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GENERAL ASSEMBLY

PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE NINTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Wednesday, 24 September 1986, at 3 p.m.

<u>President:</u>	Mr. CHOUDHURY	(Bangladesh)
later:	Mr. KABANDA (Vice-President)	(Rwanda)
later:	Mr. OGOUMA (Vice-President)	(Benin)

- Address by Mr. Oscar Arias Sanchez, President of the Republic of Costa Rica
- General debate [9] (continued)

Statements were made by:

Mr. Clark (Canada)
Mr. Mwananshiku (Zambia)
Mr. van den Broek (Netherlands)
Mr. Abdullah (Oman)
Mr. Barry (Ireland)
Mr. Tindemans (Belgium)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

ADDRESS BY MR. OSCAR ARIAS SANCHEZ, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF COSTA RICA

The PRESIDENT: This afternoon the Assembly will first hear an address by the President of the Republic of Costa Rica.

Mr. Oscar Arias Sanchez, President of the Republic of Costa Rica, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations General Assembly the President of the Republic of Costa Rica, His Excellency Mr. Oscar Arias Sanchez, and to invite him to address the General Assembly.

President ARIAS SANCHEZ (interpretation from Spanish): I should like to extend my best wishes to the representatives of sovereign States Members of this unparalleled forum where we express our thoughts and hopes. I express to you, Mr. President, my pleasure that you should have been chosen to preside over the General Assembly during this International Year of Peace, for you add lustre to the international community.

I come from a nation without weapons. Our children have never seen a tank and cannot recognize an armed helicopter, a ship of war, or even a gun. Parents and grandparents tell stories to the young of the peculiar architecture of some schools that, so many years ago, served as fortresses.

I come from a small nation that has enjoyed 100 years of democracy. None of my country's children, men or women knows oppression. There is not a single Costa Rican in exile. Mine is a nation of liberty.

I come from a land that in a few short years has provided refuge for more than 250,000 foreigners. Men, women and children have come to our soil, fleeing from tyrannies, fleeing from horizons of hopeless misery, fleeing from violence among brothers, to seek a refuge in the liberty and peace that are Costa Rica's. These

(President Arias Sanchez)

foreigners make up 10 per cent of our nation's population and are, in the majority, Nicaraguans.

I come from a nation that, as is true of many here, confronts grave problems. Our problems range from the poverty suffered by a number of our citizens to the ominous threats to the peace we hold so dear. We wish to defeat that poverty and to preserve that peace.

I come from a region of the world that is a mosaic of contrasts. Inequalities abound among the five countries of the Central American isthmus and among the peoples who inhabit it. There are in these lands peoples who may freely elect their governments, and others who cannot; there are lands in which human rights are upheld, others where they are violated daily; there are lands where violence is rife in the countryside and in cities. Others where peaceful coexistence is exemplary. Together with thousands and thousands of illiterates, there live, among its men and women, musicians and artists who honor humanity, poets and sculptors who transcend frontiers with their artistic expressions. There are dictators who exceeded the bounds of cruelty throughout the decades of sombre history. These are the lands of Central America, among them Costa Rica, lands of wealth for the few, of pain for the many, but of hope for all.

I come from the oldest democracy in Spanish America. I come forth with the joyous contentment of a nation that sees democracy with justice reign supreme throughout its area as the only hope for peace for the Americas. We rejoice in the knowledge that so many sister States have recovered their political liberties. We hope to forget soon the suffering that each despotic and autocratic experiment in our America brings in its wake.

We deplore the fact that the scenario of cruelty, of useless indebtedness, of rampant corruption and the systematic desecration of human rights unfolds even today in some of our American lands. That is why when I recently took over the Presidency of my country, we formed an alliance between liberty and democracy. I

(President Arias Sanchez)

said then that neither economically nor politically would Costa Rica ever serve as an ally of governments who oppress their people. I affirmed then, and I reiterate today, that to embark on the road to peace in the Americas and the Caribbean, the fear of liberty must be overcome. Liberty and democracy for development, liberty and democracy for justice, liberty and democracy for peace.

To this forum I bring a message from my people. Let us talk about peace in Central America, assailed by the violence that persists in some sister States and by the threat of war in others.

Eminent persons have for decades predicted that the road to justice can only be found in freedom and democracy. Dictatorship, however, has cast a lengthy shadow over the region. As the light of liberty began to shine it showed clearly what that shadow had meant to many countries: years and years of violations of human rights, and insensitivity to the problems of the humble, and their wrongful exploitation by unmerciful rulers.

The democratic awakening of Central America is not easy and is plagued with obstacles. In some countries, the military, accustomed to dictatorships, appear to dog, in a sinister way, the hesitant first steps of Governments elected by their people. In other cases, the deep mistrust of brothers and sisters, springing from the same land, mushrooms into guerrilla warfare. The call to an internal reconciliation through democratic means does not appear, for the time being, to be producing tangible effects. Brothers continue to kill brothers; Central American blood continues to be drained.

The problems described thus far appear overwhelming. But there is more. The heroic struggle for freedom by the people of Nicaragua culminating in the overthrow of the tyrant Somoza has followed a political path that does not conform to the

desires of its people for liberty, nor to their hopes for a full and vigorous democracy, which so many countries had fully supported earlier in their fight against dictatorship.

Such a turn of events, neither desired nor anticipated, has transformed Central America into yet another stage for East-West confrontation. There is no respite from the path chosen by the "comandantes" who betrayed a revolution destined to give democracy to generations who only knew oppression. There is no respite for a people, frustrated and disappointed, who have returned to civil war. There is no respite for neighboring lands, who feel the threat from a new dogmatic totalitarianism and who suffer now the consequences of a border rife with anguish and disenchantment.

Latin America, tired of futile violence and grieved by decades of oppression, warned that the dawning of a new age of liberty for the American Continent was overshadowed by the conflict between the East and the West as a consequence of the path taken by Nicaragua.

There then emerged an unprecedented diplomatic initiative: the Contadora Group. The objective pursued by Mexico, Colombia, Panama and Venezuela earned the respect and support of the whole world and, of course, that of Costa Rica. The aim was none other than to provide a forum to help Central American States to strengthen their democracies and freedoms. It was created as a forum to seek the internal reconciliation of people locked in armed struggle, and to guarantee, by means of democracy, the immediate end to the incipient conflict between East and West. It was created as a forum to facilitate world understanding of the need for preferential economic treatment for Central America. It was created as a forum to accelerate the economic development of our nations and to mitigate the reservoir of ill feeling built up during the dictatorships.

(President Arias Sanchez)

The Contadora Group was then joined by the Support Group, including the democratic Governments of Argentina, Brazil, Peru and Uruguay. The whole of Latin America wished to unite and revive Bolivar's clarion call for liberty. Contadora transformed itself into the vanguard of a Latin America that wished to march united towards liberty and in favour of political democracy for all its peoples. "No more dictators, whether of the left or the right", proclaimed the banner of peace held by Contadora.

The Government of Nicaragua has not listened to history's message of liberty. The Government of Nicaragua has not accepted the fraternal hand extended by Contadora. Instead it has utilized this forum for liberty to gain time and consolidate a military and totalitarian State in its territory.

Contadora is not dead. Costa Rica will continue to support its efforts as long as a whisper of hope exists. We desire a peaceful solution and we appeal to the sovereignty of reason. There is a tradition of liberties which beckons us to serve as responsible and conscientious advocates. Yet if we turn our backs on this tradition, the tragedy of war will overtake us, a tragedy in which we are doomed to be victims.

Costa Rica has declared itself neutral in all the armed conflicts of Central America. My Government will have its neutrality respected, calling upon whatever courage is needed. This we have demonstrated in words and in deeds. We desire to see all of the great Powers remove themselves from Central American disputes. Costa Rica does not abide the fuelling of war or the extension of death in the region by external forces. While the entire world calls for peace in Central America, the clouds of war gather. While the entire world clamours for greater economic growth, in large parts of Central America the only growth is in poverty.

(President Arias Sanchez)

I will not permit any armed group to use our territory in order to attack neighbours. I will not permit it because Costa Rica respects international law. I will not permit it because the existence of armed groups in our territory is a danger to our national security. Since we lack an army to defend ourselves, if we so acted, we would lose all legitimacy before the international community, in whose principles we rest the defence of our sovereignty. I will not permit it because such use of Costa Rican territory easily lends itself to the traffic of arms and to the traffic of drugs. I will not permit it because the moral standing of Costa Rica is sacred. I will not permit it because Costa Ricans believe in peaceful solutions and are not prepared to let their soil be trampled upon by those advocating violent ways. I will not permit it because Costa Ricans do not want war on their territory, or those who believe in war.

Our commitment is to peace and to development. We aspire to more homes for our families and more employment for our work-force - and this is incompatible with war.

Because in Costa Rica we do not know the fear of liberty, we will not desert our trust in dialogue. That is why we went to the meeting of Central American Presidents in Esquipulas, Guatemala. There, Central America reaffirmed its faith in democracy and in liberty. The Government of Managua stood cautioned that only democracy could shield against the suffering and war we wished to avoid.

Costa Rica also upholds President Cerezo's initiative to create a Central American parliament. But we believe in this parliament only if it is composed of genuine expressions of democratic régimes in each of the Central American nations. We do not accept a regional forum that would serve only to legitimize dictatorships internationally.

(President Arias Sanchez)

The Government of Nicaragua has accused my country before the International Court of Justice at The Hague of supposed complicity of my Government in warlike actions from Costa Rica. It is a little like the pot calling the kettle black, as the saying goes. We vigorously deny this charge.

We are going to the Court at The Hague to defend ourselves. We are familiar with the publicity manoeuvres of the Managua régime. We are tired of dialogues in which everything changes; tired of the insincere promises to negotiate. At The Hague we want the entire world to see the hidden truth of a Nicaragua that once again has betrayed Sandino. Seven years ago Sandino arose to celebrate the liberty of his people. Once more he has been assassinated.

We have received thousands and thousands of Nicaraguan refugees. As Costa Ricans, we are concerned about the consolidation of a totalitarian régime of Marxist ideology on our borders. Our people know that in Europe as well as in other regions of the world the geographical frontiers between West and East cost millions and millions of dollars in armaments, defensive systems and military alliances.

Can the world understand that in Costa Rica we have no desire whatsoever even to consider the possibility of re-establishing armed forces? Can the world understand that we do not wish to continue receiving wave upon wave of refugees?

I ask the world to understand, and I ask the great Powers, whatever their ideology, to understand, that for the Americas a pact for democracy, for pluralism and for liberty benefits all humanity and promotes peace throughout the world.

I also bring a mandate from my people to discuss our concerns regarding the world economy and to talk of our proposals to reach a more humanistic development. In this difficult period of our history, we wish to write an especially frank and honest page. For this, we need a guaranteed peace for our country and a more just international economic structure.

(President Arias Sanchez)

First and foremost, we are concerned that the return of political democracy in the Americas may not be accompanied by a more equitable international economic order.

We are surprised by the paradox that today, some of the most severe economic restrictions that can be recalled since the crisis of the 1930s, are being imposed on Latin America. It will be difficult for history to record that many of the industrial nations were allies of Latin America in its efforts to democratize. At best, they will be viewed as indifferent spectators of a process that concerned them much less than the tribulations of the international private banks.

In the recent past of Latin America, we saw how efficient and expert bankers stimulated the dreams of greatness of generals who restrained freedom and liberties in many lands. A short while ago, the international banks competed fiercely to lend to tyrants. Today, they unite to collect from democracies. Yesterday, they cared little that their money maintained the rule of despots. Today, they are not concerned with the suffering of those who pay in liberty.

(President Arias Sanchez)

No one has the right to invoke the apolitical in order to commit the amoral. Such an attitude damages the dignity of our shared humanity and endangers civilized international relationships.

The belligerence of the international financial community in its collection of debts contrasts with the serenity of spirit and sense of responsibility with which those in the third world have devoted themselves to consolidating their plans for political freedom. Not all those efforts benefit from the same ethical standards. Why is a club of Paris legitimate, but not a club of Cartagena or Buenos Aires? Why is there wisdom and propriety in a co-ordinating committee of private banks, which can dictate the behaviour of debtors, whereas it is dangerous for the presidents of the central banks of our nations to meet and plan joint action?

We are concerned that multilateralism, a traditional instrument to fortify the autonomy of our nations, no matter how small, has been used for a different purpose. The economic conditions being imposed upon the third world are of such magnitude that the developed nations themselves do not dare impose them bilaterally. For such purposes they have recourse to certain multilateral organizations. That is a serious political error that may have grave consequences if not soon corrected.

We are concerned about the distaste shown by certain powerful nations for the whole question of the political equality of all States. It appears to be reflected, at least in part, in the financial crisis affecting the United Nations. It seems that small and weaker nations are being denied the right to a dialogue of equals, a dialogue free from constraints or conditions. My Government desires the prompt solution of the financial problems of the Organization. Conscious of our limitations in this regard, my country agrees to contribute its share, in the hope that the seed of equality will continue to grow in this forum, a fortress for lasting world peace.

(President Arias Sanchez)

Costa Rica will fulfil its international commitments, but proposes adjustments to the rules of the game. Some things must change: countries with heavy debt burdens should be given the opportunity to grow, so that they can pay eventually, rather than be forced to pay now, with complete disregard for their continued impoverishment. Thus we may avert the bitterness of the weak and reduce the arrogance of the strong. It is crucial to fight for multilateral arrangements in all the organs of the United Nations. We denounce those of its agencies, however, that lend themselves to favouring a few nations or favouring only certain development strategies, diminishing the diversity that enriches the world.

We must not continue to tolerate the questioning of assistance for housing, health or food while loans proliferate for the purchase of combat aircraft and soldiers' uniforms. Let us not again permit the inequalities of the industrialized world to be reflected in more poverty and anguish in the third world. The cost of past errors must be more equitably shared. The hope of development must return quickly to the weakest nations.

In recent years, in large nations and small, we have been obliged to view through the lens of the international banking community, the world problems it has helped create. We have made the world small. Let us extend our vision beyond that of the banks to the struggles for peace and freedom, whose value in defeating poverty and guaranteeing respect for human rights in every corner of the globe we should assert. Many are the noble causes that have been debased under the scrutiny of the financier. Let us respond again to those noble causes in order to perceive the world anew. Let us not fear the only vision that can lead us to a lasting and secure peace: that of a world that struggles in solidarity to free itself from misery.

(President Arias Sanchez)

What we have achieved as a people can be explained in large part by the fact that our ancestors made education the main national goal. Experience has taught us that increased education for all and an improved quality of family life offer a possible path even given the modesty of our limited means. We have learned that that by following that path we strengthen our democracy and widen the horizons of our freedoms.

Like the vast majority of countries, today we confront adverse conditions. We do not believe, however, that that adversity can ever justify departing from social sensitivity in seeking solutions for development problems. We cannot escape the challenge to make our economy more efficient and adapt it to new conditions. We can, however, choose a way leading to that goal which does not entail unemployment and in which freedoms are never restricted. We can choose a way that, above all, preserves social peace. We wish to strengthen the only force that will permit us to grow in freedom.

We are committed to a programme that integrates our national youth in our structures for progress. We are committed to absorbing new technologies that promote development. We seek the full integration of women in the production process, with full equality with men in rights and responsibilities. We proclaim in our country that no farmer shall be without land and no land without farmers.

