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GENERAL ASSEMBLY

PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE TWENTY-SEVENTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 6 October 1987, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. FLORIN (German Democratic Republic)

- General debate [9]: (continued)

- Statements were made by:

Mr. Bongo (Gabon)
Prince Mohamed Bolkiah (Brunei Darussalam)
Mr. Bemananjara (Madagascar)
Mr. Tsering (Bhutan)
Mr. Jameel (Maldives)

- Address by Mr. Kennedy Simmonds, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Saint Kitts and Nevis

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The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.

PROGRAMME OF WORK

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Russian): I should like to draw the Assembly's attention to a letter addressed to me by the Permanent Representative of Costa Rica dated 5 October 1987, distributed this morning in document A/42/618. In that letter the Permanent Representative, on behalf of the Central American countries signatories to the Guatemala Agreement of 7 August 1987 and the countries members of the Contadora and Support Groups, requests that the General Assembly consider agenda item 34, "The situation in Central America: threats to international peace and security and peace initiatives," as a matter of urgency, if possible not later than Wednesday, 7 October 1987.

In this connection a draft resolution has been distributed in document A/42/L.2.

May I take it that the General Assembly agrees to that request?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Russian): If members concur, it is my intention to take up the item at our morning meeting, tomorrow, Wednesday, 7 October 1987, after we have heard the last speaker in the general debate for that meeting.

AGENDA ITEM 9 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. BONGO (Gabon) (interpretation from French): At this forty-second session of the General Assembly, it is fortunate that the United Nations has honoured you, Sir, by electing you President. Your election, which comes at a time when the United Nations is reviewing its past, taking stock of its present and pondering its future, is for my delegation and myself a most pleasant opportunity to congratulate you most warmly. We are all the more pleased in that the Assembly has, through you, singled out and honoured the German Democratic Republic, your

(Mr. Bongo, Gabon)

beautiful and great country, with which Gabon has long maintained the closest links. We are convinced that under your leadership, and thanks to your commitment, lucidity and selflessness, our work will be brought to a happy conclusion. In this respect my delegation assures you of its full co-operation.

(Mr. Bongo, Gabon)

We should like to pay a tribute also to Ambassador Choudhury, your predecessor, whose actions throughout the forty-first session of the General Assembly and whose outstanding qualities encouraged the hope and convinced us that there is always in the spirit of man the resources needed to strive for the best and the most just for all.

The excellent report of the Secretary-General is a proof of his determination and courage in tackling the problems with which it deals. We assure him that in all his undertakings and in the comprehensive reforms that he is proposing, we are and shall continue to be at his side, combining our will and our strength with his.

Finally, I greet the representatives of Member States, with whom we share the efforts and responsibilities of this session so that together we can contribute positively to the strengthening of the principles enshrined in the Charter.

The celebration two years ago of the fortieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations gave my country an opportunity to express the hope that the Organization would do everything possible to achieve the purposes and principles set out when it was established to meet the hopes that each of its Members placed in it. These include the maintenance of world peace and security and the promotion of international co-operation towards the complementarity of our economies.

Peace and development are not just two major questions of concern to the world today, but the very heart of the problems facing our Organization. In general, the United Nations has certainly made praiseworthy efforts to instil in the economic relations among States a striving for peace and an ideal of justice, which are the necessary conditions of the establishment of a new international economic order. However, its clear shortcomings must be put on the debit side of its actions. We note in particular that it is far from having completely achieved its goals and

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from playing its full role, certain big countries showing a lack of goodwill in this respect.

In today's world the arms race, acts of aggression and regional conflicts are a constant source of concern for developing countries which are striving to protect their independence, sovereignty and security and working actively to develop their economies and strengthen international co-operation. Nevertheless, the talks that have been going on at the highest level over the last few months between the United States and the Soviet Union with a view to concluding an agreement on nuclear disarmament offer a glimmer of hope. Gabon cannot but encourage such initiatives.

It is now a fact that certain States, directly or indirectly, are cultivating egocentrism, thus weakening the multilateral development of international relations. The loss of enthusiasm for multilateralism, caused essentially by States preoccupied with their own interests, relegates to the background the ideals which were supported unanimously in 1945. This is a subject of profound concern for my country, for this attitude seems likely to make more acute the major problems of the time, particularly those of peace and security, justice and dignity among peoples and nations, international co-operation and the progress of mankind.

Regarding the questions on the agenda for this session, I stress the unchanging position of my Government on the problems of security and the arms race. Gabon is deeply devoted to the fundamental principles and ideals of the Charter and has always advocated the settlement of disputes by peaceful means. It remains convinced that security cannot be maintained in a climate characterized by the use of force, military interventions, acts of aggression or the occupation of territories by foreign forces.

(Mr. Bongo, Gabon)

Security and disarmament are closely linked. Consequently, international security cannot be strengthened by increasing armament. Only the creation of a climate of mutual trust in relations among States can lead to the solution of security problems.

Moreover, over the last year there seems to have been no sign of feasible solutions to the various problems facing the United Nations; some of which, such as that of the situation in South Africa, have, rather, grown worse. The United Nations has branded apartheid, a crime against humanity, for the racial oppression of the South African people, the illegal occupation of Namibia and the constant acts of intimidation and aggression against the front-line States could hardly be more accurately described. Having long flouted the many appeals of the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Organization of African Unity, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries that it put an end to the hateful practice of apartheid, South Africa arrogantly defies the universal consensus and is perfecting its system of racial oppression.

In flagrant and deliberate violation of the Charter and the elementary norms of international law governing the behaviour of States, the South African Government continues its acts of armed aggression against neighbouring States, with the avowed intention of destabilizing them.

The imposition of the state of emergency has further complicated the already complex South African question. Unfortunately, strategic interests and the possible loss of the vast profits which the allies are making under the reign of apartheid seem to prevail over the many pertinent appeals to the Security Council finally to exert its authority.

The international community should seize the opportunity offered by the present session of the General Assembly to demand that Pretoria put an end to

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repression, bantustanization, the banishment, harassment of black leaders fighting for their independence, and the extermination of freedom fighters, and begin as soon as possible a constructive dialogue with the oppressed black population, in order that it may at last freely exercise its rights.

Apartheid cannot be reformed. No attempt to reform that hateful system should be encouraged. It must be eradicated and destroyed. It is the entire South African population that must decide the fate of its country, without distinction on the ground of race, colour, sex or belief, on a basis of full equality.

For its part, the Territory made the responsibility of the United Nations, Namibia, last year commemorated the twentieth anniversary of its illegal occupation by the country of apartheid.

During this time, the Pretoria régime has developed in the Territory colonialism, apartheid and aggression, all practices rejected by the international community as seriously threatening world peace and security.

(Mr. Bongo, Gabon)

At the same time, foreign economic activities and interests stubbornly obstruct the road to the exercise of full and genuine independence by the valiant Namibian people, under the enlightened leadership of its sole representative, the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO). These same foreign interests are accelerating the systematic plundering of the natural wealth of the territory in flagrant violation of the relevant resolutions of the United Nations.

For my delegation, only the relevant decisions of our Organization can be considered as valid measures likely to guarantee the independence of the Namibian people. Consequently, full implementation of Security Council resolution 435 (1978), which defines a coherent plan for the immediate independence of Namibia, is still the only framework likely to promote the decolonization process in Namibian territory. Gabon considers with interest, and supports, all attempts on the part of the parties concerned for the independence of Namibia to accelerate this process and considers the fallacious linkage of the granting of independence to Namibia with the withdrawal of Cuban troops based in Angola to be a subterfuge.

I should like to reaffirm strongly my country's support for SWAPO in its implacable struggle for the liberation of Namibia. These are in no way mere statements of intention. Gabon has long since gone beyond this stage and is now undertaking concrete measures, of which I will only mention the granting of diplomatic status to SWAPO, the issuance of special postage stamps the profits from which will go to SWAPO, and the granting of stipends to Namibian students.

To sum up, it is a direct responsibility on the part of the United Nations to guarantee the Namibian people the exercise of the right to self-determination and to ensure the independence of Namibia through free elections.

(Mr. Bongo, Gabon)

The United Nations cannot abdicate its responsibility to put an end to the constant acts of aggression perpetrated by South Africa in the region.

Likewise guided by the principles and objectives of the Charter of the United Nations, like those of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), my country is following with great concern the development of the conflicts, particularly in Chad and Western Sahara, that are tearing fraternal peoples apart.

The question of Chad has always been viewed in its two aspects: the intra-Chadian problem on the one hand, and the border conflict between Chad and Libya on the other.

As regards the first area, everyone here will remember the contribution made by my country and its Head, El Hadj Omar Bongo, in the reconciliation of all the sons of this fraternal country. It is comforting that the leaders of the various components of the opposition are actively trying to work out the unification process.

As regards the border conflict between Chad and Libya, the General Assembly will recall that on 6 April 1983 the Security Council referred the matter to the OAU for consideration within the framework for appropriate OAU machinery. One of these mechanisms is precisely the Ad Hoc Committee set up in 1977 by the fourteenth summit meeting of the OAU and chaired since then by Gabon.

