure that the broadest possible consensus is reached on its recommendations.

Over 12 years ago the Assembly, disturbed by the growing disparities between the rich and the poor, proclaimed a new international economic order. The hesitations and prevarications which have since attended its implementation have undermined the efforts of our institution to reduce the widening gap. Many developing countries, including Sierra Leone, remain particularly vulnerable to unpredictable external economic forces. Our era is one that requires sustained reflection, a frank and honest analysis and the combined efforts of all the human and technological resources at our disposal if we are to provide a solution to the unprecedented economic crisis that still besets our nations.

In spite of appreciable shifts in perception among the major industrialized countries, the socio-economic situation in Africa remains precarious and disturbing. The fact that many African Governments have revised their policies and reformulated strategies and programmes should not invite complacency on the part of the international community. The present crisis is largely attributable to fundamental structural problems which can be rectified only by sustained, long-term, growth-oriented adjustment programmes. This requires several years of coherent, sustained and well-co-ordinated action, appropriately initiated at the national level and receiving the ungrudging co-operation of the international community and particularly, the support of the major financial institutions. Indeed, the shortage of liquidity and inadequate financial resource flows to many developing countries have both contributed to disturbing levels of poverty and

(Mr. Kormaa, Sierra Leone)

deprivation. We have no doubt that some of the traumatic incidents associated with famine and food shortages in Africa must be attributed essentially to the basic constraints of inadequate and ineffectual resource flows.

(Mr. Koroma, Sierra Leone)

For our part, my Government has adopted and is pursuing programmes for rehabilitation and economic recovery, and in order to accelerate their implementation it has gone a long way, and has bent over backwards, to reach an accommodation and understanding with the International Monetary Fund (IMF). That is not an easy process. It runs the risk of instability for any Government that attempts to operate within a framework which is unacceptable to the majority of its people. In accommodating IMF conditions, one can undermine democracy. In that connection, we believe that the major industrialized countries should have the vision to offer greater, more reliable, constant and effective assistance without very harsh conditions whose implementation can cause severe hardship. The special session on the critical economic situation in Africa, which convened here in the spring, identified some areas for priority action, and we believe that the international community must support our efforts to achieve meaningful, effective and sustainable development.

The funds required to support and implement the Programme of Action over the next five years are substantial, and Africa first and foremost, with the international community in support, must renew its commitment to achieving economic recovery and development. In that connection, a positive and sympathetic approach by the international community to the persistent and pervasive question of external debt can have significant effects on prospects for future development.

Some of our partners in development, by cancelling substantial debts accruing as a result of our implementing programmes for infrastructure investment, have shown the way to others. Debt relief, judiciously and appropriately applied, eases economic and financial constraints, offers the recipient some respite and, properly handled, improves the prospects for recovery and rehabilitation.

(Mr. Koroma, Sierra Leone)

The United Nations has over the years stood the test of time, in spite of difficulties which sometimes challenge its usefulness. Without a shadow of doubt, it has become the only medium through which peace and security can be assured. Although the complexities of international relations today make the Organization's task, sometimes insurmountable, the successes achieved, with the determination, skill and perseverance of the Secretary-General, staff and Member States, have outweighed the frustrations and disappointments.

No nation, no matter how small, can in splendid isolation be master of its fate, but equally, no nation, no matter how great, can compel all others to do its bidding nor convert them by vigorous persuasion to its own beliefs. All nations are interdependent in terms of politics, economics and strategy. The United Nations is a guarantor of that eternal truism.

Once again the delegation of Sierra Leone solemnly renews its faith in the noble ideals enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and its endeavours to pursue the objective of a peaceful, stable and progressive world.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.