We have placed at the centre of all this effort a national challenge that transcends party lines; we desire to solve and will solve the problem of the lack of housing for thousands of dispossessed families.

The priority given to that housing goal complies with the designation of 1987 as the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless. Costa Rica will demonstrate that it is possible to end the shame of shanty-towns when we all work together in solidarity. This year, 1986, is the year dedicated to peace by the international

(President Arias Sanchez)

community. The initiative for that came from my country. I can say with pride that in spite of adverse circumstances, in spite of the most absurd provocations, Costa Rica has strengthened the force of its peace. We shall also achieve success with housing. I propose to return here again in four years' time, at the conclusion of my presidential mandate, to inform the Assembly that the shanty-towns in my country are but a sad memory from the past.

I also wish to come here to tell representatives that together we have spread peace throughout all Central America.

I come from a nation whose calling it is to struggle so that the principles of reason, word and action may permeate the world of international relations. Costa Rica knows that the gap between what is said and what is done has greatly widened over the past few years.

The environment continues to deteriorate. Hunger and poverty increase. Armaments and the destructive capacity of the machinery of war increase. The protectionism of the powerful - the very same that proclaim the need for free trade - increases. Expressions of international solidarity are exchanged, while economic assistance is decreased.

Rich nations continue to distance themselves from poor nations. Humanity is drunk with technologies that cause death because they are used without the capacity to control them. Each time we meet, we deplore the fact that our objectives are in contradiction with what is really happening in the world. But we must not lose faith; were it not for the existence of the United Nations, the gaps to which I have referred would be even more dramatic.

In the name of Costa Rica, I must stress once again that we support every disarmament initiative. The nuclear race has transformed itself into the most gigantic monument ever created to honour the blindness of the powerful.

(President Arias Sanchez)

With vigour and renewed faith in mankind, Costa Rica calls for the condemnation of all racial discrimination, which reduces man and offends civilization. A few weeks ago my Government severed diplomatic relations with the South African régime. We did so because we thought that all of the peaceful methods of exerting pressure should be intensified in order to put an end to such degrading practices.

I wish to reiterate here our desire for an urgent dialogue between Argentina and Great Britain to resolve the question of sovereignty over the Malvinas Islands.

We advocate the speedy elimination of the remaining vestiges of colonialism. It is time that the concept of overseas territories gave way to the liberty that has been sought for so many years by the peoples of those territories.

At this time the world is witnessing once again how terrorism can extend its implacable cruelty. It is unpardonable that a man of peace of the stature and greatness of the former Prime Minister of Sweden, Olaf Palme, to whom I render tribute, should fall victim to fanatical and senseless violence. I believe we should focus all our energies on ways to counteract these practices.

It may be advisable for the United Nations to consider the possibility of establishing an international brigade to counter terrorism. It is necessary to combat a practice that violates all we hold most dear. I repeat: we condemn terrorism of every kind regardless of its origin or form.

I reaffirm again in this forum that Costa Rica believes that the war against drugs must be a common cause for the international community. There is no greater crime against the youth of the whole world than the traffic in narcotics.

I reaffirm Costa Rica's desire to see the fight against hunger in Africa given first priority by the world community. There is a nuclear bomb much like

(President Arias Sanchez)

Hiroshima's that explodes in silence every day, in the form of the lack of food that kills and destroys the bodies and minds of men, women and children.

I reaffirm here Costa Rica's belief that we should never fear to enter into a dialogue, and I urge this forum to open its doors to all nations that respect its Charter. Dialogue can only contribute to the peaceful solution of problems by disarming threats of violence. My country therefore reaffirms its confidence that this forum of the United Nations will also serve, in the not too distant future, to enable the two Koreas to enter into a dialogue and find the path to reconciliation.

Political and economic exiles represent other wounds scarring the face of our world. Such scars are to be seen in my country. I wish at this time to thank the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Committee on Migration. Costa Rica needs much more help in dealing with the refugee problems that it is facing today.

We support all efforts by the United Nations to seek peaceful solutions in the Middle East. We wonder how much more unnecessary suffering must still be endured before reason and harmony are restored in that region. Costa Rica also earnestly desires to see an end to the war between Iran and Iraq. There can be no historical justification for the death and desolation that follows in the wake of fanaticism.

Costa Rica supports the unconditional independence of Namibia. We also look forward to the prompt liberation of Kampuchea and Afghanistan.

Permit me to express my gratitude to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Perez de Cuellar, and to this Organization for its unceasing efforts on behalf of peace. As long as this forum exists no one can ever forget the link between peace and development. As long we do not forget that link we

(President Arias Sanchez)

shall all make common cause in fighting poverty, defending human rights regardless of frontiers and removing the fear of freedom from all peoples.

Despite the misfortunes we have had in recent years, despite the increasing dangers in the Central American isthmus, despite the ever-growing inequalities in our world, Costa Rica reaffirms its unshakeable faith in a higher destiny for mankind, since the soul of the peoples is nourished by freedom, democracy and peace.

Today, more than ever, we must take up again the nobler causes - those that live in the soul of the peoples, overcoming fear for the sake of freedom.

Let me conclude with pride by quoting the words of the great Spanish poet Miguel Hernandez:

"Close the doors, warden, throw the latch.

Lock up this man, but you cannot shackle his soul.

There are many keys, many latches, many injustices;

But you cannot shackle his soul."

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Costa Rica for the important statement he has just made.

Mr. Oscar Arias Sanchez, President of the Republic of Costa Rica, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

AGENDA ITEM 9 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. CLARK (Canada): May I first congratulate you, Sir, on your election as President of this session and pledge Canada's full support.

I should also like to wish the Secretary-General well after his recent surgery. His dedication and courage have been an inspiration to us all, and we are thankful that we can continue to rely on his leadership.

(Mr. Clark, Canada)

In my first speech to the General Assembly, two years ago, I described Canada as a "friend" of the United Nations. In fact, we are more than that. We believe this institution is essential to the safety of the world, and we defend it even when its actions are foolish or infuriating or wrong. Our country is thirtieth in population size in the world, but fourth in the size of our financial contribution to the United Nations system. Canada's commitment will not alter or change. But the commitment of Canada - and of other countries like us - will not alone protect the United Nations from the erosion of respect which is slowly weakening the Organization we built to bring the world together.

When we gathered last year to celebrate the fortieth anniversary, a sad irony faced us: the United Nations was becoming more necessary and less effective.

Who among us cannot list many issues that should be addressed and resolved here, but are not? Who among us has not thought of referring one or another issue to this forum, but then held back for fear that debate would serve only to exacerbate our differences? Our instincts tell us that this is the right place for issues of global importance, but we often fail to raise them. That failure is the expression of our fear. It has led us more and more to resort to blocs, to bilateralism and even to unilateralism.

(spoke in French)

During the General Assembly session last spring, it became obvious that there were some of us who were not yet convinced of the need for reform. For my part, I was unable to note either any marked reduction in rhetoric or any great progress towards pragmatism and the search for consensus. The only exceptions - and they should not have been exceptions but the rule - were the decisions taken by consensus on the struggle against terrorism and on the improvement of the situation in Africa. But even here that was only a beginning.

I would be very pleased if I could state that we here had already renewed our

(Mr. Clark, Canada)

commitment to the fundamental purposes of the Charter and had revitalized the Organization. Of course, such a result could not have been expected in the space of a year. Nevertheless, the period has been sufficiently long for progress to have been made. On the contrary, the threat of financial failure looming over the Organization has become even greater, and new doubts are being expressed regarding its relevance.

(continued in English)

We need reform on two fronts - financial and political. This session starts its deliberations with the consideration of the Report of the Group of High-Level Experts on the Administration and Finances of the United Nations. The 18 experts deserve our profound gratitude. There are some recommendations with which Canada might quibble. But this is not a time for quibbling. The recommendations should be accepted without change and applied as soon as possible. They would reinforce the significant measures of financial reform already undertaken by the Secretary-General. The key area that requires further discussion - the planning and budgetary process - is profoundly contentious. We are obviously divided. But we must find common ground lest the whole reform process be imperilled. Our acceptance or rejection of the report of the Group of 18 will be the litmus test of our commitment to renew the capacity of the United Nations to fulfil its mandate.

Our budgets here are swollen by the accumulation of outdated and misguided programmes. A thorough review would free resources for meeting needs that have long been relatively neglected. These include large areas of development, in particular the promotion of women and the promotion of human rights in general.

We must also deal with the question of arrears and withholdings. At present, these amount to a total of \$400 million. This shortfall has severely strapped the Organization. A fixed schedule of repayment, allowing for some flexibility, would provide a solution to the arrears problem. But even more important is the question

(Mr. Clark, Canada)

of withholdings, which, as the Assembly knows, threatens to cripple the Organization financially this year. We look to those States which are withholding to follow the example of the People's Republic of China, which, without any change in "consistent principled positions", has announced payment of accumulated withholdings of \$4.4 million.

The adoption of the report of the Group of 18 and the settlement of arrears and withholdings would address half the problem. The other half is more basic. There simply is no escaping the fact that world-wide support for this institution depends on its performance. There may be some who think that if the United Nations were flush with funds all would be well. But the stark reality is that the United Nations must be reformed politically as well as financially.

We are in danger of becoming a caricature of the hopes expressed in 1945. This was to be a forum in which difficult decisions were to be taken: it has become a means to avoid them. When there is crisis, we have endless debate. When there is a need for hard compromise, we draft resolutions which defy agreement.

Our publics are sensible. They want peace and prosperity and justice. They judge the United Nations by what we do together, not by what we say separately. They want results, not speeches. They hear our constant refrain about the need to perform - but if we have stopped listening to ourselves, they too will soon stop listening. The place to start is with administrative and financial reforms. Obviously, putting our house in order will not put the world in order, but it will protect and strengthen the only organization that can. Canada is a strong friend of the United Nations, but Canadians who are making sacrifices at home do not want to subsidize inefficiency here.

To be sure, there will be resistance to reform. There always is. We either face it down, or risk slipping back into the shadows from which we emerged with so much hope in 1945. I cannot believe that any of us here would contemplate such a

(Mr. Clark, Canada)

future with equanimity. None of us pretends that even a fully reformed United Nations will extinguish racism, unleash a global economic boom or put an immediate end to every regional conflict. Yet we all know the kinds of contribution that United Nations agreements can make to international peace, prosperity and social advancement. Resolution 242 (1967), the law of the sea, and the Declaration and Covenants on human rights are but three that come immediately to mind.

(spoke in French)

In this International Year of Peace, we shall more than ever before be judged by our achievements in the fields of disarmament and arms control. All the members of the international community will, like Canada, applaud the resumption of dialogue between the United States and the Soviet Union. President Reagan informed us of an exchange of letters with General-Secretary Gorbachev regarding new proposals on arms control. We welcome with satisfaction this direct and open participation of the two leaders in the negotiation process. The talks held last week by the United States Secretary of State, Mr. Shultz, and the Soviet Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Shevardnadze, also contributed to improving the atmosphere of the relations between the two super-Powers. We can all cherish the hope that the resumption in Geneva of negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union on the limitation of nuclear weapons and the use of outer space will make some progress possible. We are encouraged by the greater flexibility recently shown by the two parties in their efforts to achieve the shared objective of sharp reductions in nuclear weapons - reductions which will allow for the strengthening of the strategic balance and an increase in international security.

(continued in English)

The current focus of attention on nuclear arms reductions should not, however, detract from the necessity of similar progress in the field of conventional arms control. The results of the Stockholm Conference on Confidence- and

(Mr. Clark, Canada)

Security-Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe have also added to the sense of momentum towards greater security and co-operation in East-West relations. Stockholm represents a signal accomplishment in bringing new openness and predictability to the conduct of military affairs in Europe.

(Mr. Clark, Canada)

The establishment of agreed procedures for air and ground on-site inspections is a landmark achievement which could serve as a productive precedent for other arms-control negotiations. Canada, with its record of promoting constructive verification solutions, derives special satisfaction from having contributed to that outcome. It should facilitate the movement to the negotiation of more extensive measures of military restraint and reductions.

Such signs of hope should spur the United Nations to tackle the broad range of important arms-control questions before it. Progress on one issue can unlock progress on others.

Canada will strive for a ban on chemical weapons. We will continue to work to ensure that outer space is developed for peaceful purposes. We will be seeking to play an active role in strengthening the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Canada will again be supporting a comprehensive nuclear-test ban. That is a fundamental goal and one towards which concrete steps can and should be taken now. Canada welcomes President Reagan's undertaking that the United States of America is prepared first to move forward on ratification of the threshold test-ban treaty and the treaty on peaceful nuclear explosions and then to take subsequent measures to limit further and ultimately to end nuclear testing.

We urge all nations to co-operate and, indeed, participate in the development of the verification techniques needed to provide the confidence necessary to ratify those agreements, which will enable us to plan the subsequent steps we must take in all areas of arms control. For verification is not just a question of technical capacity; it is a question of the political will to reach agreement on the application of technologies and techniques. In this spirit and in co-operation with others Canada will continue to work vigorously towards real progress on verification.

(Mr. Clark, Canada)

A further critical task facing the United Nations is to buttress the international trade and payments system, now under great strain, and to stimulate the growth so desperately needed in much of the developing world. We are making some progress. Canada is encouraged by movement forward on the elaboration of the Baker Plan and by the agreement of Economic Summit countries at Tokyo to co-ordinate their economic policies more effectively. We particularly welcomed the unanimity of the agreement reached in the meeting of the countries of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) to launch a new round - the Uruguay round - of multilateral trade negotiations. Those are all welcome signs of a growing recognition that we must work together in pursuit of a sound and fair international economic system.*

A raison d'être of this Organization is to create a more humane world. The most fundamental human rights embodied in the Charter and in United Nations human-rights documents are being systematically and grossly violated in a number of Member countries. The reports of Amnesty International are an indictment of our age. In Afghanistan, a whole people has been tyrannized and millions of citizens made refugees. Around the world and every day people are being tortured and killed for their political and religious beliefs.

One of the most distressing trends of the past year has been the deterioration of the situation in South Africa. The Government of that country has stubbornly refused to dismantle the abhorrent régime of apartheid and to adopt a system that respects human rights for all its people. It has instead imposed a draconian state of emergency. We have seen hundreds of deaths and more than 10,000 detainees.

The South African Government's repressive policies can have no outcome other than more violence and, in the end, a cataclysm in which all South Africans, white

* Mr. Kabanda (Rwanda), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Clark, Canada)

and non-white, will suffer grievously. That would be tragic for a country so blessed in human and material resources.

Canada has worked to intensify the international community's pressure against apartheid and has helped mobilize the special capacities of the Commonwealth to try to stop the destruction of southern Africa. Canada is implementing all the sanctions agreed to by six Commonwealth leaders in London last month. But pressure will only be fully effective if the international community stands as one, and I urge all countries, especially those with significant economic relations with South Africa, to implement further concrete measures on an urgent basis.

(spoke in French)

International terrorism threatens us all, and we must act jointly to fight it. The United Nations, acting in a manner that should characterize all of its activities, has set forth that goal and met that need during the past year. All Member States are in agreement regarding the threat posed by international terrorism. During the last session the Security Council unanimously and unequivocally condemned all acts of hostage-taking and kidnapping. At that same session the General Assembly unanimously condemned all acts, methods and practices of terrorism, wherever and by whomever committed. At that time, the Organization rose to the occasion admirably.