That is why, in application of the resolution adopted at the twenty-third summit meeting of the OAU, and taking into consideration the worsening of the military situation in the area, President Bongo had, first, made an appeal to the two parties in the conflict, and then undertook efforts to convene the Committee in Lusaka, with the agreement of President Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia, current Chairman of the OAU. It is my privilege to confirm to the Assembly, as many eminent delegations have done before me, that the Ad Hoc Committee did indeed meet in the

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capital of Zambia on 23 and 24 October, under the chairmanship of El Hadj Omar Bongo, with the presence of President Kaunda and with the effective participation of the Heads of State of the following Member States: President Diouf of Senegal and President Chissano of Mozambique; and of other Member States, namely Algeria, Cameroon and Nigeria, who were represented at the ministerial level.

For the first time the Ad Hoc Committee had the participation of both parties in the conflict, Chad represented by its Head of State, President Hissene Habre, and Libya by the head of the People's Bureau of External Relations. After expressing their pleasure with the Chadian and Libyan decisions to respond positively to the appeal of the current President of the OAU that they lay down their arms and co-operate frankly and loyally with the Committee, the Committee called upon both parties, first, to make available to it all relevant documentation to support their arguments, by 30 October 1987 at the latest; secondly, to maintain and consolidate the cease-fire at all levels; thirdly, to refrain from any action that would make the conflict an international one.

Moreover, the following timetable was drawn up: from 30 November to 30 December 1987, a meeting of juridical and cartographic experts at Libreville; on 7 January 1988, a meeting of ministers in Libreville; in the first two weeks of January 1988, a meeting of Heads of State at Dakar.

Respect for this timetable and strict observance of the Lusaka decision by the parties to the conflict should lead to further progress in their effort undertaken since 1977 both at the OAU level and at the United Nations level, to achieve a peaceful settlement of this dispute. Despite alarming reports received lately, we believe that the two parties in conflict will not dare to continue to turn a deaf ear to the various appeals made, or remain deaf to wisdom and reason.

(Mr. Bongo, Gabon)

That same striving for peace among nations through dialogue has always been advocated by Gabon with regard to the question of Western Sahara.

My country is still convinced that only the organization of a referendum on free democratic and honest self-determination can lead to a final settlement of this conflict. We therefore welcome the recent initiative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Perez de Cuellar, who visited Morocco and Algeria to study on the spot the practical conditions for organizing such a referendum.

I shall not conclude my statement on the political situation on the African continent without mentioning the question, still topical, of the Comorian island of Mayotte. My Government reaffirms its solidarity with the Comorian people and condemns and rejects all new forms of consultation that might be organized on the Comorian territory of Mayotte and reiterates its desire to continue to pursue the efforts already under way to return the Comorian island of Mayotte to its motherland as soon as possible.

My Government's position as regards the Middle East is clear. We in Gabon are persuaded that the withdrawal of Israel from the occupied Arab territories, occupied since 1967 is the sine qua non condition for achieving a just and lasting solution. We believe that the Palestinians, like all other people in the world, must claim the full exercise of their legitimate rights, including that of existing within secure and internationally recognized borders. We are convinced that the Palestine Liberation Organization as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, must play an essential role in the efforts made to find a solution to this problem, efforts in which all interested parties should participate.

(Mr. Bongo, Gabon)

The situation in Lebanon causes us concern, because of, among other things, the excellent relations between our two countries. We urge all the parties concerned to put an end to that fratricidal struggle and to devote themselves to the difficult but noble task of rebuilding the country.

As regards the conflict between Iran and Iraq, Gabon in particular and the international community in general have several times expressed their extreme concern over that endless and bloody confrontation. It is absolutely essential that there be a cease-fire and that the two sides accept and fully apply all the relevant Security Council resolutions. In order to speed up the opening of negotiations, Gabon encourages and supports the international initiatives - above all, of course, the action taken by the Secretary-General, who, under Security Council resolution 598 (1987), adopted unanimously on 20 July, went to Baghdad and Tehran to work out a platform for negotiations.

In Afghanistan foreign intervention has fomented the war for nearly eight years. Far from being ended, the fighting is spreading. The only way out is through the search for a political solution guaranteeing both the withdrawal of foreign forces and the free determination of their future by the Afghan people.

As for the painful situation in Kampuchea, Gabon reaffirms its condemnation of the occupation of that country by foreign forces. It deplores the sacrifices inflicted on the innocent civilian population and recalls the urgent need to find a peaceful solution based, here too, on the withdrawal of foreign forces and the national reconciliation of all the sons of that friendly country.

The division of the Korean people, a long-running drama, having gone on for 40 years, continues. Gabon, which is pleased to count both Koreas among its best friends, continues to support a negotiated solution aimed at the peaceful reunification of those two parts of the same country.

(Mr. Bongo, Gabon)

Latin America is another area of our world where tension is increasing daily. My country believes that only the implementation of the principles of peaceful coexistence, good neighbourliness, the non-use of force, respect for territorial integrity and non-interference advocated by the Charter of our Organization can contribute to halting the worsening of the climate in that region. Therefore, we renew our support for the Contadora Group and welcome the complementary contributions of the Lima Group, which provide propitious frameworks for renewing the chances of a better understanding between all peace-loving people.

The pitfalls of our era require from us nothing less than respect for the ideals on which the United Nations was built. The Organization can be strong only through our strength; it can be rational only through our reason; it can be efficient only through the means we can offer it.

Having created the United Nations for a better world, we must know that ultimately the world will only be the result of what we collectively intend to make of it. That applies both to political and to economic problems, on which I shall now put forward my country's position.

It must be recognized that the world economy, as we see it today, is naturally a result of policies advocated, followed or applied in the past. They have led us into a cycle marked by negative changes, all of which were seen during the course of 1986. They are characterized by a new collapse in production and in the international trade system, as well as by an increase in protectionism. All those negative factors, together with world monetary disorder and the imbalance in capital markets, clearly have an unfavourable impact on the economies of developing countries.

Our countries, whose economies are essentially based on the commodities trade, have overall been seriously affected in recent years by the prolonged weakening in

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the prices of those products. The oil-producing countries in particular, including Gabon, face a grave economic crisis as a result of the fall both in the price of oil and in the exchange rate of the dollar. In American dollars the annual average price was 30 per cent lower in 1981 than it had been in 1980 - about 20 per cent in real terms. In other words, Africa's share of world commodity exports fell, for most commodities, particularly in the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s.

Gabon believes that the machinery of the Integrated Programme for Commodities, and its accompanying Common Fund, should have the full support of all trading partners. Stabilization of commodity markets requires appropriate regulation at the international level.

It should be noted that trade flows have been such that the exports of developing countries fell from 33.6 per cent in 1980 to 24.6 per cent in 1986. In the same period their imports fell from 28.7 to 25.2 per cent.

An additional cause of concern is the effect on the international market in commodities from developing countries of the proliferation of substitute products from developed countries.

In the light of what I have said, which is by no means exhaustive, my country endorses the fundamental conclusion of the Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in his report for the past year that:

"In the present situation the improvement in the world financial and trade environment is the key that should make it possible for the developing countries to begin to realize their development potential."

We feel that that is a realistic evaluation, for any effort made at the national level by our country is doomed to failure if it is not supported by a real change in international economic structures.

(Mr. Bongo, Gabon)

It is in this context - a reduction in international trade and an increase in protectionism in all its forms, the floating of the main reference currencies, a fall in public aid and a hardening of the terms of private loans - that we note with a feeling of anguish and impotence the disturbing increase in Africa's foreign debt.

(Mr. Bongo, Gabon)

In fact, by the end of 1985 Africa's total debt amounted to \$162 billion, more than \$19 billion of which is swallowed up each year by debt servicing. Various solutions have been advocated, among them the rescheduling of debts. I take this opportunity to pay a well-deserved tribute to the representative of Canada and, through him, to his great and generous country, which in a magnanimous action has just wiped out the debts of seven African countries, including Gabon, in a total amount of \$250 million.

It is in order to find a solution to this grave problem that the African countries decided, in the Organization of African Unity, to hold a conference on Africa's foreign debt. On several occasions, under the terms of the relevant resolutions and declarations of that organization, our countries have solemnly undertaken to honour their debts. Africa's creditors should therefore feel protected from the confrontation which they seem to fear, and should not regard this conference as the framework for defining a strategy aimed at refusal to pay.

Beyond this question of the external debt of the developing countries there is another question, which is linked to it: the absence of international liquidity facing our countries, which reduces and hinders our development possibilities. Hence, the five-Member group of experts established in July 1984 by the late Prime Minister of India, Indira Gandhi - at that time the Chairman of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries - recommended in its report a greater allocation of resources and the implementation of a process of reform of the international monetary and financial systems.

Finally, if development is to be integral, we cannot hide its social aspect, because it is precisely that aspect which most directly affects the people - who, as the President of the Republic of Gabon constantly repeats, are at the start and the end of any action for development.

(Mr. Bongo, Gabon)

We note with interest the inclusion in the agenda of this session of items relating to the fate of the disabled and the elimination of all forms of discrimination based on sex, as well as items relating to actions to be taken to ensure the protection of women. My Government stresses how important these problems are.

The distortions created by a period of relative economic growth and by the social changes it engendered have made my Government aware of the need to establish appropriate compensatory mechanisms to ensure, among other things - in the framework of its social action policy - the social reintegration and rehabilitation of the physically and mentally disabled. Moreover, women, like men, have access to education, vocational training, employment, and government - which now includes five women. We view our policy of social assistance, in the context of national solidarity, and our policy of improving the status of women as being in full accordance with the relevant provisions of the resolutions of the Organization in this field.