Those declarations must, of course, be accompanied by concrete and specific measures. Canada, along with the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), has launched an initiative designed to consolidate the structure of international law against terrorism. We propose the conclusion of an agreement under which all parties would undertake to pursue and to extradite all persons perpetrating acts of violence in international airports. I am sure that the international community will give that initiative its full support. I am also convinced that the collective will of the Members of the United Nations, expressed through concrete

(Mr. Clark, Canada)

measures of this type, will be decisive in our joint struggle against this scourge of our era.

(continued in English)

I have touched on only a few of the issues with which the United Nations will have to grapple at this and future sessions. Difficult as these are, I remain confident that this institution can serve our common needs and serve them well. We have only to give it the means and the direction. Canadians, for their part, wish to have a strong United Nations capable of dealing pragmatically and effectively with global issues. At this session the Canadian delegation will be seeking every opportunity to join with like-minded States in realizing that goal. If I have dwelt on the need for reform, it is because I am convinced that it is still within our grasp.

I can think of no better way to conclude than by recalling the words of my distinguished Canadian predecessor, Lester Pearson. At the eighteenth session of the General Assembly in 1963, he said:

"the United Nations alone serves us all. It provides the only world assembly to protect and advance human rights and freedoms and human welfare, to reduce and remove the causes of conflict. ...whether it discharges that great role and fulfils its great responsibilities, depends on us. When the United Nations fails, its Member Governments fail. When it succeeds, all the plain and good people of the world succeed." (A/PV.1208, para. 95)

Mr. MWANANSHIKU (Zambia): When I addressed the Assembly on 17 September 1986, as we met in special session to review the question of Namibia, I had the opportunity to congratulate the President on his well-deserved election to his post for the forty-first session. My delegation is delighted to note that he is guiding our deliberations with great skill. May his stewardship bring about a successful conclusion of our work.

(Mr. Mwananshiku, Zambia)

Last year we commemorated the fortieth anniversary of our Organization. At that session, we all reaffirmed our hope and faith in the United Nations. We are meeting again today to continue our collective efforts to find solutions to the problems facing us.

(Mr. Mwananshiku, Zambia)

Regrettably, since our last regular session there has been very little we can point to in the direction of progress that we have achieved in resolving the many problems facing mankind today. On the economic front, third-world nations continue to face very critical economic problems, including the pressure of crushing external debt and lack of real growth in their economies.

On the political side, the threat of nuclear catastrophe continues to threaten the world, while regional problems in southern Africa, the Gulf, Central America, the Middle East, Korea, Cyprus, Afghanistan and Kampuchea remain unresolved.

The world faces a number of economic challenges. In the developing world, and especially Africa, economic prosperity remains an unattainable and distant goal for the majority of the countries. Instead of moving forward, the economies of many countries are either stagnant or actually declining. This situation has been brought about by both inappropriate domestic policies and the current unfavourable international economic order. Happily, an increasing number of African countries, including my own, are taking the hard steps required to reorient their economies towards increased productivity and eventual growth.

The holding, earlier this year, of a United Nations General Assembly special session on the critical economic situation in Africa testified to the determination of the nations of Africa to address their economic problems. Yet, despite the efforts that we ourselves are making to deal with our economic difficulties, these problems will not disappear until the nations of the world have been able to resolve the central issue of the relations between the nations of the rich North and the poor countries of the South. The existing international economic order is clearly exploitative and contributes a great deal to the economic problems we are facing in the third world.

(Mr. Mwananshiku, Zambia)

Our countries continue to be essentially producers of primary commodities. Under the existing international economic order, the prices of these commodities are invariably fixed by the rich North, which provides the markets. The nations of the North have also the benefit of fixing the prices of their own products which they sell to us. Since the prices of primary products invariably remain lower than those of industrial products, we have a situation in which net real resources are flowing from the poor nations to the rich instead of the other way round. When one also bears in mind the flow of invisibles from the poor nations to the rich, the situation is clearly desperate, requiring urgent action by the international community.

Since we are unable to receive fair prices for what we export, we are forced to borrow in order to finance our development plans. The result is that debt servicing has now become a serious constraint on our development efforts. In order, therefore, to give real meaning to our reform of domestic policy, it is necessary that the international community take urgent measures to reduce the impact of debt servicing on our economies.

At the same time, fresh efforts should be made to bring about the establishment of a new international economic order. The reluctance by the industrialized countries to agree to the establishment of a new order is clearly intended to continue the present system in which the poor are exploited to enrich those who are already rich.

The international political situation remains equally unsatisfactory. The spectre of nuclear war overhangs the world as the nuclear race continues unabated and threatens to extend to outer space. The world power blocs continue to develop new and more powerful weapons of mass destruction despite the fact that existing stockpiles of weapons are already at levels that cannot be justified by

(Mr. Mwananshiku, Zambia)

any rational military purpose. We remain convinced that the survival of mankind cannot be guaranteed until real progress is made towards disarmament under effective international control. We believe that the first step in this process is the freezing of the development, testing, production and stockpiling of additional weapons. In this respect, we welcome the efforts being made by the United States and the Soviet Union to reach agreement on limiting nuclear weapons.

The situation in southern Africa continues to pose a serious threat not only to regional security and peace but also to international peace and security. The major problems that bedevil our region are three: the continuation of apartheid in South Africa, the illegal occupation of Namibia by racist South Africa and South Africa's policy of destabilization against the independent African States in the region.

This Assembly is familiar with the nature of apartheid. It is a policy or system under which the white minority régime of South Africa retains in its hands all political, economic, military, scientific and social power to the exclusion of the black majority and uses that power to carry out a most extraordinary and systematic programme of exploitation and dehumanization of the black majority comparable only to slave trade and nazism. It is noteworthy that the perpetrators of this system were supporters of Nazi Germany during the last war. Indeed, as nazism was being defeated in Europe, it was already beginning to re-emerge in South Africa.

The black people of South Africa have made every effort to end apartheid peacefully. For close to 50 years they carried out their protest against white minority rule peacefully. Regrettably, this peaceful effort was entirely fruitless and resulted only in the intensification of apartheid.

(Mr. Mwananshiku, Zambia)

The independent African countries of the region have also made concerted efforts to bring about a peaceful end to apartheid. Some of our countries have met with the leaders of South Africa and have also signed agreements with them with the aim of bringing about peace in our region. Regrettably again, these efforts have failed, and they have failed only because racist South Africa remains committed to racism and apartheid.

(Mr. Mwananshiku, Zambia)

Finally, the international community has made efforts to assist South Africa to abandon apartheid. The latest of these efforts were made by the Commonwealth and the European Economic Community missions to South Africa. Those, too, failed, and for the same reasons. Last week we discussed the question of Namibia. As we saw, efforts to bring Namibia to independence have stalled because of the extraneous conditions demanded by the United States and apartheid South Africa.

I have deliberately gone into these details to show that the African people of South Africa and the independent African States of the region have made every effort to bring peace to southern Africa. We cannot, therefore, be blamed for the increase in tension that has occurred.

Instead of responding favourably to those efforts, South Africa has intensified repression of its black majority, especially under successive states of emergency. Moreover, South Africa has refused to allow Namibia to accede to independence and has instead mounted a campaign of destabilization against its neighbours. That campaign consists of a number of co-ordinated elements: the destruction of our transport infrastructure in the vain hope that having to depend on South Africa will cause the African States to support apartheid; military attacks such as those on Angola, Botswana, Zambia and Zimbabwe; the promotion of bandits in our countries; economic blockades such as the one against Lesotho; economic sanctions such as those recently applied against Zambia and Zimbabwe; and a variety of threats.

Because racist South Africa has refused to abandon apartheid, the black independent nations of southern Africa, the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the Commonwealth, the Non-Aligned Movement and the international community in general have called for the imposition of comprehensive mandatory sanctions against South Africa, these being the most peaceful instrument of persuasion now available, all else having failed.

(Mr. Mwananshiku, Zambia)

Sadly, these, too, have been effectively blocked by the vetoes of the United States and Britain. Even the efforts of the European Economic Community have been effectively diluted by Britain and the Federal Republic of Germany. Clearly this support encouraged and strengthened the racist régime in its persistent maintenance of apartheid.

We can find no reason why the United States and Britain, which fought and defeated nazism barely 40 years ago, now find themselves firmly on the side of apartheid, other than their own racism, economic interests and misguided ideological considerations.

We again call on the United States and Britain to unblock the international process for peace. Unless that is done, the black people of South Africa and Namibia will have no alternative but to look to themselves to bring about the end of apartheid and the independence of Namibia. Were this to happen, there could no peace anywhere in the region, and that for a long time. The major Western countries would not be able to escape their responsibility.

We also call on South Africa to take the steps necessary to bring about negotiations and peace. In particular, we call on South Africa to declare apartheid null and void, lift the state of emergency in all areas and eliminate all the draconian laws, lift the ban on the African National Congress of South Africa (ANC), the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (PAC) and other political organizations, release unconditionally Nelson Mandela and all the other political prisoners still in jail or detention and establish a dialogue on the future of the country between Government leaders and the genuine and authentic leaders of the African people.

Another area of great concern to us is the Gulf region. Since the Gulf war started six years ago the loss of life and property on both sides has been considerable.

(Mr. Mwananshiku, Zambia)

In 1981-1983 Zambia joined Cuba, India and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in a Committee of Four appointed by the Non-Aligned Movement to mediate in the war. That effort, like others, failed. Recently, at the Non-Aligned summit in Harare, Zambia again called for an end to the war. While Iraq has shown willingness to end the war by negotiation, Iran, regrettably, has shown no flexibility whatsoever, insisting that the war be ended on the battlefield.

The international community cannot allow this needless war to continue indefinitely. The United Nations Charter provides the means to intervene in a situation where international peace and security are threatened. In our view, such a situation exists today in the Gulf.

Moreover, the two countries involved are both members of the Non-Aligned Movement. The continuation of the war not only weakens the two countries concerned but also affects the well-being of the Movement. For these reasons, we in Zambia believe that the peace plan proposed by Iraq offers the best chance of resolving the conflict. As the Assembly is aware, the Iraqi peace plan involves the following broad elements: the general, complete and unconditional withdrawal of troops to internationally recognized borders, a general and complete exchange of prisoners, the signing of a peace and non-aggression agreement between Iran and Iraq, non-interference by either country in the internal affairs of the other country, respect by each country for the choices of the other, and the commitment of each country to all efforts aimed at achieving stability and security in the Gulf area.

Zambia believes that if those elements are accepted, they will provide a basis for moving forward towards peace in the area.

The conflict in the Middle East continues to be another source of concern. As we have stated before, the core of the Middle East problem is the question of the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to self-determination in an independent

(Mr. Mwananshiku, Zambia)

State of their own. Israel's refusal to concede that right, its acts of aggression against its neighbours and its continued occupation of Arab lands only serve to compound the problem. We call upon Israel to concede the right of the Palestinian people to their own independent State and to desist from acts of aggression against its neighbours. We remain convinced that a just solution of the Middle East problem is still possible within the framework of the United Nations.

The situation in Central America continues to worsen despite the efforts of the Contadora Group to bring about peace. We commend the efforts of the Contadora countries and the Support Group aimed at bringing peace to the region.

(Mr. Mwananshiku, Zambia)

We are, however, concerned that Central America is turning into an arena for East-West rivalry. We feel strongly that those outside Central America should respect the sovereignty, national independence, territorial integrity and non-aligned character of the Central American States.

The continuing conflicts and tensions in Afghanistan and Kampuchea are also of great concern to us. We believe that the solution to these problems lies in political settlements based on the immediate withdrawal of all foreign forces from these countries and on respect for the sovereignty, national independence and territorial integrity of both countries. We believe that the people of these countries should be given an opportunity to choose their own economic, political and social systems without outside interference.

In the Korean peninsula, Zambia supports the desire of the Korean people to reunify their country through peaceful negotiations. Finally, Zambia supports the independence, territorial integrity and non-aligned status of Cyprus. We are anxious to see a lasting solution to the conflict in that divided community. For this reason, we support the efforts of the Secretary-General to bring unity to the island.

In concluding my statement, let me again stress the urgency of the racial crisis unfolding in southern Africa. The United Nations can play a meaningful role in bringing about the peaceful elimination of apartheid in South Africa and independence for Namibia, but only if it is allowed to do so by the major nations of the West. We ourselves stand ready to play our part. But if the major nations of the West continue to support apartheid by blocking all peaceful efforts to end it, the oppressed people have a right, nay, a duty, to rid their country of apartheid by all the means at their disposal, including armed struggle. If this is what they have to do, the loss in human life and property will be incalculable. This loss is unnecessary and can be prevented. Does the West have the will to prevent the unfolding catastrophe?

Mr. VAN DEN BROEK (Netherlands): May I begin, first of all, by congratulating the President of the forty-first session of the General Assembly upon his election and commend him for the prominent role his country plays in many international forums, such as the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation, to name just a few. All of us know full well what his country, Bangladesh, has done in these forums. They have amply benefited from the President's outstanding personal qualities of leadership, initiative and sense of compromise, and I can assure him that we have full confidence in his presidency.

My esteemed colleague Sir Geoffrey Howe, the Foreign Minister of the United Kingdom, has expressed the views of the 12 member States of the European Community on some major international problems before the General Assembly. A memorandum was circulated as a companion piece to his speech. The Netherlands fully subscribes to the views expressed on that occasion. European unity is a cornerstone of Netherlands foreign policy. European integration is of course not an inward-looking process. The ongoing construction of Europe obliges the Twelve concurrently to play their appropriate role in the international community. The Twelve accept the responsibilities in world affairs which their joint capabilities impose on them.

Since last year's session of the General Assembly the international atmosphere seems to have improved. The meeting of President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev last autumn opened up prospects for a better and a more rational relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union and helped to bring about a certain easing of tensions between East and West. Hope for the future can be derived too from the successful outcome of the Stockholm Conference on Confidence and Security Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe. Indeed, significant new avenues seem to have been opened as far as verification and

(Mr. van den Broek, Netherlands)

inspection are concerned. Last year, we also saw democracy gaining further ground, notably in Latin America and in the Philippines. In international economic co-operation there is a certain promise of a realistic accommodation of interests, as just witnessed by the outcome of the Conference in Punta del Este in Uruguay.

The tragic nuclear accident in Chernobyl has increased our awareness of our shared responsibility. The consensus within the International Atomic Energy Agency on notification and assistance in case of nuclear accidents testifies to this.

These hopeful developments should not, however, make us overlook the fact that in many parts of the world armed conflicts continue unabated with their heavy toll of human lives. In South Africa the abhorrent system of apartheid continues to breed violence. In many countries the scourge of terrorism is making itself felt increasingly. This vicious phenomenon, which strikes at innocent people, should be eradicated by the joint efforts of us all.

What is the context in which we have to place all these developments? The time we live in is characterized by rapid change. Technological innovation propels mankind into a new phase in its historical evolution. The information society that awaits us imposes new demands upon individuals and organizations. A premium is set on flexibility, adaptability, participation and initiative. The individual has an essential role to play in this process. The modern age does not stop at the doorstep of the United Nations. The Organization will have to change and adapt to these changing times too. The outside world, I think, is tired of rhetoric, ideological polarization and worn-out procedures. There seems to be a new tendency towards pragmatism and businesslike attitudes, without which, evidently, we cannot achieve our ideals.

Recent experience has demonstrated that when the Organization puts its mind to it, when it concentrates its efforts upon a concrete challenge and when the Member States take a constructive stand, it can function effectively and accomplish something. Let me give two examples, both of which concern Africa.