That, in substance, is the message which, on behalf of my country, Gabon, I have the pleasure to address to the General Assembly on this solemn occasion. May the words it contains find in Members' countries the favourable response which it deserves as a contribution to the dawning of a new era of peace, justice and harmony in the world.

Prince Mohamed BOLKIAH (Brunei Darussalam): It is a pleasure for me to congratulate you, Sir, on your unanimous election as President of the General Assembly at its forty-second session. I note and appreciate that your country was one of the many countries that spoke to welcome Brunei Darussalam when it was admitted to the Organization in 1984. I am confident that with your wisdom and experience you will be able to guide this session to a successful conclusion.

(Prince Mohamed Bolkiah,
Brunei Darussalam)

Our congratulations go also to your predecessor, the Foreign Minister of Bangladesh, on his excellent work as President of the General Assembly at its forty-first session.

To the Secretary-General my delegation would like to express its appreciation for his unceasing efforts, patience and devotion - qualities which are an example to us all.

Twelve months have passed since the last session of the General Assembly. There has been no improvement in the world situation, although a few events in the past year have given us some ray of hope for the future - hope for a better world, a more peaceful world.

The General Assembly declared 1986 the International Year of Peace. That Year has ended with no sign of the conflict of the 1980s diminishing. For example, the senseless and appallingly bloody war between Iran and Iraq continues unabated. It is a source of great concern to their neighbours, and the escalating attacks by both sides on shipping in the Gulf can have very grave political consequences. It must now be apparent to both parties that this conflict can be resolved only by negotiation. Brunei Darussalam therefore welcomes Security Council resolution 598 (1987). We also call upon both sides to co-operate with the Secretary-General and assist him by complying with the Council's call for an immediate cease-fire.

When discussing the political situation in the Middle East, we need to consider the wider issue of the Arab-Israel conflict. The main problem of this conflict remains the Palestine question. My delegation feels that an international conference, which has been proposed, would be useful in bringing all parties concerned to the negotiating table. However, the stand taken by some parties, notably Israel, has prevented any progress towards the convening of such a

(Prince Mohamed Bolkiah,
Brunei Darussalam)

conference. In our view, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) is the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people and it should therefore be at the conference to negotiate on their behalf.

In the African continent, the immediate problem is still the apartheid policy of South Africa. Numerous debates and resolutions adopted by the Assembly condemning this unjust and evil policy have been ignored by South Africa. My delegation is convinced that more concrete and effective actions must be taken. Pressure must be exerted on the Pretoria régime to change its policy, and it is the moral obligation of the international community to see that this policy is dismantled.

(Prince Mohamed Bolkiah,
Brunei Darussalam)

Brunei Darussalam also denounced South Africa's continued occupation of Namibia. We call on South Africa to withdraw its troops from Namibia so that free elections can be conducted to determine the Territory's future.

In Afghanistan, the Afghan people are still being denied their inalienable rights. Foreign forces are still occupying their land, driving them from their homes to live as refugees in Iran and Pakistan. We urge the immediate implementation of the relevant resolutions of the United Nations and the withdrawal of foreign troops. We fully support the Secretary-General's efforts to resolve this conflict.

In our own region of South-East Asia, the problem of Kampuchea is still with us. The Vietnamese forces of occupation are now in their ninth year in Kampuchea. Meanwhile, the resistance fighters of the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea, under the leadership of His Royal Highness Prince Norodom Sihanouk, continue their fight to free their land from foreign occupation. The overwhelming support given by the international community has strengthened their determination to continue their struggle and they have already made significant progress, not only in regaining their territory but also in winning the hearts and minds of the people.

Peace in South-East Asia can be achieved only if the Kampuchean problem is resolved. The Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) has put forward many proposals, the latest of which is the convening of a "cocktail party". It is our hope that this will encourage a process of dialogue that can open the way to negotiations on a solution to the problem of Kampuchea. Viet Nam, however, has chosen to reject that proposal. Viet Nam should realize that this problem can be resolved only by peaceful means. We urge Viet Nam to withdraw its forces from

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Brunei Darussalam)

Kampuchea and work out a peace settlement within the framework of the eight-point proposal put forward by the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea.

Turning to the situation in the Korean peninsula, my delegation welcomes the recent statement and initiatives of the Republic of Korea proposing a meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. We believe that this will lead to a lessening of tension and further enhance the prospect of peace and stability in South-East Asia. We also wish to reiterate our support for the admission of the Republic of Korea as a Member of the United Nations, if it so desires, in conformity with the principle of universality of the United Nations.

I have highlighted some of the problems that confront us. There are many others. The most important of these, which continues to dominate the international political scene, is the question of the elimination of nuclear weapons. The world would be a better and safer place in which to live if those in possession of these highly dangerous weapons could agree to their elimination. There are already enough destructive weapons in this world without nuclear weapons. Brunei Darussalam therefore welcomes the agreement in principle on the elimination of medium-range nuclear weapons between the United States of America and the Soviet Union.

It is the role of the United Nations to promote international peace and security. Let us give the United Nations a chance to succeed. Let us all express our political commitment to the United Nations by continuing to give it the financial support it needs to maintain its operations and by honouring the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly. If we have the will and determination to create a peaceful world, I am sure that we shall be successful. The price of failure is too great for all of us.

Mr. BEMANANJARA (Madagascar) (interpretation from French): Sir, you represent a country with which mine entertains the best of relations, and your election to the presidency of this session is a tribute to the contribution of the German Democratic Republic to the promotion of peace, social progress and international co-operation. It is also a recognition of your qualities as a statesman with which my Government associates itself with particular pleasure since in your many activities in the United Nations you have demonstrated special understanding for the problems of the third world, particularly those that affect Africa.

To your predecessor, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, I offer, on behalf of my delegation, sincere gratitude for his effective and responsible manner in which he fulfilled the mandate that had been entrusted to him.

I cannot let this opportunity pass without congratulating the Secretary-General of the Organization on his timely and courageous initiatives at the administrative, political and economic level, in particular those for the benefit of Africa, thus meeting the challenges to multilateralism. He has our support and we wish him every success in his endeavours towards peace, his mediation efforts and the use of his good offices.

The last time we were able to welcome the adoption of a real disarmament measure was on 16 December 1971, on the occasion of the adoption of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction. Since then, despite acceptance of the need for general and complete disarmament, and in particular nuclear disarmament, negotiations and discussions have centred on the concepts of limitation, reduction, control and verification. The objective

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demanded by the non-aligned countries of a world without nuclear weapons, has thus become increasingly illusory, perhaps to the satisfaction of those whose strategies are still based on the precarious balance of deterrence, parity or, worse, superiority.

The escalation of the arms race, the emergence of technologies at the service of theories and concepts that justify the deployment, possession and use of nuclear weapons, the promotion of a nuclear strategy based in space and the continuation of testing will continue seriously to affect international security, even if they temporarily enhance the sense of security of some States. Nevertheless, the problem is not insoluble.

(Mr. Bemananjara, Madagascar)

The non-aligned countries have on several occasions proposed collateral deterrent measures such as the conclusion of an international treaty on the prohibition of the use, or threat of the use, of nuclear weapons and the creation of nuclear-free zones or zones of peace, while the two super-Powers and the two politico-military blocs have been engaging in countless initiatives in Geneva, in Vienna and elsewhere; without giving an exhaustive list, I shall mention the treaties on strategic arms limitation, the limitation of nuclear weapons and nuclear explosions for peaceful purposes and the most recent proposals on the reduction of conventional forces in Europe, the freezing and reduction of military expenditures, and conventional as well as nuclear disarmament in central Europe.

We thus have a consensus which must be structured and harmonized if it is to be democratic and effective. To this end, we have available to us the Conference on Disarmament and the Disarmament Commission as well as the relevant departments of the Secretariat. We shall soon hold our third special session devoted to disarmament, the agenda for which includes the evaluation of new facts and trends, and the consideration of the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament. These few indications convince us that the United Nations must be properly informed of the state of affairs and progress of negotiations on disarmament.

In any event we should be churlish were we not to hail, as is appropriate, the announcement made on 18 September last by the Soviet Union and the United States relating to their acceptance of the principle and the broad lines of a treaty on the elimination of medium- and short-range nuclear missiles. From 1972, the date of the first strategic arms limitation talks, to 1987, has been a long and difficult road. Imagination, a sense of compromise and a desire for dialogue were needed to reach this result, and we shall not attempt analysis, for in truth what matters is the spirit that allowed the adoption of this very promising decision.

(Mr. Bemananjara, Madagascar)

We support the joint declaration of the six nations which, on 22 May 1987, in anticipation of the event, stated, inter alia, that it had been proved that when the political will existed it was possible to arrive at major agreements on nuclear disarmament measures.

Unfortunately, such political will failed to materialize last month, when we completed our discussions on the relationship between disarmament and development. There were many points of agreement, but the doctrinaire perception of reality caught up with us at the crossroads.

Indeed, if the world needs disarmament as much as it needs development, if they are the conditions for a system of international global and collective security, and if we admit the negative repercussions of the level and scope of military expenditures on the economic world situation, where is the harm in proposing the creation of a fund for economic and social development, financed through resources released as a result of disarmament measures or the limitation of armaments?