(Mr. van den Broek, Netherlands)

The establishment almost two years ago of the Office for Emergency Operations in Africa (OEOA) under the able leadership of Mr. Bradford Morse has proved to be an adequate reaction of the United Nations system to the alarming famine in large parts of Africa at that time. In our view, the Office has performed well in co-ordinating, often under difficult circumstances, the emergency assistance flowing into Africa's drought-stricken countries from so many sources.

Furthermore, Member States have demonstrated their ability to co-operate in a constructive manner during the special session of the General Assembly devoted to the critical economic situation in Africa. That was a well-prepared and efficient session that produced a genuine consensus on concrete steps to put the African countries back on a track to sustained economic development. The United Nations proved that it can be a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations, in the way foreseen in its Charter.

Values and ideas are essential to guide nations. Differences in ideologies and cultures are a fact of life, but polarization and mutual recrimination are not their inevitable corollary. If we are unable to engage in a serious dialogue, the future of the United Nations would look grim indeed. What is required are concrete results through real negotiations.

We need genuine consensus, not the adoption of phraseology that papers over fundamental differences of opinion. Recent United Nations conferences on major international political issues have once more demonstrated how the unfortunate practice of false consensus has further developed over the years - and that is, of course, not the road to follow. I am convinced that there is sufficient convergence on quite a number of issues to enable our Organization to function as a forum where meaningful results can be achieved.

(Mr. van den Broek, Netherlands)

Equally essential for the functioning of the United Nations is respect for its Charter. The concept of universality, which is fundamental to the Organization, requires the admission of countries like the Republic of Korea. The Charter also provides means for the peaceful settlement of conflicts. It is regrettable that quite a number of Member States seem reluctant to avail themselves of these tools and that so few States recognize the jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice. I submit that international adjudication should be more frequently utilized and that the Court should be called in more frequently. However, its prestige will be threatened if it is misused for short-term political advantage.

As we all know, the Organization is faced with a severe financial crisis. Its causes go well beyond the question of arrears and withholdings of Member States. The financial crisis in itself reflects political dissent among the Members of the United Nations. No doubt the present crisis, if left unresolved, would soon become an institutional one, jeopardizing the viability and integrity of the whole Organization. Apart from the urgent task of balancing the budget, the financial crisis requires long-term structural solutions. It is clear that to solve the present impasse Member States will have to fulfil their obligations under the Charter. In addition, rational management and programme evaluation techniques will have to be applied. As Lloyd George once said:

"Don't be afraid to take a big step if one is indicated. You can't cross a chasm in two small jumps."

The General Assembly should not shy away from taking such a big step.

The report of the Group of High-Level Intergovernmental Experts to Review the Efficiency of the Administrative and Financial Functioning of the United Nations - the so-called Group of 18 - provides, in our view, a highly appropriate basis for further decision-making by this Assembly. We strongly support the general thrust

(Mr. van den Broek, Netherlands)

of the recommendations contained in the report of the Group of 18. It is essential that this Assembly build upon that Group's valuable work. The agreement should be expanded to areas for which the Group was, regrettably, not able to formulate unanimous recommendations. I refer to the procedures and mechanisms for programming and budgeting, including a broadening of the mandate of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination.

As far as the Secretariat is concerned, the Secretary-General bears primary responsibility as the Organization's chief administrative officer. He has ably assumed these responsibilities by consistently providing Member States with clear and revealing insight into the gravity of the crisis, and has not hesitated to take effective measures. In his annual report the Secretary-General has outlined the causes underlying the present crisis and their implications; he fully recognizes the need for improved management of the Secretariat at all levels, improved co-ordination and streamlining of various departments. We agree with his observations on the need for re-examination of the structure, staff and procedures aimed at bringing about a tighter, less costly Secretariat. We support his efforts and expect continued leadership in pursuance of more efficiency and streamlining of the Secretariat.

But streamlining and personnel cuts are not enough. Furthermore, such measures cannot be properly carried out in isolation; they should be accompanied by a reform of the intergovernmental machinery and its functioning. Over the years we have, as the Group of 18 correctly notes, built an overly complex structure which suffers from a lack of cohesion and makes co-ordination extremely difficult, if not impossible. The Netherlands is of the opinion that a long-term solution to the present crisis must be found in the achievement of a more compact, coherent and

(Mr. van den Broek, Netherlands)

effective programme. We, the Member States, should give guidance for the rationalization of the Organization and set priorities on the basis of an agreed level and content of the programme budget. This is a major challenge for this Assembly.

On the subject of working methods, we feel that an overloading of agenda items should be avoided. In general, it does not seem wise to duplicate in the United Nations work done in specialized forums, such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) on debt and the World Bank in the field of long-term financing for structural change. Tackling clusters of important issues, one at a time, in the appropriate forums, might well prove to open up possibilities for step-by-step improvements. Through the Economic and Social Council and the Second Committee the United Nations seems particularly well placed to assure that the outcome of sectoral discussions are related to each other and perceived in their interrelationship. With this in mind, my Government will also actively contribute to a constructive European approach in the new round on liberalization of trade in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT).

Whatever the problems and shortcomings of the United Nations may be, we certainly do not overlook the many achievements of the Organization and all its affiliates. For instance, I have in mind the important work that the United Nations is doing in setting standards and norms in the legal field. The same applies to its policy-making and supervisory functions on social and humanitarian scores. I think also that no one will doubt that the Organization has proved itself capable of doing fundamental and innovative work in the human-rights field, setting standards and monitoring their implementation.

It is appropriate in this context to point to the common declaration of the States members of the European Community last July in which they set out the basic

(Mr. van den Broek, Netherlands)

objectives of their human-rights policy. That declaration, which the Netherlands was privileged to initiate, underlines once more that respect for human rights is one of the cornerstones of European co-operation.

One of the most successful achievements of the United Nations system is its aid to developing countries. In all the major economic, social and cultural sectors the United Nations is active through its aid organs and specialized agencies.

(Mr. van den Broek, Netherlands)

My country will remain one of the strong supporters of the multilateral aid fabric of the United Nations. In this respect I should like to stress that the Government of the Netherlands has again committed itself to continue to provide 1.5 per cent of the Netherlands net national income for development co-operation, roughly equivalent to \$2 billion a year.

Many of the specialized agencies and other United Nations bodies have been demonstrating for a long time that practical and beneficial activities are possible without the systematic introduction of extraneous political and ideological issues. To our regret, however, that is not always the case. Take for instance the developments in the Committee on Information, where the deliberations are moving away from the consensus on the development of a new world information and communications order which had been achieved within the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). We deem it essential that that consensus be restored. All the same I should not hide from this Assembly the serious concern of the Netherlands Government about the lack of progress UNESCO displays in implementing the reforms decided upon in Sofia last autumn. If UNESCO fails to carry out the Sofia decisions in a satisfactory way, I regret to say that the Netherlands might be forced ultimately to reconsider its position towards that organization.

The maintenance of international peace and security remains a primary task of the United Nations, as laid down in the Charter. It has been only moderately successful in this field and many problems remain unsolved year after year, as, for instance, a glance at southern Africa and the Middle East sadly underlines. The views of my Government on those conflicts are well known. As President of the European Political Co-operation during the first half of this year I was once more reminded how intricate and complex these issues are and how little progress was

(Mr. van den Broek, Netherlands)

actually achieved. But if one looks at the Middle East, am I right when, in spite of all the dark clouds, I detect a glimmer of hope in recent developments? Is it too daring to assume after all that 1987 could be the year of real peace negotiations in the Middle East and notably that the forces in favour of genuine dialogue could gain further momentum?

As for South Africa, change is long overdue and the situation is deteriorating further. We must therefore continue to apply the necessary pressure on the Government of Pretoria to bring about the eradication of the unacceptable system of apartheid. Together with its European partners, the Kingdom of the Netherlands will continue its efforts towards promoting in South Africa a genuine dialogue across lines of colour, politics and religion. In order to achieve this the Netherlands is committed to a meaningful programme of political action, consisting both of economic sanctions and of measures aimed at strengthening within South Africa the forces for peaceful change. In addition to the economic sanctions already decided upon, the Twelve have agreed that the presidency will continue to seek a consensus on a ban on the import of coal from South Africa.

But here also, at the United Nations, let us concert our actions. In our common total rejection of apartheid we should not let our indignation work to the detriment of our ability to find common ground for ways of bringing about a just society within which all South Africans will be able to enjoy their legitimate rights.

The bitter war between Iraq and Iran has just entered its seventh year. The international community should spare no effort to bring the parties to the negotiating table in order to put an end to that senseless war. However, even where peace has not been restored, the rules of humanitarian law must be strictly observed: no chemical weapons must be used, civilian life must be spared,

(Mr. van den Broek, Netherlands)

prisoners of war must be treated in accordance with the relevant conventions, the war must not be extended to the territory of surrounding States and shipping in the Gulf must not be interfered with.

The continuing occupation of Afghanistan, which causes so much misery to the Afghan people, casts a dark shadow over global détente. The occupying Power bears a heavy responsibility not only towards the Afghan people but also towards the international community as a whole. An ever increasing majority in this Assembly also rejects the occupation of Kampuchea. As in the case of Afghanistan, the General Assembly has clearly indicated the principles on which a solution should be based.

As far as Central America is concerned, I feel that the Contadora countries deserve our sincere appreciation. Their unrelenting efforts, seconded by the Support Group, have not yet yielded the results hoped for. We believe that it is now up to the Central American countries to bridge their differences.

In Chile we have recently witnessed an intensification of repression. There, too, the restoration of democracy is long overdue and the initiation of a dialogue with the democratic opposition is more than ever called for.

The world is not the safe place mankind dreamed about more than 40 years ago. Wars continue to be fought. The deterrence value of nuclear weapons has its mirror image in the immense powers of destruction of those systems. With another summit meeting between the United States and the Soviet Union in sight - as we hope - we expect that effective agreements on substantive and verifiable arms control which would drastically reduce nuclear arsenals will emerge. We believe that in parallel with such reductions nuclear testing could also be reduced. The conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty remains as necessary as ever, and we remain committed to it. Let us therefore resume our work in Geneva on this issue without further

(Mr. van den Broek, Netherlands)

delay. The successful outcome of the Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference a year ago reaffirmed and even enhanced the strength and vitality of that Treaty. It remains a cornerstone in our endeavours to uphold an effective non-proliferation régime, to the common good of all. It remains equally important that outer space should not become an area of competition between the super-Powers.

We attach great importance to the earliest possible conclusion of a total ban on chemical weapons. It is encouraging that some progress was achieved in Geneva last summer and this should be built upon. The Netherlands is fully aware that a great deal remains to be done. My country made a modest contribution when it organized a workshop on the important issue of verification earlier this year. I hope that the ideas and concepts which sprang from that meeting will bear fruit.

Ours is an era of rapid change. That is as true for the Netherlands as for any place in the world. In its constitutional structure, the Kingdom of the Netherlands has recently undergone an important adjustment. The island of Aruba, which formed part of the Netherlands Antilles, became a separate entity within the Kingdom of the Netherlands as from 1 January 1986. That decision, which honoured the expressed wish of the people of Aruba, was reached after close consultations within the framework of the Kingdom and after the approval of the respective parliaments. As a result, the Kingdom now consists of three equal partners. This development does not entail any alteration in the relations between the Kingdom of the Netherlands and other countries or international organizations and I am confident that this new structure will be a factor in promoting prosperity and stability in the region.

(Mr. van den Broek, Netherlands)

As the General Assembly convenes for its forty-first session the international picture looks, as I mentioned in my introductory remarks, somewhat brighter than it did when we met last year. It is hoped that a summit meeting between the leaders of the United States and the Soviet Union will pave the way for a further improvement in international relations. The United Nations has a role of its own to play in this process. It will, however, be able to play that role only if it manages to get its act together, to focus its efforts effectively on the search for concrete solutions. Recent examples have confirmed our conviction that the United Nations can be an effective actor in international affairs. We sincerely hope that the United Nations will be allowed to stand up, and will prove capable of standing up, to the challenges of what is to be our common future.

Mr. ABDULLAH (Oman) (interpretation from Arabic): I should like to express, on behalf of the delegation of Oman and on my own behalf, our deep satisfaction at the election of Ambassador Choudhury of Bangladesh to the presidency of the forty-first session of the General Assembly. The fact that he represents Bangladesh, a country from the continent to which we too belong and with which we have close and strong relations, increases our pleasure. We are confident that the valuable experience he brings to his task will be of great help in ensuring the success of the session. I wish also to congratulate his predecessor, Ambassador Jaime de Piniés of Spain, on the way in which he conducted the business of the fortieth session of the General Assembly, and, above all, the special session on the critical economic situation in Africa. The efforts being made by African countries to deal with their difficult economic situation deserve the attention and support of the international community.

I reiterate on behalf of the Government of the Sultanate of Oman our gratitude and appreciation to Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, Secretary-General of the United

(Mr. Abdullah, Oman)

Nations, for his tireless efforts and the admirable manner with which he handles the work of the international Organization, especially bearing in mind the acute financial crisis faced by the Organization, which makes it imperative for Member States to honour their commitments to the Organization by paying their contributions to the budget as soon as possible.

The large number of world leaders who attended the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations proved beyond doubt that the United Nations is indispensable to mankind as a forum for the solution of disputes by peaceful means. If anything mars the performance of the Organization in its attempt to bring about peace and security, it is the fact that its resolutions frequently remain unimplemented. Were those resolutions to be implemented, friendship and co-operation would prevail among all States, thus giving effect to the principles of the Organization, which in turn would bring to the peoples of the world well-being and stability.

Thus, it is now more than ever necessary to redouble our efforts to ensure implementation of the resolutions of the Organization so that it may remain strong and play its pioneering role in the maintenance of international peace and security and in formulating permanent and just solutions for the many problems threatening international peace.

Foremost among those problems is that of the Middle East, of which the question of Palestine is the core. The United Nations has a special responsibility in connection with this problem, for it has been on the agenda of the world Organization since its inception and has a negative effect on international peace and security. We reaffirm that any solution to this problem that fails to take into account the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to live in peace and security on its own land and Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories will be incomplete. There is no

(Mr. Abdullah, Oman)

doubt that had it not been for the intransigence of Israel and its refusal to respond to any peace initiatives or to implement the resolutions of the United Nations, a just peace would now prevail in the Middle East, peace that would guarantee all the peoples of the region the right to live in security, friendship and peace.

We believe that it is high time for the international community to play its proper part in persuading Israel to accept a just peace. The Middle East will not enjoy stability or security while Israel continues to ignore the legitimate right of the Palestinian people to occupy the Arab territories and continues to violate the sovereignty and security of neighbouring States.

In this respect the Sultanate of Oman believes that an international conference would provide the most acceptable forum for seeking a permanent, comprehensive solution of the whole problem and that all the parties concerned should participate on an equal footing in such a conference.

The war that is raging between Iraq and Iran has now entered its seventh year and continues to deplete the energies and resources of two Moslem peoples. It recently experienced a serious escalation, at a time when the States members of the Gulf Co-operation Council were using their good offices, based on the resolution of the Muscat summit, to help bring that war to an end by peaceful means in a way that would guarantee the interests of both parties.

We welcome the responsive position adopted by our brother Iraq towards peace initiatives and continue to hope that the Islamic Republic of Iran will respond similarly to the initiatives taken to end that destructive war.

The Sultanate of Oman, faithful to the principle of the settlement of disputes by peaceful means, supports all the efforts made by the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the Non-Aligned Movement and the United Nations to end this tragedy.

(Mr. Abdullah, Oman)

In spite of the fact that there has been no progress in finding a way to bring both parties to the conflict to the negotiating table, we still believe that the United Nations is the most appropriate and acceptable forum for the conduct of a dialogue between them on their conflict. We believe that the eight-point proposal submitted by the Secretary-General could represent an acceptable common ground for such a dialogue, even though a direct dialogue may not be possible during the first stages of the negotiations. However, it could take place initially through the Security Council, which bears the primary responsibility for international peace and security.

Since January 1980, the General Assembly has adopted many resolutions on the situation in Afghanistan. Regrettably, those resolutions remain unimplemented because of the continued foreign presence on the territory of Moslem Afghanistan, in violation of the principle of respect for the sovereignty of States and non-interference in their internal affairs.

In this respect, we should like to support the efforts made by the Secretary-General through his Special Representative, Mr. Cordovez, to bring about a solution of the Afghan problem. We hope that those efforts will lead to a solution to that problem that would guarantee that the people of Afghanistan can exercise its right to self-determination and that would ensure the right of the refugees to return to their homeland and to live in peaceful coexistence with neighbouring peoples on the basis of mutual respect and non-interference in the internal affairs of others.

There is another similar problem which requires the special attention of the international community, namely, the problem of the continued presence of Vietnamese forces in Democratic Kampuchea. Those foreign troops remain there in spite of the fact that the international community has called for their immediate withdrawal so as to enable the Kampuchean people to determine its destiny and choose its own system of government.

(Mr. Abdullah, Oman)

In calling for the immediate withdrawal of the Vietnamese forces from Democratic Kampuchea, we are bound to express our support of and pay a tribute to the efforts made by the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) to find a just solution to that problem. The latest of those efforts is represented by the eight-point plan which resulted from the meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the Association held in Indonesia in April 1986. This plan has met with the support of many countries throughout the world. We also support the plan presented by the Government of National Alliance under the chairmanship of Prince Norodom Sihanouk to find a just solution for this problem.

Because of our friendship with so many of the African countries, the Sultanate of Oman shares with those States their legitimate aspirations, and denounces the policy of racial discrimination of the Government of South Africa, a policy that violates all ethics and principles of international human conduct. My country likewise condemns all the repressive practices of the Government of South Africa against the black majority. At the same time, we should like to associate ourselves with those who call for the immediate independence of Namibia through the implementation of the relevant United Nations resolutions, in particular Security Council resolution 435 (1978), which includes the United Nations plan for the independence of Namibia.

The Government of South Africa is called upon now to co-operate with neighbouring African States in finding a formula that could put an end to the policy of apartheid and racial discrimination and bring about the independence of Namibia with a view to achieving the well-being of the African peoples in peace and stability.

The Sultanate of Oman, in view of its geographical location and on its policy of keeping the Indian Ocean free from the rivalry of the great Powers and free from all forms of tension, has since 1971 supported the General Assembly Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace.

(Mr. Abdullah, Oman)

The Sultanate has also participated, as it still does, in the work of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean, which undertook preparatory work for the International Conference on the Indian Ocean which was originally scheduled to convene in 1981. We regret that so far that Conference has not been held. It has been postponed from one year to the next, and it is now scheduled to take place during the first half of 1988. We hope that the member countries of the Ad Hoc Committee will summon sufficient political resolve to complete the preparatory work; thereby assuring effective participation in the conference when it takes place. This is an important step that has to be taken in order to declare the Indian Ocean a zone of peace.

The situation in Central America is a source of concern because of the tension that prevails among the countries of the region. We are confident that the Central American countries fully realize that their national responsibilities dictate mutual respect for the rights of all peoples, for the sovereignty of States, and for their desire for economic stability and development. In this context, we should like to support the efforts made by the Contadora Group to settle the differences in the area. We believe that the efforts of the Contadora Group offer the best guarantee for achieving the peace and security desired by the States of the region.

One of the main challenges faced by mankind at this time is the control of the arms race, particularly the nuclear-arms race, and arms reduction. This has been confirmed by the Final Document of the first special session on disarmament, which states:

(Mr. Abdullah, Oman)

"... effective measures of nuclear disarmament and the prevention of nuclear war have the highest priority. To this end, it is imperative to remove the threat of nuclear weapons, to halt and reverse the nuclear-arms race until the total elimination of nuclear weapons and their delivery systems has been achieved ..." (S/10/2, para. 20)

My country supports all efforts to stop the arms race on earth as a necessary step towards a return to détente, and to the establishment of a comprehensive system of international security and co-operation as well as the implementation of development for all peoples.

(Mr. Abdullah, Oman)

We hope in that respect that the détente that has started to take place in relations between the two super-Powers will be reflected in their forthcoming summit meeting, so that the two countries may achieve results that will help the disarmament negotiations, and thus lessen international tension, and help find appropriate solutions to the crises that the international community faces today.

The success of the efforts made at the fortieth session, manifested in the adoption of the resolution on terrorism, and the success of the special session on the critical economic situation in Africa, from 27 to 31 May this year, demonstrated that international will could solve the most complicated problems if guided in the right direction. We hope that the positive impression created by that success will lead to action being taken to correct the drift of the world economy, which can be achieved only by a constructive North-South dialogue to establish a new international economic order that is more equitable to all States. That will not happen unless the industrialized and developed countries redouble their official development aid to the developing nations, reduce the burden of those nations' external indebtedness, eliminate discriminatory protective measures, help the transfer of advanced technology and stabilize the prices of those countries' main commodities at a fair level especially since the allegation by the industrialized and developed countries that the deterioration of the world economy was caused by the crisis high oil prices no longer has any validity.

While the world faces economic recession, the developing countries which are hardest hit do not receive enough assistance from the affluent countries, particularly the industrialized nations. The economies of the oil-producing countries, which gave generous assistance in the past, now face difficulties because of falling oil prices on world markets, affecting the assistance they are able to extend to the developing countries.

(Mr. Abdullah, Oman)

We believe that all of us should regard the difficult problems we are facing as an incentive to strengthen and promote the role of this international Organization so that we may enable it to find appropriate solutions. That will not be possible unless every Member State shoulders its responsibility, as stated by His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said of Oman on 18 November 1982. He said:

"It is time for every State to assume its responsibility within the framework of the international family with a view to promoting and reaffirming the role of the United Nations, making it more forcefully and positively effective for the sake of international peace and security."

Mr. BARRY (Ireland): I wish at the outset warmly to congratulate the President on his election to preside over the General Assembly at this forty-first session. I have every confidence that the depth of experience and range of skills he brings to his high office will contribute significantly to the Assembly's work at this session. We wish him every success in his endeavours.

I wish also to express my appreciation of the efficiency and the dedicated manner in which Ambassador Jaime de Piniés of Spain carried out the duties of President during the fortieth session.

Of course, like other representatives, I am also pleased to compliment the Secretary-General on his speedy recovery following his recent operation. I express to him our gratitude for his unflagging devotion and commitment to the Organization's ideals.

Last year we came to the Assembly to celebrate the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations, founded, as the shadow of war was lifting from the planet, to renew the spirit of mankind, worn down by the turmoil of the previous upheavals. At this session we must begin the renewal of the Organization, so that in the decades ahead it can become, as it was conceived, the central instrument for the management of international relations.

(Mr. Barry, Ireland)

Our immediate priority is to take action, through a programme of administrative and budgetary reform, to end the deepening crisis in the Organization's finances and to see to it that it is provided with the resources necessary to carry out all the responsibilities assigned to it under the Charter.

As we commit our Organization to a process of reform, we, the Member States, must also renew our commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter. The weakening of that commitment has impaired the United Nations in the discharge of its historic mission and has diminished public confidence in our affairs; the financial difficulties we must now surmount are no more than a symptom of that weakening of commitment.

The circumstances of our world have greatly changed since the Charter was signed. The wartime alliances which brought the United Nations into being quickly fragmented under the pressure of the cold war, and the idealism which the Organization inspired at its foundation seemed to fade in the face of new rivalries and new priorities. The achievements of science, which have pushed out the frontiers of our knowledge, have forced us also to contemplate the nightmare of global destruction. A general war has been avoided in our time, but the cold calculations of deterrence which have helped to give us our uneasy peace have not brought with them any easy assurance of security. Peace and freedom remain the luxury of the few on the planet, where regional conflicts persist, where new tyrannies have arisen and where hunger, poverty and disease still thwart our best efforts to achieve a fairer world.

In the face of these great changes and of continuing adversity, the Charter's promise of a new order, free from the scourge of war, based on respect for the dignity and worth of the human person and the rights of all nations, great and small, has gone unfulfilled. That should not, however, lead us to doubt the worth

(Mr. Barry, Ireland)

of the Organization or to call into question the purposes for which it was designed. It is precisely because the play of chance and human error, of avarice and folly, continues to perplex our nuclear age, just as it did in earlier but arguably less dangerous eras, that we require an organization through which we can strive to impose order on our troubled world and dull the edge of competition between our nations.

As we debate in the Assembly how best the Organization can properly and more efficiently perform its role, we must not lose sight of what it has already achieved and may yet contribute in the service of mankind.

(Mr. Barry, Ireland)

It has put at the centre of the international system universal standards of law and conduct and has made respect for these the first obligation of membership.

It has provided a now almost universal forum where States can draw attention to their grievances and avail themselves of the mechanisms to hand for the conciliation of differences.

Though regional wars have continued, many crises have been defused and wider conflict avoided through the good-offices role of the Secretary-General and the contribution of peace-keeping operations.

It has nurtured the process of decolonization, which has seen over 100 States come to independence.

It has established universal standards for respect for human rights to which all Member States must aspire, and it has sharpened vigilance in the detection of abuses of those rights.

Through its specialized agencies it has pushed back the boundaries of famine, poverty, disease and underdevelopment, and it has housed and nourished those displaced by wars and other disasters.

Why, then, is it that there are doubts and hesitations about the value of the Organization, with its incontestable record of achievement, at a time when the need for such a body was never more apparent? The Secretary-General in his annual reports has drawn attention to a crisis of confidence in the multilateral approach to international relations. Within the Organization this crisis reflects itself in the tendency of Member States to accept a whole-hearted commitment to some but not all of their Charter undertakings or to pursue their interests outside the framework of collective security, which is at the centre of the Charter. It reflects itself also in the tendency of States to look to this Assembly for the satisfaction of short-term advantage only and to disregard the opportunities it offers for the more arduous and more critical work of building that consensus which

(Mr. Barry, Ireland)

is the basis of progress. It is evidenced not least in the withholding by a number of Member States of their due contributions so that our present financial difficulties came to a head even as the Organization celebrated its fortieth year.

This crisis of confidence in the multilateral approach has also been marked by growing criticism on the part of those who observe our affairs and who have become weary of what they see as a contradiction between promise and performance in our deliberations. Perhaps they ask of us higher standards than we are able to attain, but they remind us that the standards they expect are those which we have all accepted in subscribing to the Charter. Others point to the wasteful dissipation of our energy through duplication in our agenda, to a preoccupation with internal debates, to the neglect of practical solutions to the pressing problems of the outside world, to a tendency to single out for criticism a small number of countries while the misdeeds of others are seldom commented on. These criticisms may not do justice to the problems faced by a global institution made up of different peoples and regions which must seek a balance in the priority to be given to the issues of importance to each of its Members. However, since they are heard even from those who are in principle advocates of this Organization, they must give us cause for serious concern.

I wish to make it clear that in my own country there remains a fundamental confidence in the work of this Organization. Commitment to the principles of the Charter is at the heart of Irish foreign policy. As a small nation which has experienced more than its fair share of the problems of division and conflict, we have a particular interest in the propagation and universal acceptance of the Charter's central tenet: the settlement of disputes between nations by peaceful means. We are also acutely aware that in this nuclear age no nation is immune to the dangers inherent in regional conflict. For while these conflicts have involved an appalling toll in the destruction of innocent lives and in the despoliation of

(Mr. Barry, Ireland)

needed resources, they have at times also threatened wider escalation and brought the nuclear Powers perilously close to confrontation.

If, as I believe, all Member States are agreed in the face of this overwhelming reality that we need the United Nations as the central instrument of order and co-operation in our nuclear age, we must be willing to take whatever steps are necessary to make it work and end the contradictions between promise and performance in our affairs. For, however we weigh the balances of success and failure of the United Nations, one thing is certain: the failings of this Organization are our own failings.

The States assembled here are the United Nations. The success of this Organization in carrying out the responsibilities for which it was brought into being can be no greater than the effort each of us is prepared to make to fulfil the obligations of membership.

Those obligations are real and substantive. They govern both the conduct of our relations with other States and our involvement in the structures of the Organization itself. Member States have a particular obligation to co-operate with the Security Council, which has been given primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. If the United Nations is to function at maximum effectiveness, the fullest possible support must also be given to the Secretary-General in accomplishing the many difficult but essential tasks which fall to him, not the least that of forging solutions to many of the regional conflicts that have been at the centre of our deliberations.

The States represented in this Assembly must also exert a greater effort in the resolution of the issues which come before us year after year.

If I mention first East-West relations, it is because the relationship between the two great nuclear Powers is the overriding reality of international life that intrudes at every level in the work of the Organization. The Charter was conceived

(Mr. Barry, Ireland)

at a time when those great Powers had joined in common purpose. Today, long after the rupture of that coalition, competition between the super-Powers remains a central preoccupation of this Organization. Through its role in containing regional conflict, the United Nations has helped by acting as a regulator of the relationship between the two great nuclear Powers. But its contribution to crisis management can be effective only when both Powers are agreed on the scope and purpose of any action contemplated. Under the Charter, in virtue of their permanent membership of the Security Council, the Soviet Union and the United States have a special responsibility to promote international peace and security. It is therefore of the first importance that they meet that responsibility by availing themselves of every avenue for dialogue and for the more effective management of their competition, so that tensions between them may be reduced.

The improved climate of East-West relations during the past year offers grounds for continued, if moderate, optimism that a new spirit of co-operation between the Soviet Union and the United States may yet emerge. In particular, the summit meeting between President Reagan and Secretary Gorbachev of last November brought agreement to maintain regular contacts at both the political and the official level on important issues of concern. In spite of the serious differences which they acknowledged, the two leaders were able to identify some significant common ground as regards the approach to bilateral negotiations on nuclear and space weapons.

(Mr. Barry, Ireland)

We hope that the understandings then reached and the important meeting recently held between Secretary of State Shultz and Foreign Minister Shevardnadze will lead to substantial advances on all aspects of their relations. If so, the positive effects will be felt within this Organization as well as in the East-West dialogue and within the framework of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe. As a means of highlighting the priority which arms control and disarmament must have in international affairs, the Assembly has designated the 1980s as the Second Disarmament Decade. Looking back over the first half of this Decade, we cannot in truth conclude that it has led us any further away from the awesome threat of ever more sophisticated nuclear arsenals with their deadly potential to end life on this planet. I cite as just one example the fact that of the more than 1,000 nuclear explosions which have been detonated since the partial test ban Treaty came into effect in 1963, almost one quarter have taken place in the last five years alone.