Some might tell us that the time is not ripe, although the question has been under discussion, on and off, for more than a quarter of a century. We may also be told that security has priority over all other considerations. If so, we shall respond that our security requires development and that to be convinced of this, it suffices it to look at the kind of development that has been bequeathed to us.

Though they use the usual language, there is agreement among international authorities and international experts - be they from the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank or the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) - that, apart from a few pockets of relative prosperity, the economy of the third world is on the verge of bankruptcy. The relevant statistics and figures are so grim that they are difficult to believe.

(Mr. Bemananjara, Madagascar)

First, for 70 per cent of low-income countries, basic commodities represent 50 per cent of total export earnings.

Secondly, for half of such countries, the same commodities bring in 90 to 100 per cent of export earnings, out of which 80 per cent is devoted to the import of foodstuffs and fuels.

Thirdly, the average deficit in the commodities sector in the period 1980-1984, for all developing countries, has been assessed at \$14.9 billion per year, half of which is the burden of low-income countries.

Fourthly, those countries have only received approximately 30 per cent of compensatory financial assistance, be it Stabex or Compex of the European Economic Community (EEC) or the mechanism of compensatory financing of the International Monetary Fund.

Fifthly, in 1986, the prices of industrial goods rose by 17 per cent. The export earnings of commodities dropped by an average of 26 per cent and the losses suffered by developing countries because of deterioration of terms of trade rose to \$100 billion.

Sixthly, in 1986 an average of 37 per cent of export earnings were devoted to the repayment of debt, which is 50 per cent above the 25 per cent limit considered tolerable.

Finally, loans from commercial banks have declined by two thirds since 1980. Commercial credits only represent one sixth of the 1981 level. The level of direct foreign investments has plummeted by approximately 50 per cent, and official development assistance has been reduced to half the 1982 level.

I need not continue. Let us simply say that we have reached the breaking-point, while international institutions are beginning to run out of steam and private banks, on which we have relied for the recovery of investments and free enterprise, are becoming more than reluctant in granting us new loans. Thus we

(Mr. Bemananjara, Madagascar)

are now bearing the overwhelming social burden of policies referred to as curative. The problems of commodities, trade and development, and indebtedness are intimately related. The reaction of some - inherited from the nineteenth century - has been to say that Oliver Twist is still asking for more. But if we wish to give real meaning to interdependence and international economic security at the dawning of the twenty-first century, let us really meet the challenge inherent in the relationship between disarmament and development. Let us think in positive terms about a common fund for commodities, and let us accept the need to establish an additional mechanism for compensatory financing while improving existing mechanisms. Let us reverse the negative trends of the transfer of resources from developing countries and, above all, let us admit that it is important to embark upon a genuine dialogue on the problem of indebtedness.

(Mr. Bemananjara, Madagascar)

The proposal to create a stabilization fund for commodities, a monetary fund and a development fund among third world countries, which was confirmed by the President of the Democratic Republic of Madagascar during the commemoration of the fortieth anniversary of our Organization, seems, in view of these considerations, to be most timely.

It is true that in adopting resolution 41/202 and by the consensus that we supported during UNCTAD VII we have placed this dialogue in a general framework. But the dialogue must become political in nature, for above and beyond technical, financial and banking considerations it is the future and security of all our peoples for many decades to come which is at stake. That dialogue must also be open and not take place behind the screen of preconceived or rigid ideas. In other words, on the basis of the idea of shared responsibility, we must ensure that this dialogue is at no time overtaken by events. It is in that spirit that I should like briefly to recall the position of the Democratic Republic of Madagascar on the question of the debt.

Our shared responsibility with regard to the rising tide of debt imposes an obligation to undertake direct concerted action between debtors, grouped together in a club of debtors, so to speak, on the one hand and their creditors on the other. If the restructuring of the debt is to be viable it requires an amendment of the rules of the Paris Club and the London Club, a 10-year moratorium on interest modelled on the practices of the International Development Association and the fixing of the percentage of the export earnings to be devoted to debt servicing on the basis of the figures for several years.

In this connection we have proposed the following alternatives: either to request or decide upon the freezing of debt repayment for the next 10 years or to limit the payment to a maximum of 10 per cent of the value of the export earnings

(Mr. Bemananjara, Madagascar)

of each country. The basic objective is to postpone payment of most of the debts to the year 2000.

The strategy must contain elements that allow us to bring about the recovery and strengthening of our national economies. That objective would involve reconsideration of the concept of adjustment programmes, which must be based on growth and must not exist simply for the repayment of the debt. In this connection it would be appropriate to have a more equitable distribution of the burden of adjustment and to proceed to an easing of the rules of conditionality required by international monetary and financial institutions and acceleration of the procedures for subscription to structural adjustment loans. Such measures must be coupled with structural reform of the international financial system.

We are pleased that elements of our position have already been reflected in some reference documents. It is not our intention to make these elements pre-conditions, for in the final analysis we must play the game of solidarity with both the developing and the developed countries if we want to avoid the blocking of the dialogue, to the detriment of the interests of all.

I have just dealt, in a somewhat linear fashion, with some of the problems inherent in disarmament, development and debt, in the firm belief that we must find solutions to these problems that will contribute to the strengthening of international security. Nevertheless, our efforts would be in vain if we did not use our imagination and work together to ease or eliminate the regional tensions and conflicts that continue to beset the third world, including Africa, the Near East and Middle East, central Africa and South-East Asia.

Indeed, in South Africa the hopes born of the mass rebellion which occurred last year have been swept away by the maintenance of the state of emergency over the entire territory. Despite unanimous condemnation by the international

(Mr. Bemananjara, Madagascar)

community, the Pretoria régime continues to persist in its defiance by tightening the apartheid system. Under the pretext of better mastering apartheid by controlling it, it continues to ignore the needs of the black population. That same régime lends support to the illegal occupation of Namibia and increases its murderous acts of aggression against front-line States.

How much longer will we continue to accept this savage policy of domination, this hegemonism? How much longer will we continue to accept this policy which subordinates a man's dignity to the colour of his skin? Are we to be satisfied with mere talk of condemnation in the face of the humiliation of man, the image of God on earth?

It is those considerations that lead the delegation of Madagascar to congratulate and strongly support the Nordic countries, which have decided to impose economic sanctions against South Africa, and to encourage all those that still hesitate to follow suit. We do not have sufficient power to act in these matters, much less the necessary resources to assist the front-line States, but we have the voice of reason and wisdom and we shall continue to raise it for as long as the South African régime exists.

In Palestine, what crime has been committed by the Palestinian people that it should be hunted as one hunts a deer in the forest? Is it the crime of claiming its legitimate rights or of recovering its lands, its homeland? What is the reason for the persistent rejection of peace, security and stability in the Middle East? Why is it that all the parties to the conflict in the Middle East persist in maintaining the explosive situation in the region, with all the dangers inherent in it? Can one sacrifice the life of an entire people to protect the conflicting interests of all sides? Can one condemn a people to wander, like a ghost, for its entire life?

(Mr. Bemananjara, Madagascar)

We shall not cease to appeal to the international community to recognize the right of that people to self-determination and to a homeland freely chosen within the context of a peaceful overall settlement of the Middle East crisis. Such a settlement could be found through the convening of an international conference on peace in the Middle East, under the auspices of the United Nations and with the participation of all the parties directly concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, and the permanent members of the Security Council.

We cannot remain silent in the face of the equally crucial problem of the Lebanese people. The soil of Lebanon continues to be occupied by foreign forces. It seems that 12 years of conflict have only sharpened the will of the enemies of Lebanon to see the country torn apart, divided and subjected to contradictory spheres of influence. Therefore, with the Lebanese people wounded, torn apart and the victim of the conflicts in the Middle East, but refusing to die and determined to defend its life and its reasons for living, we demand the withdrawal of Israeli troops from Lebanese soil in accordance with United Nations resolutions, so that the Lebanese people may regain its full authority over all its national territory.

(Mr. Bemananjara, Madagascar)

With regard to Afghanistan, can we simply sit on our hands in the face of the efforts for national reconciliation? The Afghan people have suffered for many years. Some have confined themselves to purely and simply condemning the presence of foreign troops in that country. We will say more: some are encouraging and continuing to support those who are against the régime. But why? Is it in order for one ideology to win out over another? Can we treat so lightly the identity and personality of a people? That is why, after considerable thought, we support the policy of national reconciliation in Afghanistan and condemn any attempt at blocking it.

The same goes for the reunification of Korea, which we most vigorously support politically and diplomatically. There may be a confrontation of ideologies, but people can engage in dialogue and reach understanding.

As for Western Sahara, we repeat our support for resolution 104 (XIX) of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and take note of the Secretary-General's decision to send a fact-finding mission to the Sahara. However, that mission might be a futile exercise in the absence of a prior political commitment for the establishment of an interim United Nations administration in the Territory.

With regard to the Chad-Libya conflict, we respectfully abide by the decision of our Heads of State or Government at the last summit of the OAU, namely, confirmation of the Ad Hoc Committee's mandate to organize negotiations between the two belligerent parties to find a just and lasting solution to the problem, and the search for a negotiated political settlement to their border dispute.