By contrast, however, with the disappointing results of recent years, there are indications that an advance might even yet be possible in the period ahead because of the improved prospects for negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union to which I have already referred. I would urge the leaders of these two powerful nations to pursue every possibility for agreement on substantial reductions of nuclear weapons, with a view to their eventual elimination. They must also ensure that outer space will never become the arena for a new arms race.

There is unchallengeable evidence that chemical weapons are in use in contravention of the 1925 Geneva Protocol, and there are disturbing indications of growing interest in the acquisition of these weapons. The conclusion of an internationally binding and verifiable chemical weapons ban must therefore have the utmost priority, and I am happy to note encouraging signs of progress in the negotiations on a convention which are taking place at the Conference on Disarmament.

(Mr. Barry, Ireland)

In the last few days, moreover, the Stockholm Conference on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures has concluded its negotiations with a major agreement which will contribute significantly to the creation of an improved climate of security in Europe.

I have used this podium previously to appeal to the nuclear-weapon States to undertake a commitment to halt the testing of nuclear weapons and to take steps to achieve a comprehensive test ban treaty. Such a prohibition will not eliminate nuclear weapons. But we are persuaded that it would constrain their further technical development and open the path to their reduction and elimination. As such it would be a credible demonstration of commitment by the nuclear-weapon States to their often-declared intention to eliminate nuclear weapons, and indeed a needed reassurance to the international community that its concerns have not gone unheeded.

The development of the concept and the practice of peace-keeping has been one of the most remarkable and valuable achievements of the United Nations. Ireland is particularly honoured to have had over 30 years a close involvement in this response by the United Nations to the management of regional conflicts. Through participation in observer and peace-keeping missions, we have sought to give practical expression to our commitment to the peaceful settlement of disputes.

In agreeing to the dispatch of troops on peace-keeping missions Irish Governments have been concerned to ensure satisfaction of a number of basic conditions necessary for the effective operation and security of the force concerned: first, it should operate under a clear mandate from the Security Council and with the full support of its members; secondly, it should enjoy the co-operation of the various parties to the conflicts; thirdly, it should operate on the basis of satisfactory financial arrangements. Judged against those criteria, the present situation of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), on

(Mr. Barry, Ireland)

which the Secretary-General has in recent days reported to the Security Council, can only give grounds for serious concern.

Central to the problems confronting UNIFIL is its inability to implement the mandate given to it in Security Council resolution 425 (1978). The so-called security zone which Israel has insisted on maintaining has been the focus of resistance and confrontation which have led to dangerous escalation of violence on all sides. The loss of life and other casualties suffered by the Force in recent weeks bear testimony to the high price paid by the members of UNIFIL in the efforts to restore stability in that region and to carry out their duties impartially. Their current precarious position cannot be allowed to continue. It is imperative that murderous attacks on members of the United Nations Force should cease and that they should be allowed to discharge their mandate without further interference. Progress in this sense must be made immediately.

I strongly endorse the Secretary-General's recommendation to the members of the Security Council, both collectively and individually, to take urgent action to unblock the present impasse and make substantial progress towards implementation of the mandate. I note that the Security Council has again seized itself of the matter in the last two days. All the parties concerned have once again been asked to co-operate in having the Force deployed to the southern border of Lebanon. This call must be heeded. The Secretary-General has been asked to make the necessary arrangements. It is important that he be assured of the full support of all Members of this Organization in his efforts. A clear demonstration by all Member States of their willingness to give full political support to the United Nations peace-keeping effort and to pay their assessed contributions is more necessary than ever before.

Perhaps in no other area of United Nations activity is the gap between promise and performance more evident than in that of human rights. The United Nations has

(Mr. Barry, Ireland)

to its credit already accomplished much in this field by defining and codifying the common standards which all Governments must respect in virtue of their co-operation as Members of this Organization. The Universal Declaration, agreed only four years after the United Nations was founded, has been the basis for all that has subsequently been achieved. And yet if we look beyond these halls, beyond the debates we have held and the drafts we have argued over, sometimes for years until we have reached agreement, we find that the standards we have set and the protections we have envisaged are all too often spurned and that too many States still impose their authority in brutal disregard for the rights of the individual.

I would suggest, therefore, that in the period ahead, if this work is to have concrete and lasting value, the United Nations might with profit concentrate on how best to ensure the widest possible implementation of the various international human rights instruments now in force. Nothing would do more to enhance the reputation and popular perception of the United Nations than the knowledge that its decisions and resolutions had a significant impact on the possibility for ordinary men and women to live out their lives in dignity and in freedom. We must therefore work to ensure that the machinery for the correction of abuses and for the investigation of grievances is developed so that individuals everywhere can have the confidence of redress where that is now denied.*

* Mr. Ogouma (Benin), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Barry, Ireland)

For a great part of mankind repression takes the form of hunger, disease and poverty. The human costs are immense. At the same time, the political consequences are becoming more evident as the stability of many developing countries is called into question by the mounting social and economic difficulties they have to face.

Economic problems cannot be contained within national boundaries. Few countries today can escape the impact of economic decline, even in distant regions of the world. Individual States do not have it in their power either to avoid those problems or to devise solutions to them. Common action is not an option; it is a necessity.

The focus for such efforts is provided by the multilateral framework of the United Nations, which thus has a key role to play in assisting the developing countries. The special session on Africa which took place earlier this year is an example of what can be achieved when Member States recognize the need for multilateral action and show the determination and pragmatism necessary to arrive at concrete and practical results.

A major event on next year's United Nations agenda, and one for which preparations are now under way, is the Seventh United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. We attach great importance to that meeting. It will have a heavy agenda covering the basic issues, including resources for development and commodities, and will take account of the problems facing the least developed countries.

One of the outstanding achievements of the fortieth session of the Assembly was the innovative and far-reaching agreement reached by Member States on measures to prevent international terrorism. Since that session, however, a number of European States, including some of our partner States in the Twelve, have suffered

(Mr. Barry, Ireland)

from a barbarous onslaught of terrorist attacks. Other countries in other regions have also fallen victim to the terrorists' murderous intentions.

Ireland and its European partners are determined to confront this renewed terrorist threat. In condemning such acts of terrorism we have emphasized that States which support or harbour terrorists cannot expect to maintain normal relations with our countries. We have also asked for the co-operation of other States Members of the Organization in our efforts to defeat terrorism and to isolate those who carry out such outrages. International terrorism is an affront and a challenge to all that the Organization stands for. Building, therefore, on the consensus we achieved at last year's session, we must now strengthen our co-operation and vigilance so as to ensure the elimination of this great evil.

Progress in the priority areas that I have just identified - East-West relations, disarmament, peace-keeping, human rights, development and the prevention of international terrorism - would strengthen the role of the Organization and go some way towards achieving the goal of the founders of the United Nations. But it is also important that the United Nations should not lack the resources necessary to carry out its global responsibilities. A background of ever threatening financial crisis can only lead to the progressive paralysis of the Organization. The first requirement is that all Member States should pay their assessed contributions, which are obligatory under the Charter. This is central to any effort to place United Nations finances on a sound footing. It is also important that we make our Organization as efficient and as vigorous as possible. My delegation would like to congratulate the members of the High-Level Group on the report they have prepared, which represents a major contribution to the debate on the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations. In seeking change, we must take care that we do not upset the balance which the Charter

(Mr. Barry, Ireland)

strikes between the interests of all nations represented here, great and small alike, in exercise of their sovereign equality. If we exercise this care, I am confident that we can more effectively equip the Organization to play in the decades ahead the indispensable role in international life which falls to it in virtue of the Charter.

Most of the regional conflicts which we confront have persisted despite the efforts of the United Nations to point the way towards an agreed settlement and to offer its services to aid that outcome. All of them dramatize the futility of violence and all have brought intolerable hardship to the peoples involved. Through their co-operation the States members of the European Community have sought to lend their collective weight to the efforts of the Secretary-General and other interested parties to assist in the resolution of these conflicts, whether in Afghanistan, in Cyprus or in the Gulf. Yesterday my colleague, the British Foreign Secretary, reaffirmed the determination of the Twelve to continue their efforts to encourage a peaceful settlement of such conflicts. For my own part, I wish to address today the particular problems of three regions: the Middle East, southern Africa and Central America.

In Ireland we remain deeply concerned at the continuing failure to bring an end to the conflict between Israel and its Arab neighbours, a conflict whose instabilities have radiated far beyond the immediate region. We were encouraged in the past year by the opportunities which then seemed to be emerging from the agreement reached in February 1985 between Jordan and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). The impasse that has since developed has, unfortunately, disappointed the many hopes to which that agreement once gave rise. More recently, we have followed with particular interest the renewed efforts by Egypt and Israel to find a peaceful resolution of their bilateral differences.

(Mr. Barry, Ireland)

A greater effort is now called for from the parties concerned and from the wider world community to ensure for the region as a whole a comprehensive and enduring peace. Our own approach to a settlement of that conflict is based on the Venice Declaration adopted by the States members of the European Community. Justice must be secured for the Palestinian people in accord with their right to self-determination. Israel also must be given the reassurance of security behind recognized frontiers.

Lebanon has been the victim of the instabilities caused by the failure to find a settlement of the wide conflict in the Middle East. The past year has involved further suffering and bloodshed for the divided communities of that land. We appeal to the Lebanese Government and to others in the country to continue in the vital task of bringing about national reconciliation. In so doing, we again recall the equally pressing need for restraint by forces outside the country. The territorial integrity, sovereignty and political independence of Lebanon must be respected if peace is to be secured.

The continued worsening of the situation in South Africa over the past year is a source of great dismay to the international community. Despite the drastic measures taken by the South African Administration to prevent the media reporting on events there, the attention of the world is focused as never before on the disastrous consequences of apartheid in all its manifestations. It is idle for the South African Government to claim, as it does, that it has embarked on a process of reform. Tinkering with the system is valueless if the basic structure of apartheid is left intact. That evil practice must be eradicated root and branch. The declaration of a state of emergency and the wholesale arrests and repressive measures taken under it clearly indicate that the South African Administration is not yet seriously intent on genuine reform or on commencing a meaningful political dialogue with the authentic leaders of the black community.

(Mr. Barry, Ireland)

Progress requires that certain basic pre-conditions be met. These include the lifting of the state of emergency, the immediate and unconditional release of Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners, the ending of the ban on the African National Congress, the Pan African Congress and other political parties, and an end to detention without trial and forced relocation. It should be clear to all by now that only collective action by the international community will eventually persuade those holding power in South Africa to make a real commitment to abandon apartheid. For this reason Ireland favours the imposition by the Security Council of a set of mandatory sanctions against South Africa to be fully implemented by all. As a member of the European Community, we have consistently supported the introduction of joint measures to pressure South Africa to accept change and we shall continue to act with our partners in the Community in the interest of a further strengthening of its sanctions until real change is brought about.

South Africa continues to defy international law and opinion elsewhere in the region. Its efforts to destabilize its neighbours have been condemned by Ireland and by the international community. The manoeuvrings of the South African Government in establishing the so-called transitional government of national unity in Namibia do not deceive world opinion and should be recognized for what they are: further obstacles in the way of independence for Namibia. The only way forward is the immediate implementation by South Africa of Security Council resolution 435 (1978).

It is dispiriting to note that in Central America the reflex of violence as a solution to the area's problems is still far too prevalent. Violence will not provide a solution to economic and social injustice. Only a firmer democracy will bring with it a greater assurance of justice to the people of the region, leading to a lessening of the burden of poverty and oppression which has affected too many of them for too long. A basic requirement of this development is peace. The

(Mr. Barry, Ireland)

countries of the area need peace, externally and internally. The best hope remains the efforts of the Central American States themselves. They have a right to look to others for their goodwill and encouragement. The Contadora process seemed to us a good augury. We are disappointed that that initiative has not resulted in the agreement which would be the foundation for lasting progress. We urge the Contadora States to renew their efforts, with the co-operation of the Support Group, to construct the framework for the enduring peace which the region so desperately needs. Ireland, as one of the Twelve, looks forward to the opportunity of providing active support to this process within the context of the Twelve's political dialogue with Central America.

For 18 years Ministers for Foreign Affairs of successive Irish Governments have informed the General Assembly each year in this debate of the situation in Northern Ireland. We have described the historic background to the instability of that part of Ireland and the underlying causes. We have stressed our sincere desire to find, with the British Government, a peaceful resolution of this issue. The present troubled phase goes back to 1969, but this is only one phase of a deep-seated and difficult problem which involves the relationship of two Member States - Britain and Ireland - and the existence of two major traditions - unionist and nationalist - in the island of Ireland. We have reported to the General Assembly - and I do so once again today - not only because this is our single most important national problem but because the United Nations has a paramount role in the maintenance of world peace and security.

Since I last addressed the Assembly a year ago there has been a major constructive development. On 15 November last at Hillsborough, in Northern Ireland, the Irish and British Governments signed a solemn, binding Agreement - the Anglo-Irish Agreement of 1985. Our Parliaments in Dublin and London debated and approved the Agreement, which entered into force on 29 November. Under Article 102

(Mr. Barry, Ireland)

of the Charter, the representatives of our two Governments registered the Agreement on 20 December 1985 at the United Nations.

The Agreement results from the commitment of two Members of this Organization to seek solutions to an issue of great common concern through negotiations. It results equally from a common rejection of any attempt to promote political objectives by violence or the threat of violence. It is particularly fitting that I should inform the Assembly about the Agreement in this the United Nations International Year of Peace.

The Agreement was preceded by a long period of reflection and consultation on both sides. For our part, representatives of the constitutional nationalist parties in the whole of Ireland met formally in Dublin to consider the manner in which lasting peace and stability could be achieved. The New Ireland Forum Report of May 1984 contains the agreed result; it was the basis for the position of my Government in the ensuing negotiations with the British Government.

Both Governments entered into negotiations in the knowledge that it was in their joint interest to reach agreement. We had before us four main objectives. We wanted, through concerted action, to promote peace and stability in Northern Ireland. We wanted to help to reconcile the two major traditions - nationalist and unionist - in Ireland. We wanted to create a new climate of friendship between the peoples of Britain and Ireland. And we wanted to put an end to violence and terror.

We set out to provide a framework for achieving peace, stability and reconciliation. We did not intend that the Agreement should produce ready-made solutions to a problem which dates back to the Anglo-Irish settlement of over 65 years ago, with origins deep in the past. But we were convinced that, if we could establish the right framework, solutions would come progressively and in time. The Anglo-Irish Agreement is the result.

(Mr. Barry, Ireland)

In its important first article the Agreement declares that any change in the status of Northern Ireland would come about only with the consent of a majority of the people of Northern Ireland. The present wish of a majority of the people there is for no change, but if in the future a majority of the people of Northern Ireland clearly wish for and formally consent to the establishment of a united Ireland both Governments will introduce and support in their respective Parliaments legislation to give effect to that wish.

For the first time an international agreement sets out plainly the legitimacy of the nationalist aspiration to a sovereign united Ireland achieved by peaceful means and through consent. At the same time the concerns of unionists are fully met by the assurance that there will be no change in the present status unless a majority in Northern Ireland so wishes.

(Mr. Barry, Ireland)

The Agreement provides for an Intergovernmental Conference as the means through which the Irish and British Governments have committed themselves to work together for specific objectives: accommodation of the rights and identities of the two traditions which exist in Northern Ireland and peace, stability and prosperity throughout the island of Ireland.

For the first time in an international agreement the rights of the Irish Government to speak for the nationalists in the North has been recognized and provided for on a formal and continuing basis. For Northern nationalists, this gives new hope. The Irish Government in the Conference is their advocate.