In Central America we see a glimmer of hope, thanks to the commendable efforts of the countries of the region to ease tension and re-establish stability in that part of the world. Thus we unreservedly support the Guatemala Agreement of 7 August 1987.

(Mr. Bemananjara, Madagascar)

With reference to the Iran-Iraq war, we cannot fail once again to deplore the fact that Security Council resolution 598 (1987), demanding a cease-fire, has not been implemented. Of course, one might fear that effective implementation of a cease-fire could be undermined by those who supply weapons, as that might run counter to what they regard to be their vital interests. Also, one wonders whether negotiations between those two fraternal countries - now enemies - could ever take place while they are obstinately clinging to their respective positions.

This war makes no sense and has lasted far too long. It represents an ongoing threat to countries of the region in particular, and in light of the present state of affairs could become internationalized. Furthermore, the concentration of naval forces in the region is a real danger for the whole world, and it is truly regrettable that security for international shipping has been affected and become practically non-existent as a result of this conflict.

Madagascar, through its President, has consistently called for the declaration of the Indian Ocean as a demilitarized and denuclearized zone of peace. But can we today still hope for such a development? Hence we wish to address an appeal to all parties in the Iran-Iraq war to remain calm and avoid inflaming further this most dangerous and critical situation in the Gulf. In particular, we appeal to Iran and Iraq to accept implementation of Security Council resolution 598 (1987) on a cease-fire.

It has never been Madagascar's posture to remain on the sidelines of international affairs; thus we advocate an immediate cease-fire simultaneously with a halt on all arms deliveries to the belligerents, and the establishment of a fact-finding commission to determine responsibility for the start of the war. Finally, we support the establishment of an international force to ensure the security, safety and freedom of navigation in the Gulf.

(Mr. Bemananjara, Madagascar)

We cannot conclude this analysis of regional conflicts without emphasizing in the Assembly that these regional conflicts might have been solved but for the persistent policy of interference in the internal affairs of third-world countries.

We have come here to seek peace, justice, social progress and co-operation - ideals and objectives which we shall attain by displaying the utmost responsibility and the needed generosity. A reading of the Charter always leads us to conclude that it is in keeping with the common good. Even though peace remains, as it should, our primary concern, in these 40 years priorities and realities have often changed.

Our Organization's role is also to allow for the necessary adjustments with due regard to our purposes and principles. And when initiatives sometimes reflect ideals set forth in the Charter it is not intended to counter or bypass them, but simply to clarify their scope by bearing in mind the evolution of international relations on the ideological, political, economic and social levels.

Thus, our support for the establishment of a comprehensive system of international peace and security stems from two considerations: to give the United Nations another chance to play its legitimate role, after the failure of our commitment to a system of collective security; and to recognize that the time has come to renew and ennoble our debate on the basis of tolerance, mutual respect, dialogue and interdependence.

It has never been a crime to proclaim one's dedication to peace and to advocate a security system for all individuals, peoples and nations. At the end of our quest and efforts, may peace, justice, social progress and co-operation reign and no longer be empty words. May our Organization be the master builder. May the peoples of the whole world be the beneficiaries.

Mr. TSERING (Bhutan): I have the honour to convey to all representatives the warm greetings and best wishes of my august sovereign, His Majesty Jigme Singye Wangchuck, for the success of the forty-second session of the General Assembly.

I should like to extend my sincere felicitations to you, Sir, on your election as President of the General Assembly. We are indeed fortunate to have a statesman of your great experience and ability to guide our deliberations. I should also like to congratulate Ambassador Joseph Reed on his appointment as the Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly Affairs.

(Mr. Tsering, Bhutan)

Mr. Humayun Rasheed Choudhury, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bangladesh, deserves our highest praise for the truly outstanding manner in which he conducted the proceedings of our last session and for the valuable contribution he made to the work of the Assembly. A tribute is also due to our Secretary-General for the dedication with which he is carrying out his onerous responsibilities.

In his annual report on the work of the Organization, the Secretary-General made the following comment on the current international situation:

"Countries of disparate political orientations and economic systems have begun to deal with problems of an interdependent world with a new pragmatism in awareness of the dangers of immobility. ... It is as if the sails of the small boat in which all the people of the earth are gathered had caught again, in the midst of a perilous sea, a light but favourable wind." (A/42/1, p. 2)

The favourable wind of which the Secretary-General spoke has in no case been more dramatically demonstrated this year than in the agreement, in principle, between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States of America to dismantle the intermediate nuclear forces. The significance of that agreement does not lie in the number or class of weapons it will eliminate. Its true significance has been explained by Foreign Minister Shevardnadze in the following eloquent words:

"For the first time in history the idea of nuclear disarmament is close to the beginning of its fulfilment. It is not a new idea. What is new is that this turns out to be possible. Only yesterday all we could see was a blank wall: today we can see far ahead.

Two thousand warheads are but a small part of nuclear arsenals, but that is a big enough part for its disappearance to give the world a new vision. The agreement on these weapons is only the lesser part of what has happened.

(Mr. Tsering, Bhutan)

Something much more important has taken place: the Soviet Union and the United States have finally spoken together the first word in a nuclear-free vocabulary. When that word becomes deed, the world will also gain new knowledge. It will become convinced that nuclear weapons and security are not synonymous and that security becomes stronger when those weapons disappear."

(A/42/PV.9, p. 2)

The delegation of Bhutan fully subscribes to those lofty sentiments, which give renewed hope to humanity. We are convinced that the two super-Powers, imbued with purpose and vision, have embarked on an undertaking of heroic proportions, an undertaking which seeks to ensure the very survival of the human race.

We wish Secretary of State Shultz and Foreign Minister Shevardnadze every success in their talks in Moscow later this month and we hope that the summit meeting between President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev later in the fall will become a real turning point in the history of east-west relations and will herald the beginning of the process of eliminating all strategic nuclear weapons as well as other disarmament measures. The world will then become an infinitely safer place in which to live and the two leaders, through their contribution to the disarmament process, would have carved out for themselves honoured niches in the history of mankind.

It is to be hoped that the wisdom that has dawned on the super-Powers will also cast its benign rays on the other nuclear Powers of the world and that they will exercise self-restraint and control in the testing and development of new nuclear weapons and in accretion to their existing stockpiles. It is also hoped that other countries that have developed the capability of producing nuclear weapons, particularly developing countries, will desist from taking the path of economic and strategic disaster. Diversion of massive amounts of scarce resources

(Mr. Tsering, Bhutan)

to unproductive ends at the cost of the economic well-being of nations, cannot be justified in any circumstances. The greatest fear under which all the peoples of the world live today is the threat of a nuclear holocaust. We must all endeavour to rid ourselves of this spectre.

The majority of States on this planet are small. While their locations and circumstances may vary greatly, they are by their very nature weak and vulnerable. Internally, their transition to modernity is creating a whole range of disturbing imbalances. Externally, they face a sombre economic, political and strategic environment compounded by erosion in the spirit of multilateralism. Because of their limited resources, they are severely handicapped in pursuing their development goals. Yet, in spite of those handicaps, it is quite heartening to note that an increasing number of small States are playing significant roles in international affairs. All of us in the third world are committed to the creation of a new and just world order in which all States, large and small, can enhance their well-being and security and make a contribution to international peace and progress.

We subscribe to the view that internal cohesion, economic self-reliance, a prudent and well-thought-out foreign policy based on geo-political considerations, and a distinctive national identity based on a nation's culture and traditional values, are important elements in ensuring the well-being and security of a small State. The assumption that the main threat to a nation's security comes from other countries has not only led to a disastrous world-wide arms race, but has diverted attention from the real causes of a State's instability and insecurity: namely, internal social, cultural, economic and political factors. In fact, the arms race by ruining the economies of developing and developed countries alike, has led to a deterioration of the international politico-strategic environment. While Bhutan

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attaches the highest priority to nuclear disarmament, we should like to appeal for a halt in the conventional weapons race which consumes the bulk of global military expenditure and which fuels all regional conflicts.

Mr. JAMEEL (Maldives): Sir, it is indeed a pleasure for me and the members of my delegation to extend to you our sincere congratulations on your election as President of the General Assembly at its forty-second session. Your election to this high office is a tribute to your personal qualities and record of distinction in your career as well as a recognition of your experience. It is also a well-deserved tribute to your country, with which Maldives has most cordial relations. I am fully confident that under your wise and able stewardship the Assembly will make positive and substantive progress and reach successful conclusions.

(Mr. Jameel, Maldives)

My delegation joins previous speakers who have expressed appreciation to your predecessor, Mr. Humayun Rasheed Choudhury, for the able and exemplary manner in which he discharged his duties as President of the forty-first session of the General Assembly. As a member of the South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation, we were particularly proud and honoured to be associated with him and with his successes in our deliberations during the last year.

We are meeting at a time when important changes are taking place in the world and historic trends are taking shape. Some of these changes are to be welcomed, as unprecedented opportunities emerge from them for the advancement of peace, justice and security, while others pose new problems and challenges confronting the international community. While recalling the momentous and timely decisions taken by this Assembly to revitalize the functioning of the United Nations and to strengthen its role and its capacity in facing the enormous challenges confronting the international community, we are happy to note that the significant developments that have taken place in several areas of international relations have resulted in renewed confidence in the vital and irreplaceable role of the United Nations and recognition of the values upheld by this body. It is with satisfaction that we note the distinct improvement in the international climate and in particular in relations between the East and the West.