We will support the rights of nationalists in Northern Ireland and ensure, through the Conference, that those rights are fully acknowledged and accommodated. We want to see a society in which nationalists as well as unionists can live in peace, free from discrimination and intolerance and with the opportunity for both communities to participate in the structures and processes of Government. We also want to see - as soon as possible and through the co-operation of the constitutional political representatives in Northern Ireland - a devolved Government established there on a basis which has widespread support from both unionists and nationalists alike.

The Anglo-Irish Agreement is an initiative by two Governments aimed at producing new positive political movement through joint action. It was carefully designed to meet a particular situation. Its form and implementing machinery are new and have no exact precedent in international affairs. Its architects, the two Governments, are committed to its success because it is in their vital interests to ensure that it does succeed.

The Charter lays down as one of its purposes the development of friendly relations among nations. Between the Irish and British nations there is a unique

(Mr. Barry, Ireland)

relationship which derives from historical, cultural and ethnic links over many centuries and from close geographical proximity. We also share strong common beliefs in democratic principles and institutions, and today there is the common bond of our partnership in the European Community. The major unresolved issue between us has been Northern Ireland.

I am confident that in the Anglo-Irish Agreement we have laid a sound foundation for progress towards reconciliation, peace and stability on the island of Ireland and for the closer development of relations, as friendly neighbours, between the British and the Irish peoples.

Mr. TINDEMANS (Belgium) (interpretation from French): At the outset, I should like to extend to Mr. Choudhury my warmest congratulations on his unanimous election to the presidency of the forty-first session of the United Nations General Assembly. I am particularly pleased at his election since our two countries maintain excellent relations. The Organization will, I am sure, benefit from his wide diplomatic experience. I am confident that his authority and his great negotiating skill will guarantee the success of our work at this session.

I should also like to thank his predecessor, Mr. de Piniés, Ambassador of Spain, for the skilful manner in which he guided the General Assembly at its last session.

I take particular pleasure in saluting the Secretary-General and drawing attention publicly to the untiring dedication with which he fulfils the high responsibilities entrusted to him by the international community. I am delighted to see him among us today in excellent health and ready to share in our common endeavour to ensure that the United Nations fulfils its role in the world.

The Secretary-General's report to the General Assembly has received the close attention of my Government. He correctly emphasizes the extent to which the interdependence of all States compels us to co-operate ever more closely in

(Mr. Tindemans, Belgium)

order to achieve stronger multilateralism. The ideals of the Organization can only be achieved through such co-operation among all States, which is the responsibility of every State, directly and individually.

My country's commitment to international co-operation has been clearly demonstrated in the past. Today, I am convinced that the goals of such co-operation include the strengthening of the United Nations.

In this context, my country attaches great importance to the universal character of our Organization. For example, with regard to the question of the Korean Peninsula, Belgium is in favour of the simultaneous admission of the two Koreas to membership of the United Nations, pending direct talks between the two parties leading to reunification.

The Foreign Secretary of the United Kingdom, Sir Geoffrey Howe, current President of the Council of Ministers of the European Community, has perfectly described from this rostrum the way in which the 12 members of the Community view international questions of concern to us. I should like to thank my colleague and emphasize that Belgium associates itself strongly with his statement.

A year ago the General Assembly proclaimed 1986 the International Year of Peace. That initiative was a response to the aspiration of all people to live in a world in which peace is permanently guaranteed by effective, verified disarmament. But we must recognize that a number of fundamental prerequisites for effective disarmament have not yet been fulfilled. There is still an appalling lack of trust, and without trust nothing concrete will ever be achieved. It seems to me, therefore, that only a gradual approach has any chance of leading to results that will lead to permanent solutions.

The Geneva summit in the autumn of last year gave rise to great expectations;

(Mr. Tindemans, Belgium)

the "spirit of Geneva" characterized the ensuing atmosphere of growing trust between the two super-Powers. Since then, those relations have had ups and downs, but the dialogue continues, and that is the main thing. We hope that another summit will take place in Washington. Real progress towards agreements on the reduction of forces is possible, beginning with the complete elimination of a whole category of weapons. I am thinking of medium-range nuclear missile, which are of direct concern to my country.

A balanced reduction of the strategic arsenals of the two super-Powers will open the way to greater stability. That goal could be reached without upsetting the balance of power, because such a reduction would simply bring the arsenals down again to their level of some 10 years ago.

It is against this general background that we must examine the question of putting an end to nuclear testing. Belgium welcomes the progress that has been made in the past few months. We follow with interest the proposals that have been made on both sides in the area of verification. It seems to us that the climate is favourable for a resumption of dialogue. Belgium has therefore welcomed the Soviet decision to extend its unilateral moratorium on nuclear tests. However, Belgium believes that a moratorium, even if it were multilateral, would not necessarily offer all the safeguards that can be provided only by a treaty signed in due and good form.

(Mr. Tindemans, Belgium)

If, taking into account the real facts of the problem, a total halt in nuclear testing cannot be expected over the short term, there are intermediary solutions within the context of a gradual and realistic approach. The military nuclear Powers, beginning with the two super-Powers, could agree on limiting testing programmes to a minimum. President Reagan said the day before yesterday that he was ready to start negotiating an agreement along those lines. Such an agreement would be accompanied by a commitment to provide all relevant information relating to verification. Such a step, particularly if it were accompanied by on-site inspection and verification - and this seems to be accepted in principle now - would provide valuable information on the reliability of procedures for exchanging seismic data. This would play an essential role in verification of a complete halting of nuclear tests.

Whatever the importance of negotiations on reducing nuclear arsenals, arms control has also a conventional dimension which we cannot neglect.

Belgium has always followed very closely the issue of conventional arms control, particularly in Europe where, in addition to the negotiations on a mutual and balanced force reduction, which have been going on for years now, we see new prospects that can be explored. We must also increase trust and transparency. The Stockholm Conference has just ended with encouraging results. We welcome those results, but we are still far from the goal. Much remains to be done before real confidence can be built, for that is the only way to take greater strides towards disarmament in Europe.

For this reason the Disarmament Conference in Geneva must continue its work in all earnest and with intensity. For Belgium, the ban on chemical weapons is a priority. Only a universal ban can prevent the possible use of those weapons. Indeed, the world has unfortunately witnessed the use of those weapons in the past few months.

(Mr. Tindemans, Belgium)

Alternative approaches, such as "chemical-weapon-free zones", can never provide the same safeguards. However, some optimism seems to be justified in view of the progress made in Geneva. Let us hope the momentum will be strengthened still further. We await with interest the concrete proposals from the Warsaw Pact member States relating to verification. A constructive attitude on the part of those countries is a major contribution to the success of the negotiations now under way. Belgium will continue to be as active as possible in the Geneva Conference.

Here, I should like to express gratitude to the Secretary-General, who over the past year has carried out his task of investigating alleged violations of the Geneva Protocol. His work is an important aspect of the credibility of the Protocol, which in the absence of a complete ban on chemical weapons is the only bulwark protecting mankind from the actual use of such chemical weapons.

The convention on the ban of biological warfare is now the subject of a second review conference in Geneva. My country hopes that this conference will further strengthen the standing of that convention which, despite criticism regarding the lack of appropriate verification measures, is an important instrument against those weapons, which otherwise could rapidly become operational.

We are also making great efforts in other forums in addition to our work and the work of this Organization. The Final Act of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, held at Helsinki, the tenth anniversary of which we celebrated last year, initiated a permanent, process aimed not only at arms control and reduction, but also at safeguarding human integrity and dignity and promoting mutual confidence in relations between peoples.

The 35 signatory countries will be meeting again in Vienna on 4 November for a thorough consideration of implementation of the positions agreed on in the Final Act of Helsinki and at the Madrid meeting. Belgium attaches great importance to

(Mr. Tindemans, Belgium)

this work since it includes a full examination of the way in which commitments entered into 10 years ago have been implemented, and an examination of the achievements of several specialized intermediary meetings.

The negotiators will also be examining ways and means of improving the implementation of the Final Act, this important instrument. The commitments entered into at the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe are indivisible. It will therefore be absolutely indispensable for the negotiators to arrive at a balanced agreement, with possibilities for progress in each and every one of the main fields covered in the Final Act.

Peace and security are a necessary basis for fulfilling the aspirations of the individual and for creating a climate in which international relations can be directed towards universal economic and social progress. Unfortunately, those ideals are threatened by other factors, no less dangerous than war itself. Recent events force us to strengthen our actions in the area of the environment and human health. Here I am thinking in particular of nuclear safety, deforestation and drug abuse.

The Chernobyl accident did indeed evoke a profound reaction in public opinion throughout the world. It directly affected the lives and health of workers at the plant, contaminated the population in the region, and produced negative effects throughout large parts of Europe. It is essential, it seems to me, that international machinery should be devised to respond to the serious concerns resulting from this accident.

In the nuclear area, we must arrive at a common concept of security. The activities of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the European Community on the regional level have increased our information and our evaluation of nuclear

(Mr. Tindemans, Belgium)

safety. However, there is an element of decision-making in the design of nuclear plants that still lies exclusively within national competence.

There is an obvious need for international co-operation. As a first step we must agree on a common international approach to the evaluation of risks in nuclear plants and of the possibility of serious accidents. Here, the role of IAEA is of the utmost importance. We cannot accept a situation in which the norms for acceptable levels of radiation in agricultural products, soil and water are purely national and may therefore vary.

There has been a crisis of credibility in this connection. The world needs standard norms and measures of exposure. IAEA and other competent bodies must work swiftly to resolve this matter. Lastly, the Chernobyl accident has revealed the need for a better flow of information. In this particular field, an important field, a great effort must be made at the national level, where adequate data should be made available. This should be done at all levels - national, regional and global. IAEA could encompass such a global information structure. Here, I welcome the convention on early notification of nuclear accidents.

(Mr. Tindemans, Belgium)

Problems have arisen on the question of whether this convention should include accidents linked to nuclear weapons or tests. A solution has been found providing that States possessing nuclear weapons should make voluntary notification of accidents not listed in article 1 of the convention. We invite all States to declare their intention to this effect. Belgium attaches paramount importance to this question and feels that all nuclear Powers should make such a statement, because it is the only guarantee for our populations that appropriate measures will be taken whatever the nature of the nuclear accident causing radioactive fallout on their territory.

Finally, we must ensure international solidarity in the event of nuclear disaster. In this respect I welcome the prompt action taken by IAEA to draft an international convention on assistance in case of nuclear accidents or similar risks of radiation exposure.

I should like to touch briefly on two other problems affecting our environment and health: deforestation and the gradual death of European forests rank high among our concerns.

In Europe the death of forests is associated with acid rain. The scientists cannot give a definite explanation of the complex process which leads to the slow death of European forests, but all scientists agree that atmospheric pollution is one of the major causes. Vast regions of central and northern Europe are seeing their age-old forests dying slowly. The effects are disastrous from the standpoint of the ecology and the economy, not to mention human health. An effort is essential at the level of international co-operation. Belgium has lent its full support to the major initiatives taken in the past 15 years to protect the environment. My country will preside over the work of the "European Year of the

(Mr. Tindemans, Belgium)

Environment", to be organized in 1987 within the framework of the European Economic Community. At the national level, the Belgian Government continues its work to combat atmospheric pollution.

But Europe is not the only continent affected by the disappearance of forests. In Africa, America and Asia tropical forests are now disappearing as a result of human activities. The disappearance of tropical forests is indeed a real threat to mankind. For many years the drought which has struck many countries in Africa has demonstrated the importance of respecting ecological balances.

The international community is gradually becoming more aware of this as a result, inter alia, of the work of the United Nations. This new awareness must now be translated into action.

Belgium stands ready to join its European, African and international partners to define a co-ordinated and concerted strategy to combat desertification in which man would be at the centre of action. That was stated by the Belgian Prime Minister at the recent Silva Conference in Paris. The elaboration of such a common strategy is the only way to mobilize efficient ways and means to see our forests reborn and to combat desert and famine.

I turn now to another issue. The illicit drug trafficking and drug abuse are an international problem which increasingly threatens the general health of the population and undermines society and its institutions. There is a link between drug trafficking and the increase in crime and terrorism, the regression of national economies and the modification of social systems.

The international community must fully assume its responsibilities in this area. Most of our Governments have intensified their fight against drug abuse, drug production and trafficking. The international dimension of the problem makes co-operation at the regional and international levels essential.

(Mr. Tindemans, Belgium)

Last June, the 12 member States of the European Community decided to increase their co-operation in the fight against drugs, while ensuring that their actions would not duplicate the work carried out in other multilateral forums.

Belgium believes that the United Nations has a unique role to play in this field and welcomes two initiatives taken within the Organization's framework, namely, the draft convention against illicit traffic in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances and the proposed international conference on drug abuse and illicit trafficking. My country has approved both initiatives within the framework of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and the Economic and Social Council.

I have already mentioned another scourge that threatens mankind and which can be fought only through efficient international co-operation. I refer to terrorism. In recent weeks the horrendous events in Karachi, Istanbul and Paris demonstrated once again how this criminal madness increasingly threatens us in our daily life.

General Assembly resolution 40/61, adopted by consensus last year, unequivocally condemns terrorist acts. This is an important stage in our common fight. In order to contribute to the implementation of that important resolution, I wish to inform representatives that measures have been taken in my country to ratify the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Crimes Against Internationally Protected Persons, including Diplomatic Agents, which was signed in New York on 14 December 1973; and the International Convention Against the Taking of Hostages, which was adopted in New York on 17 December 1979.

Recent developments show clearly that efforts undertaken by the United Nations must be sustained and increased; above all, they must be efficiently and actively supported by all States. It is essential that the international community as a whole steadfastly reiterates that no political goal can ever justify resort to terrorism. Our loathing for such actions must be clearly reaffirmed.

(Mr. Tindemans, Belgium)

When I spoke last year on this same issue I raised the possibility of drafting a convention on the use of booby-trap devices along the lines of the Convention against the taking of hostages. I should like to repeat the suggestion now. Of course my country would also be prepared to support any other proposal to intensify the fight against this scourge.

Another issue that I should like to speak on is human rights which directly affect man's ability to live in dignity. A striking example of violations of human rights is South Africa. In his statement made on behalf of the 12 member States of the European Community, my British colleague reflected the horror inspired in us by the policy of apartheid, our greatest concern over the extremely distressing situation in South Africa, and our firm commitment to contribute to the abolition of apartheid in all its manifestations. In the course of this session I shall speak again on this matter, as we did at the recent special session on Namibia. Today I shall comment in a more general manner. This year Belgium is once again a member of the Commission on Human Rights, thus demonstrating the great interest that my country attaches to matters relating to human rights.

(Mr. Tindemans, Belgium)

Aside from the events that took place during the last session of the Commission on Human Rights, I should like to stress some main trends that are taking shape in the United Nations in the field of human rights and to mention paths we should like to see followed.

First, it seems to me that our Organization, through its various organs, has almost completed its process of establishing universal norms pertaining to fundamental rights. From now on there is the danger that we would be witnessing exercises of merely refining those norms, which appears absurd when the most fundamental human rights are still being ignored or violated in certain parts of the world. We are therefore of the opinion that the efforts of the international community should now be focused essentially on the implementation of existing norms.