Like a number of previous speakers, we warmly welcome the agreement in principle reached last month between the United States and the Soviet Union on the complete elimination of intermediate- and shorter-range nuclear forces and we hope that this accord will lead to further agreements on the larger issues of global concern, such as strategic and space armaments. We also hope that this significant agreement will enhance the new atmosphere with respect to the multilateral disarmament negotiations aimed at genuine arms limitation and complete

(Mr. Jameel, Maldives)

disarmament. In this context, we should like to see the Conference on Disarmament, in Geneva, progress rapidly in its deliberations on a chemical weapons convention and continue dealing with the vital issues on its agenda, such as a comprehensive test ban and the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

We should also like to acknowledge the link between disarmament and development as highlighted by the recently concluded Conference on Disarmament and Development.

Maldives resolutely continues to support all efforts being made towards the objective of disarmament and demilitarization. It is also our belief that, while the bilateral agreements between the super-Powers and multilateral negotiations do provide the necessary catalyst towards general disarmament, ample opportunities exist for regional and subregional arrangements which would eventually contribute towards the ultimate objectives of disarmament. It is for this reason that Maldives has supported the proposals for establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones and zones of peace in various parts of the world. We have, obviously, given particular importance to the United Nations Declaration on the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace and the proposal for establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South Asia, where Maldives is located.

While highlighting the significant events that have taken place during the past year, I should also like to recall the conclusions of the seventh session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD VII), convened in Geneva this summer, and to note with satisfaction the positive trends embodied in the final act of the Conference, which we genuinely hope will lead to a resurgence of momentum in North-South dialogue and signal a reversal of the current sceptical and adverse situation regarding international co-operation for development.

(Mr. Jameel, Maldives)

While we are encouraged by the positive developments in the overall international climate, we remain deeply concerned at the mounting dangers and problems which threaten international peace and security, some of which are well within the issues discussed and debated again and again in this Assembly for many years.

There is no doubt that the most urgent concern of the international community at the present time is the conflict between Iran and Iraq. Two independent countries, Members of the United Nations, have been engaged in a senseless war for seven long years, during which hundreds of thousands of people, including civilians, have lost their lives and enormous material destruction has been inflicted. The international community has now recognized the dangerous implications of this conflict for world peace and security. Security Council resolution 598 (1987) reflects the grave concern of the world community over the issue and the need for intensified efforts in halting that bloody conflict. As before, Maldives renews its call to the combatant nations to stop the fighting and resolve their dispute by peaceful means. It is our belief that the United Nations has an important role to play in the achievement of a peaceful and just solution to this conflict.

The aspirations of the Palestinian people to their inalienable national rights remain unfulfilled. Israel retains its unyielding hold on Arab and Palestinian lands, including Al-Quds, and continues relentlessly to go ahead with its policy of establishing illegal settlements in Arab lands. We have long acknowledged that the question of Palestine is the very core of the Middle East problem and that its just settlement is the only way to peace in the Middle East.

(Mr. Jameel, Maldives)

We have called for the withdrawal of Israeli forces from all occupied Palestinian and Arab lands. We firmly believe that there cannot be a just and lasting solution to the Palestinian question and the aggravated crisis in the Middle East unless the inalienable right of the Palestinians to self-determination is recognized and fulfilled. Maldives strongly supports the convening of an international conference on peace in the Middle East, with the participation of all the parties concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organization as the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, in order to find a comprehensive solution to the problem.

Maldives has always condemned the odious policy of racial discrimination and resolutely supported measures towards its elimination. In particular, we resolutely condemn the policy of racial discrimination and apartheid practised by the régime in South Africa and consider it a crime against humanity. We view the latest developments in South Africa with the utmost gravity and concern. The crisis situation, as it continues to unfold, demonstrates the fact that South Africa's black majority is under virtual siege. The racist régime has shown itself to possess neither the policy nor the capacity for progressive change. We believe that apartheid cannot be reformed or improved upon by trifling incremental measures. It must be dismantled in its entirety. We are disappointed that agreement has not been reached on applying comprehensive and effective sanctions against the arrogant régime in Pretoria. However, we welcome the decision made by some multilateral corporations to stop their operations in South Africa.

The racist régime in Pretoria continues to occupy Namibia in defiance of international law and world-wide condemnation. It is plundering the immense natural resources of Namibia, to the benefit of the privileged white minority, and, to our deep regret, it is doing so with the help and complicity of some other States Members of the Organization. We believe that the only basis for a peaceful

(Mr. Jameel, Maldives)

settlement in Namibia is Security Council resolution 435 (1978), and we reject any attempts to link the question of Namibia's freedom to extraneous issues.

The situations in Afghanistan and Kampuchea have remained tense, without any significant developments towards a settlement. We reiterate our conviction that only through a comprehensive political solution on the basis of the withdrawal of foreign troops can the sovereignty and territorial integrity of those countries be restored, allowing their peoples to determine their own affairs for themselves. We pledge our full support for the efforts of the United Nations Secretary-General in these complex issues.

Another conflict that needs our attention is the one in Cyprus. This prolonged conflict should be solved urgently, with due regard to the national integrity of Cyprus and the aspirations of its people. We appreciate the tireless and sincere efforts of the Secretary-General in seeking the settlement of that conflict.

The world economy still continues to be caught in serious imbalances and dislocations, while the majority of developing countries are faced with serious difficulties in adjusting to structural changes imposed upon them by such reversal factors as the debt burden, exorbitantly high real interest rates, the fall in commodity prices and the arrogance of protectionism. On the other hand, the significant decrease in the growth rate in the industrial world has caused much disparity in an already aggravated situation. Debate has been going on for many years about the world economic order. A dialogue was initiated between the North and South without any concrete results. My delegation hopes, as I mentioned at the beginning of my statement, that with a new positive trend emerging in the international climate steps will be taken towards the implementation of measures capable of meeting the needs of global economic reform.

(Mr. Jameel, Maldives)

In a world which is teeming with tensions, conflicts and wars and in which mankind is still hostage to awful nuclear arsenals of its own creation, the importance and indispensability of the United Nations cannot be overemphasized. Although our Organization has its problems and difficulties, we feel that there is no better institutional arrangement than the United Nations to deal with problems and grievances among States and of peoples. Our firm belief in the constructive role which the United Nations is playing will not be diminished by its shortcomings, which are often caused by the deliberate and self-centred acts of a few. We will continue to have full confidence and trust in the United Nations and will support it as best we can.

ADDRESS BY MR. KENNEDY SIMMONDS, PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF SAINT KITTS AND NEVIS

The PRESIDENT: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Saint Kitts and Nevis.

Mr. Kennedy Simmonds, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Saint Kitts and Nevis, was escorted to the rostrum.

The PRESIDENT: I have great pleasure in welcoming the Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Saint Kitts and Nevis, the Honourable Mr. Kennedy Simmonds, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. SIMMONDS (Saint Kitts and Nevis): Mr. President, I wish first of all to thank you for the opportunity afforded me to make my second address to this body. I bring to you and to the distinguished personalities assembled here fraternal greetings from the Government and people of Saint Kitts and Nevis.

May I now join the eminent and eloquent speakers who have preceded me and congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the esteemed position you now occupy.

(Mr. Simmonds, Saint Kitts and Nevis)

Your election to this post is a clear reflection of the high regard in which you are held and of the complete confidence your colleagues place in you, based, most assuredly, on your personal qualities, diplomatic skills and sincere commitment to the high ideals of the Organization. My delegation pledges its fullest co-operation, in every way possible, with your endeavours to carry out your duties during this, the forty-second session of the General Assembly.

I also express congratulations to the previous President of the General Assembly on his capable handling of the critical issues that commanded the attention of this body during the last session and on his skilful guidance of the deliberations.

(Mr. Simmonds, Saint Kitts and Nevis)

My delegation cannot emphasize too strongly the importance it attaches to the role of the United Nations, in general, and to the General Assembly in particular, in recommending solutions for the peaceful settlement of international political conflicts, for the improvement of international economic conditions, and for the maintenance of human rights and freedom the world over.

We firmly believe in the link established between international peace and security and political and socio-economic development. They are not mutually exclusive. They are interdependent and complementary one to the other. We, as citizens of the world community, are committed to redouble our efforts to preserve global freedom and peaceful coexistence of which we here in this body are the sole arbiters.

It is a sad reality, however, that our combined efforts to achieve and preserve lasting peace and freedom are constantly thwarted by adverse national and international economic conditions, regional and localized conflicts, and repeated violations of human rights.

Indeed, war and the threat of war are issues which constantly demand the attention of the world Organization. However, we are not succeeding in beating the swords raised in anger around the world into ploughshares, as is so clearly set forth as a serious objective by the Organization. Too often we find that the prospect of peace is dangled tantalizingly before a world that is eager for a respite from war - a respite that would give us all an opportunity to build rather than to destroy. Just as often, we find that prospects for peace vanish like a soap-bubble blown into the air.

My delegation supports the peace initiative with regard to Iran and Iraq undertaken by the Secretary-General. The world is weary of this seven-year-old war of attrition between Iran and Iraq that has wasted vast amounts of human and

(Mr. Simmonds, Saint Kitts and Nevis)

natural resources. Recent events in that region clearly demonstrate the risk of the widening of the conflict, and even the possibility of super-Power involvement if the conflict continues, thereby posing a genuine threat to international peace and security.