I have already had the opportunity to express before the Assembly Belgium's views on what could be an ideal system for maintaining observance of human rights through a universal mechanism, as well as through interactive regional arrangements. We are still far from this, but we would like to emphasize here the need to strengthen international co-operation in the field of human rights. Such co-operation cannot be kept within national boundaries. The international community must address itself specifically to the fate of individuals and peoples. One should be able to draw the line between what would be inadmissible interference in the internal affairs of States, such as intervening their political, social and economic order, and objective concern for international co-operation properly understood.

We acknowledge that, universal as it should be, the implementation of human rights requires subtle balances which take into consideration social, cultural and historical elements. Such considerations invite us to be cautious. We do not want to condemn; we wish first of all to understand individual situations. That

(Mr. Tindemans, Belgium)

nevertheless implies that, in return the authorities involved should not only co-operate in order to clarify the situation but also agree that wherever a common examination of a situation revealed unacceptable shortcomings, that situation should be remedied. Belgium has always emphasized and encouraged the progress made, rather than tried to highlight remaining flaws.

As I have said, Belgium is of the opinion that our Organization must decisively turn to the implementation of human rights. We therefore regret in particular the present financial situation which the Organization is having to face. Indeed, and even if it is only for the time being, various essential bodies dealing with the implementation of those rights have been silenced. The Sub-Commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities was not able to meet this year and the Human Rights Committee was obliged to reduce the number of its annual meetings. The share of the United Nations budget allocated to activities in the field of human rights is modest. That sector has been severely affected by austerity measures and retention of such cuts in coming years could very quickly jeopardize the whole system of the promotion and protection of human rights.

In the same spirit we wish to maintain and build on the new approaches of the Commission on Human Rights, to the implementation and promotion of rights as reflected in the monographs on forced disappearances, summary executions, religious intolerance and torture.

In this connection, Belgium will work to strengthen the institution of special rapporteurs appointed by the Commission to investigate violations of human rights. We will also call for the co-operation of the Governments involved. Indeed, we believe, as does the Secretary-General, that this is the direction in which we should move in future.

(Mr. Tindemans, Belgium)

I have just mentioned the financial crisis our Organization is facing. In his report on the work of the Organization the Secretary-General declares that it is uncertain whether the United Nations will remain solvent until the end of the year. This current session of the General Assembly must therefore take immediate action to resolve the crisis.

As the President of the Assembly said in his opening address, one must cut bureaucratic waste, redirect expenditure to priority areas and streamline the administration. I might add that one should rationalize and lighten the intergovernmental mechanism, which is the responsibility of Member States and for which the United Nations Secretariat is but a support. The Group of 18 Intergovernmental Experts has submitted a set of useful proposals to that effect, heading in the right direction.

We should also be able to agree on a method of planning and budgeting procedures which would ensure a positive consensus on the budget and on the programmes of the United Nations. That would help to avoid a situation in which Member States contributing the largest share of the budget find themselves obliged to abstain or vote against the budget.

The agenda of the present session of the General Assembly is indeed heavy. May our work proceed in good faith and with goodwill, without which all dialogue will remain sterile, and may we find our inspiration in the hopes of all men and women for peace, dignity and prosperity.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

May I remind members of the Assembly that, in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to ten minutes for the first intervention and to five minutes for the second and should be made by representatives from their seats.

Mr. TREIKI (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (interpretation from Arabic): In his statement before the Assembly today the Prime Minister of France referred to an African question which is being dealt with by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) namely the question of Chad. We are not here to study this question and I would not have raised it had it not been for the reference by the Prime Minister of France to my country in which he made accusations which I can only say are completely untrue. I believe that my African brothers are aware of that.

My country, an African country bordering on Chad, has participated in all the African regional conferences devoted to a solution of this problem and has contributed effectively to those conferences. If the problem has not yet been solved, that is due to foreign interevention, especially French intervention.

At the Lagos Conference on 18 August 1979, all the Chad factions without exception, including Mr. Hissein Habré, confirmed - and I quote from the Lagos Agreement:

spoke in French

"All the Chad parties unanimously agreed that the continued presence of French troops is an obstacle in the search for national reconciliation and prevents a peaceful solution being found to the problem of Chad. The Chad parties agreed that the Transitional Government of National Unity, when formed, should proceed to the evacuation of French troops."

(Mr. Treiki, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

(continued in Arabic)

The question of Chad is an African question, and foreign intervention is the factor that has complicated it. The presence of French forces in N'Djamena, as confirmed by the OAU and emphasized by the Chad factions, will only lead to the prolongation of the conflict. We value and uphold the unity of Chad and its independence. We cooperate constantly and will continue to co-operate with the Chairman of the OAU and with other States neighbours of Chad to achieve a political solution to this problem.

The French Prime Minister stated that the problem of Chad is an example of the problem of development. This is true, but what was the cause of the underdevelopment of Chad? Was it not French colonialism? And who is responsible for the underdevelopment of Africa in its entirety? Who still bears that responsibility? This question will remain an exclusively African question, and as Africans we shall seek to solve it.

My country does not, as claimed by the French Prime Minister, occupy part of Chad. It respects its borders, inherited from French colonialism, just as it respects all international conventions.

The current situation in Chad distresses us. We must make joint efforts as Africans to help the people of Chad invoke the Lagos agreement and achieve a peaceful solution to the problem of Chad. Assistance to one faction and not the others, and foreign intervention, especially French intervention, will only complicate the problem.

(Mr. Treiki, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

This problem must have an African solution, free from any foreign intervention. I emphasize my country's complete readiness to assist in finding a solution to the problem between Chadians, between the Government of National Unity in Chad and the other Chadian factions.

Mr. de REMOULARIA (France) (interpretation from French): I listened with great attention to our colleague, and I must say that I was surprised to hear him say that it was the intervention of France that was preventing a solution. This must have made some people smile.

I would like to respond to the representative of Libya that in his statement this morning the Prime Minister of France merely described in measured terms the present situation in Chad. I will repeat the very words used by Mr. Chirac, in his conclusion on this point. He said, regarding the assistance given by France to Chad: "The aid we provided, and in particular the military assistance" - and I would recall that it was at the request of the Government of Chad - "was intended, while deterring Libya from pursuing its offensive activities, to prepare what will doubtless be a long and difficult road towards national reconciliation and reconstruction in Chad." (A/41/PV.8, p. 76)

Ms. NGUYEN BINH THANH (Viet Nam) (interpretation from French): These first few days of the general debate at the forty-first session of the General Assembly have once again shown clearly the irony of history. During the 40 years of its existence the United Nations has been exploited by the imperialist, colonialist, hegemonic Powers members of the Security Council and also by their protégés, in an attempt to change black to white, aggressors into defenders of human rights and apostles of the right of peoples to self-determination, while putting into the dock peoples struggling for independence and freedom, the victims of repeated wars of aggression.

(Ms. Nguyen Binh Thanh, Viet Nam)

Since the end of the Second World War we have seen striking proof that, faced with an enemy whose power, particularly military power, overwhelms them, the peoples of the three countries of Indo-China have no more effective means of defence than militant solidarity and mutual support at all levels. Without that solidarity between comrades-in-arms, without that mutual assistance, what would have happened to the peoples of the three countries of Indo-China faced with the most brutal wars of aggression in modern history inflicted on them by the colonialist, imperialist, hegemonist forces? The fact that these forces are taking advantage of the United Nations forum to slander us can in no way make them any less guilty of the crimes that they have committed against the peoples of Viet Nam and Kampuchea.

This morning the representative of China claimed that "China seeks no selfish interests in Kampuchea" (A/41/PV.8, p. 47). We are entitled to ask him this: if China has no selfish interest in that country, why did it help the Pol Pot clique take over power in Kampuchea after the Kampuchean people's historic victory of 17 April 1975? For that was the origin of the terrible carnage in Kampuchea and the border wars with all its neighbours, including Viet Nam. Why did China send 600,000 troops to commit aggression against Viet Nam if not because Viet Nam had committed the "crime" of saving the people of Kampuchea from the genocidal régime put back in power by China and the instrument of Peking expansionism? If China has no selfish interests in that country, why is China now trying to maintain the remnants of the Pol Pot army and, against wind and tide, trying to re-establish them in power in Kampuchea?

(Ms. Nguyen Binh Thanh, Viet Nam)

At this forty-first session of the General Assembly we have also witnessed a cunning distortion of the situation in South-East Asia and Kampuchea by the representative of France, who said outright: "We are seeing in this country a new kind of colonization." It is certainly surprising that the representative of France, a notorious former colonial Power itself, should say such a thing. The Vietnamese people and the Kampuchean people, victims of nearly a century of colonial domination and nine years of wars aimed at reconquest have a good memory and know better than anybody else the flavour of the old colonialism as well as of the new form of French colonialism. So we do not need any lessons from the representative of France.

The Vietnamese people are proud of having done their internationalist duty in support of the people of Kampuchea and stood firm against that "holy alliance" of the imperialists, expansionists and reactionaries aimed at reimposing the genocidal Pol Pot clique on the Kampuchean people. History repeats itself, because some time ago we were also justifiably proud of sending Vietnamese volunteer forces into Kampuchea to help the Kampuchean patriots repel invading French and American troops.

(Ms. Nguyen Binh Thanh, Viet Nam)

After helping to defeat those common enemies of our two peoples, the Vietnamese volunteer forces then completely withdrew. This time, too, the Vietnamese volunteer forces, which have carried out partial withdrawals over the past five years, will complete their total withdrawal by 1990. Once a political solution guaranteeing the elimination of the Pol Pot cliqué as a military and political body has been achieved, then Viet Nam will order the withdrawal of all its volunteer forces at an earlier date.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to endorse strongly the statement made by the Prime Minister of France that, "no pressure, from wherever it may come, no sophistry, can ever make us accept these violations" - in other words, violations of the most fundamental human rights anywhere in the world.

I should just like to add to that the following: "There are no conjuring tricks that can change the colonists and expansionists into temporary defenders of human rights or the right to self-determination of the Kampuchean people."

Mr. ADOUM (Chad) (interpretation from French): I, too, was very surprised at the reaction of the representative of Libya to what the Prime Minister of France said this morning. Everyone knows that Libya is in fact occupying 550,000 square kilometres of Chad's territory. That is not a new development that we have just been told about. The Prime Minister of France merely referred to an existing situation in which Chad is the victim and which is causing terrible suffering. About 6,000 Libyan soldiers are occupying - and I would stress that word "occupying" - the northern part of Chad, in flagrant violation of the principles contained in the United Nations Charter and the charter of the Organization of African Unity, as well as the principles of international law.

I was also surprised to hear a reference to the Lagos Agreement, which Libyan representatives like to make a point of, since that Agreement survives only in the

(Mr. Adoum, Chad)

minds of the Libyan leaders, having been laid to rest by what we refer to in our records as the declaration by N'Djamena, adopted in 1982 by the now defunct Transitional Government of National Unity.

I was equally astonished when he spoke of French intervention, because there is no French intervention. The French troops are in Chad solely at the request of the legal and legitimate Government of Chad.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): Some representatives have asked to exercise the right of reply a second time. I should like to remind members that, in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, statements made in exercise of the right of reply are limited to five minutes for the second intervention.

Mr. FARTAS (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (interpretation from Arabic): The previous speaker alleged that there are 6,000 Libyan soldiers on the territory of Chad. My country has already emphasized on several occasions that it does not have any troops inside the territory of Chad, except for support elements to furnish advice to the Government of National Unity. When the troops of my country entered Chadian territory previously, it did so at the request of the legitimate Government at the time, and in order to supervise the elections in Chad that were to establish a permanent Government.

My country had made many sacrifices in order to restore peace by putting an end to the bloodshed and to a civil war that had raged for over 20 years. When we had succeeded, and the situation had settled down, we were asked to withdraw our forces, and we agreed to do so. But the situation in Chad then began to deteriorate again. The troops referred to by the previous speaker are Chadian troops, as he well knows, and are under the control of the former President of Chad, Mr. Goukouni Oueddi.

(Mr. Fartas, Libyan Arab
Jamahiriya)

All the troops now present inside Chad territory are Chadian troops. There is not a single Libyan soldier inside Chad, except for the support troops we have referred to on previous occasions.

Mr. YU Mengjia (China) (interpretation from Chinese): This morning the Chairman of the Chinese delegation formally stated China's position on the Vietnamese aggression against Kampuchea. The facts are very clear. It is Viet Nam that is pursuing a policy of hegemony and has used military force to occupy Kampuchean territory. The Vietnamese representative attempts to justify the actions of her country by slandering China. That attempt is completely vain. If Viet Nam really wants to present a good image, then our advice would be for Viet Nam to withdraw all its troops from Kampuchea immediately and unconditionally.

Mr. CHAN YOURAN (Democratic Kampuchea) (interpretation from French): During the past three days the Assembly has heard many statements and, if my memory serves me correctly, I believe that most speakers have said that they supported the right of the people of Kampuchea to independence and national sovereignty, and reiterated their view that Viet Nam, the aggressor against Kampuchea, should carry out a complete and unconditional withdrawal of its troops from Kampuchea so that our people can decide on its future in full sovereignty, in keeping with the relevant United Nations resolutions adopted by the Assembly as long ago as seven years.

(Mr. Chan Youran, Democratic Kampuchea)

Among those countries that cherish peace and justice and whose representatives have spoken here I cite, on the opening day of the general debate, the President of the United States and the representatives of Bangladesh, Peru, Togo, Singapore, Iceland and Brazil, who all made special mention of the Vietnamese war of aggression in Kampuchea and the need for the people of Kampuchea to continue their struggle for their national liberation, with the support of the international community as represented in the Assembly. On the second day of the general debate the President of Panama and the representatives of Tunisia, the United Kingdom - speaking on behalf of the Twelve - Greece and Denmark spoke along the same lines, saying that Viet Nam must end its war of aggression in Kampuchea and withdraw totally, so that peace and security may be restored to our region, South-East Asia. Only the representative of the Soviet Union, the provider of funds to Viet Nam, supported the cause of its servant, Viet Nam.

What have we heard and seen today? The representatives of Portugal and China, the Prime Minister of France, the President of Costa Rica and the representatives of Zambia, the Netherlands and Oman all spoke along the same lines, too. Are not all those honourable, respected representatives, representing all continents, who have spoken in favour of peace and Kampuchea's national security, independence and sovereignty, right to speak in that way? No one here can doubt their sincerity, integrity and goodwill.

The representative of Viet Nam is the sole exception, and for good reason - Viet Nam's war of aggression and its occupation in Kampuchea. Viet Nam has sold itself body and soul to the Soviet Union. That is why it is not surprising that we see the servant and the master here making common cause, the cause of aggression, the cause of Vietnamese and Soviet expansionism in South-East Asia and throughout the world.

(Mr. Chan Youran, Democratic Kampuchea)

How has Viet Nam dared to call its army of aggression an army of volunteers conducting a so-called internationalist policy? Is there in the United Nations Charter a principle concerning internationalist policy that justifies Viet Nam in interfering in our internal affairs, in occupying our country, contrary to the fundamental principles of the Charter? That is the argument of thieves, of those who support the law of the jungle, because Viet Nam is seeking to establish in Indo-China a Vietnamese so-called Indo-Chinese federation. That is the truth.

Mr. ADOUM (Chad) (interpretation from French): The language used by the Libyan representative was not new; it was full of lies, arrogant and ridiculous, and familiar to us all. I confirm that Libya not only has troops in Chad but has built military bases in the national territory of an independent, sovereign State.

The meeting rose at 7.30 p.m.