The Government of Saint Kitts and Nevis fervently supports resolution 598 (1987) unanimously adopted by the Security Council in July of this year, the text of which demands an immediate cease-fire in the Iran-Iraq war. We call upon both combatants to comply with the resolution, and States members of the General Assembly to be prepared to display the political will to exert the diplomatic pressures required to elicit compliance by the belligerents.

Also in the Middle East the question of the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to a well-defined homeland and to a just and lasting peace is still considered the core of the Middle East conflict. However, this must coexist with the right of the people of Israel to live within secure boundaries. Here, too, strong and persistent action is needed to have all parties adhere to the relevant resolutions adopted by the General Assembly on the issue.

With respect to the situations in Afghanistan and Kampuchea, my delegation notes with sad regret that these localized occupations are no closer to an end today despite repeated resolutions that call for the withdrawal of foreign troops from these occupied territories. The hopes and aspirations of the people of Afghanistan and of Kampuchea are being sacrificed in the cauldron of these conflicts. I call upon the General Assembly to continue to register its strong support for the liberation of the people of Kampuchea and Afghanistan.

The United Nations has a special responsibility to support its Members in their efforts to preserve individual sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence, and to denounce and act against those aggressive nations

(Mr. Simmonds, Saint Kitts and Nevis)

that violate the fundamental rights of other weaker and vulnerable nations. Those among us who value peace must not be dominated by others who readily resort to war. People everywhere, whether they be in the east or the west, in the north or the south, should be free to choose the government which best reflects their political convictions and aspirations.

On the question of peace and stability on the American continent, the situation in Central America preoccupies us. My delegation is particularly concerned about the possible implications for the peoples of Central America, Latin America, and the Caribbean that a worsening of the crisis in this area may have. The Caribbean and Latin America need an economic revival, but this revival cannot come in the midst of civil wars and guerrilla activity.

My delegation welcomes the peace initiative recently worked out by Government leaders of Central America. It is a peace plan by Central Americans for Central America. It should be given every opportunity to be effective. I call upon all combatants throughout Central America and the Caribbean to observe the cease-fire and then to negotiate in good faith for a lasting peace leading to the realization of true democracy throughout the region.

Also in relation to our partner in the Caribbean Community, Belize, my delegation calls for early ratification of the Cartagena Protocol as a contribution to the lowering of tensions in the region.

The fact is that the various conflicts throughout the world are being supplied with arms from seemingly inexhaustible sources. This fact, however, receives scant attention from the international community.

Our attention is focused instead on the prospects for an arms reduction agreement between the United States and the Soviet Union, mainly in relation to medium-range nuclear missiles. There is great concern about the danger of nuclear

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weapons, and this is certainly justified because no corner of the world can be considered safe from the fallout of nuclear explosion. While, however, we seek to prevent this potential calamity, the reality is that every day all over the world destruction of life and property is being wrought by conventional weapons.

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It is imperative that our forum here at the United Nations spearhead urgent and continuing efforts to achieve genuine and meaningful progress in disarmament to include all weapons, conventional and chemical, as well as nuclear. It is then and only then that we will be able to mobilize fully the resources of rich and poor nations alike to address the serious economic problems which obstruct our attempts at achieving a better quality of life for all.

Article 55 of the Charter of the United Nations recognizes that conditions of stability and well-being are necessary for peaceful and friendly relations among nations. In turn, peace and friendly relations among nations are necessary prerequisites to the achievement of steady economic growth worldwide.

The world debt problem is yet another deterrent to economic development. It runs counter to the efforts of this body to alleviate the syndrome of poverty and underdevelopment crippling half of the world's population as it currently bedevils all attempts by the developing countries to bring a better quality of life to their people. I share the sentiment that a concrete solution can only be envisioned if the issue is treated as the international crisis that it is.

The Assembly has had to concede that the International Development Strategy for the First and Second United Nations Development Decades has remained largely unfulfilled.

As we approach the end of the Third Development Decade, the developing countries do not deny the existence of their external debt, nor shun a measure of responsibility for its solution. We realize that the primary responsibility for improving our economies rests upon our shoulders. However, we cannot go it alone in this world where even the super-Powers recognize some level of interdependence. We are buffeted by changing conditions in the world at large, and are at the mercy of conditions over which we have no control. The debt problem can only be addressed in a meaningful way by a process of North-South co-operation. My

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delegation is highly supportive of the approach to this problem outlined here by the Government of Jamaica. This proposal calls for a longer-term structured rescheduling of debt, accompanied by the provision of additional capital resources, so that economic growth is not stultified by the burden of debt servicing, but rather continues in tandem with it.

The more affluent countries cannot, nor should they try, to shirk their responsibility to increase the capital resources available to the developing nations.

It is the developed countries which reduce the price that they pay to us for the primary commodities we produce. It is the developed countries which increase the price of the machinery and equipment they sell to us to be used in the production of the same primary commodities, and in other vital development areas.

This is the situation in which Saint Kitts and Nevis is placed in relation to its primary export commodity, sugar. The price is severely depressed. Quotas are drastically reduced. But the price of machinery to improve the efficiency of production continues to escalate. The plight of the sugar-producing countries in the Caribbean, and indeed throughout the world, cannot be addressed by platitudes or the current attitude of benign neglect. It requires the urgent serious and sympathetic consideration of the developed countries.

It is clear that economic strangulation can and does lead to political instability within and between nations. Many countries find it increasingly difficult to cope with growing social and economic demands in the face of drastic adjustments. Our vigorous efforts need to be complemented by increased international assistance and co-operation. It is not enough to call for structural adjustment. This is not by itself the universal panacea. Indeed, this is already being undertaken in many developing countries. In my own country, Saint Kitts and

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Nevis, we have already embarked on a programme of diversification which expands our agricultural sector, places greater emphasis on tourism development and gives impetus to the growth of light industry, while at the same time employing greater fiscal prudence in the public sector.

It is unfortunate that some - I repeat, some - experts from the developed countries have a biased view of structural adjustment. Their interpretation in relation to the developing countries is: increasing taxation on already overburdened people; reducing programmes for social and cultural developments; and cutting back on provision of employment by the public sector.

For the developed countries, however, their interpretation of structural adjustment can include: reducing taxes; increasing spending on implements of war; and reducing assistance to developing countries in the grip of structural adjustment.

This approach will only further increase the imbalances which exist and widen the gap between the rich and the poor countries.

In the final analysis, all of us need to realize that there must be a humane side to structural adjustment. The fiscal and economic measures which are employed nationally, regionally and internationally to improve the abstract indices of growth and development must also address the educational, social, cultural and health needs of people everywhere. The real essence of development is the development of people.

The world has risen to many a challenge in the past to provide a better quality of life for people everywhere, and the United Nations has been in the forefront of the struggle. Diseases once the scourge of mankind, like smallpox, tuberculosis and poliomyelitis, have been defeated. Once again we must mobilize; we must defeat malnutrition, poverty, drug abuse and the more recent scourge,

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acquired immune deficiency syndrome, AIDS, which threaten to destroy the flower of our youth who hold the keys to the future of our nations. The time has come for us to take a more humanitarian look at the world, and to divert more of its resources away from creating and proliferating the means of destruction into providing constructive and effective solutions to the problems of underdevelopment.

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I have so far projected a general view of developing countries. However, it has come to be universally recognized that there is within this broad framework a special category of developing countries whose problems require special consideration. This is the category of island developing countries.

A number of analytical and descriptive studies, including a study by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), have shown that island developing countries have characteristics distinct from those of developing countries in general. As a result, the type of development strategy regarded as appropriate in general and promoted by the United Nations may in some aspects be inappropriate for these countries in particular. The studies have also highlighted certain specific handicaps facing small island countries and dispelled some myths concerning them.

Our handicaps are basically derived from the smallness and remoteness of most of us. They include vulnerability to natural disasters, such as hurricanes, to which islands in the Caribbean are particularly vulnerable; special transport problems, which are even more acute in archipelagic countries; highly limited internal markets; lack of natural resources; and heavy dependence on imports. These imports in turn are financed by a small number of foreign-exchange-earning activities - commodity exports, tourism or emigrant remittances, for example. Given the high per capita cost of building and maintaining the economic and social infrastructure for small and isolated populations, small islands lack the critical mass to provide basic services economically for their populations. However, these services must be provided. People in island communities have as much right to life, liberty, the pursuit of happiness and basic amenities as people in large metropolitan societies.

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Growing recognition of the conclusions regarding island developing countries is reflected in the five resolutions on island developing countries adopted unanimously by the General Assembly between 1976 and 1982. The international development strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade specifically highlights our problems. Other organizations have also begun to focus on this group. For instance, the Commonwealth Heads of Government endorsed, in 1979, a special programme of action in favour of the smaller Commonwealth countries, and the Lomé Conventions make special provisions for these countries.

However, a number of countries and institutions are clearly sceptical about the specificity of island developing countries, and some are against the proliferation of such special categories of developing countries.

I say to the sceptics that the existence of sovereign island nations is a fact of life. We are real, we exist, we have a voice which is heard and must continue to be heard in international forums, and we are sovereign. We are no figment of anyone's imagination. We are here, and here to stay. I therefore call for urgent, concerted and constructive action to give effect to the resolutions in relation to island developing countries already adopted by the Assembly.

The effective functioning of the United Nations in its various dimensions is vital to the resolution of conflicts, the achievement of peace in the world, and the marshalling of the resources of the world for the effective resolution of problems. Here we can come together to heal wounds and facilitate co-operation between nations.

It is in this context that we renew our call for North and South Korea to become Members of the United Nations. This is not to deny or preclude the goal of reunification of the Korean peninsula. We must, however, address situations as they exist, and not merely as we would wish them to be. Both countries on the

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Korean peninsula amply satisfy the requirements for membership. Besides, the realities of the existing deadlock dictate the need for the stimulation and maintenance of dialogue between the two sides within such a structured and supportive framework as the United Nations can provide.

Finally, I turn to the question of human rights, the violation of which is another threat to international peace and security.

Developing countries like Saint Kitts and Nevis are acutely aware of the premium which must be placed on human resources. Our greatest potential lies in our people, and in drawing from them the qualities of patriotism and service which can flourish only in an atmosphere which guarantees the dignity and worth of the human person.

Yet, nearly 40 years after the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the right of peoples and nations to self-determination as a prerequisite to the full enjoyment of all fundamental human rights is still being denied.

Nowhere is such violation more flagrant and agonizing than in South Africa, where the evil policy of apartheid is insensitively perpetuated and consolidated. The United Nations has been in the forefront of the opposition to apartheid, and now appears to be growing weary in its efforts to bring an end to its perpetuation. Perhaps this is the design; perhaps the design of Pretoria is continually to confront the international community with arrogant defiance and frustrate it into wearied resignation and silence.

My delegation refuses to be lulled into silence on this issue. We will take every opportunity publicly to proclaim our abhorrence for the system of apartheid, because it is inherently evil, and we exhort the international community and the oppressed of South Africa to stand firm in their opposition and struggle. We laud all the countries that have heeded the appeals of the various resolutions adopted

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by the General Assembly and the Security Council and have imposed sanctions on South Africa. We are optimistic that if a persevering world unified against apartheid continues to send this signal to Pretoria the stubborn walls of apartheid must eventually crumble. We can accept nothing less than the equality of all men.

St. Kitts and Nevis also reaffirms its support for Security Council resolution 435 (1978) and the United Nations independence plan for Namibia.

The world is so closely knit and interdependent that conflicts or tensions anywhere and of whatever nature affect us all, because we are citizens of one world. We are our brother's keeper, and as brothers we are equal.

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The United Nations is like a great lens which is made to capture the powerful but diffuse rays of the sun and distil and concentrate them into a unified force directed into any selected focal point. The United Nations can and should attract the diverse energies, resources and creativity of all the nations and concentrate them into a unified powerful force to be focused upon the various problems that beset mankind. I am convinced that in this way effective solutions compatible with the preservation of human dignity can be achieved.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Saint Kitts and Nevis for the important statement he has just made.

Mr. Kennedy Simmonds, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Saint Kitts and Nevis, was escorted from the rostrum.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Russian): I shall call on representatives who wish to make statements in exercise of the right of reply.

May I remind members that, in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to five minutes for the second intervention and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. BLANC (France) (interpretation from French): In his speech this morning, the representative of Vanuatu made some incorrect statements about New Caledonia. That prompts me to make things clear by recalling a few basic truths.

First, like a large number of other countries, France voted against the draft resolution which became resolution 41/41 A and was submitted by the countries of the Pacific Forum to the General Assembly last year. So far as my Government is concerned, New Caledonia is indeed a French territory, and it will remain so as

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long as the people want it to. On the very day when the majority of the people of New Caledonia want independence, independence will be attained.

Secondly, it was precisely the appearance in the territory of an independence movement that prompted France to organize there, in application of the principle of self-determination, a vote in which the option of independence was offered. That referendum took place on 13 September last, in a calm atmosphere and in accordance with the strictest rules of democracy. The result, challenged by no one, was that a clear majority of the people of New Caledonia rejected independence. Vanuatu has the right to regret that result and to wish that it had been otherwise; but Vanuatu cannot challenge its validity without rejecting the very principles of democracy.

Thirdly, offering the choice between independence and the maintenance of the territory in the French Republic, the referendum posed a simple question - in fact, the only question relevant to the existing problem. The independentist factions decided to boycott this democratic consultation. One might wonder why they did so. The reason is this: These are minority factions and they know it. Moreover, they feared that a vote on the question of independence - which is the very heart of their claims - might reveal the disparity between reality and those claims.

Fourthly, in referring to the people of the territory, the representative of Vanuatu tried to draw a distinction between "those who were French" and "those who were not". That way of looking at things is in contradiction with the most elementary truth. In New Caledonia there are people of Melanesian, European, Polynesian and Asian origin. They are all French citizens; they enjoy the same rights as all the other inhabitants of my country. In New Caledonia there is no distinction whatever based on race, colour, religion or beliefs. Thus, for instance, two out of three of the representatives of the territory to the French Parliament and three out of four regional presidents are of Melanesian origin.

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That is quite a different picture from the simplistic and false one that has been painted in an attempt to persuade the members of the General Assembly.

Fifthly, the representative of Vanuatu stated also that France had encouraged a massive influx of immigrants into the territory. The figures on the various components of the population of New Caledonia show, on the contrary, a balance between those components. I must tell the representative of Vanuatu that here again he is on shaky ground. If he wants to develop this interesting theme, I would suggest that he turn his attention to the major countries of the South Pacific region, where massive influxes of immigrants did indeed submerge the original inhabitants.

Mr. VAN LIEROP (Vanuatu): The Government of Vanuatu finds it very interesting - although not surprising - that representatives of the Government of France now profess to speak for, and understand the motives of, the colonized people of New Caledonia with respect to their successful boycott of the purported referendum recently conducted in New Caledonia by France. We find that interesting but not surprising because throughout history colonizers have always professed to understand the motivation and the driving factors behind colonized peoples.

It is not at all surprising that today France not only should attempt to deny the people of New Caledonia the right to be heard and the right to determine for themselves their own future, but also should profess to interpret the motivation of the Kanak people. How many times before Zimbabwe became independent did representatives of Ian Smith come before the world and say that elections had been held and that the people of what was then Southern Rhodesia had expressed themselves and had decided that they wanted to continue to be Rhodesians rather than to be Zimbabweans - which is what they were.

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The representative of France has also questioned the comment we made with respect to France's policies of consciously attempting to outnumber and overwhelm the colonized people of New Caledonia. Last year I had occasion to quote from a letter that was written by Mr. Messmer, then Prime Minister, on 19 July 1972 to Mr. Deniau, Secretary of State in charge of overseas departments and territories. The current representative of France was not with us then. Perhaps he is unaware of that letter. To enlighten him, let me quote briefly:

"New Caledonia, a colony of settlement, although dedicated to a multiracial mixture, is probably the last non-independent tropical territory in the world where a developed country can encourage the emigration of its inhabitants. It is therefore necessary to seize this ultimate chance to create another, additional francophone country. The French presence in New Caledonia can be threatened - except, of course, in the event of world war - only by a revival of nationalist spirit among the indigenous people supported by some other possible allies in the ethnic communities coming from the Pacific.

In the short term and medium term, the massive immigration of French metropolitan citizens and those from overseas departments should allow us to overcome this danger by maintaining and improving the relative size of the population groups in New Caledonia. In the long term, the indigenous nationalist demands can only be avoided if the groups which do not originate in the Pacific represent a mass demographic majority. One cannot obtain this long-term demographic effect without the systematic immigration of women and children.

The circumstances are such that in 20 years New Caledonia will be a small, prosperous French territory comparable to Luxembourg and representing obviously in the emptiness of the Pacific much more than does Luxembourg in

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Europe. The success of this enterprise, indispensable to the maintenance of French interests east of Suez, depends, among other conditions, on our capacity to succeed finally, after so many setbacks in our history, in an operation of settling people overseas."

Imperfection teaches humility. I must thank the representative of France for creating the circumstances that allow me the opportunity to speak again today. This morning, when I made our statement, I inadvertently lost my place and neglected to read a very brief paragraph which was part of my text. I apologize to the Assembly for this imperfection and the slight, inadvertent omission on my part. I will now read that paragraph into the record to close my reply to the representative of France.

This morning, when discussing the prestige and glory of France, I inadvertently omitted the following paragraph:

"Therefore, we once again appeal to France to set an example. Show us your faith in the United Nations by co-operating with the Committee of 24 on this question. Open a fair and just dialogue with the Kanak people through their representative, the FLNKS (Front de libération nationale Kanak socialiste). Let the Kanaks decide for themselves what they wish to be."

We rest our case.

Mr. BLANC (France) (interpretation from French): I did not quite follow everything the representative of Vanuatu said. I am not here to indulge in sterile polemics or rhetorical effects. I have explained the position of my country. For this evening, I shall stop there.

Mr. VAN LIEROP (Vanuatu): Perhaps the representative of France would be best advised to stop there because we also have in our possession documents from the FLNKS indicating that the referendum in New Caledonia was not the unchallenged

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or uncontested exercise that the representative of France indicated. Should delegations be interested in learning a little more about that exercise, I am certain that these documents can be made available to them.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.