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GENERAL ASSEMBLY

PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE SEVENTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 22 September 1987, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. FLORIN (German Democratic Republic)

later: Mr. PINHEIRO (Portugal)
(Vice-President)

- General debate [9]: (continued)

Statements were made by:

Mr. Sepulveda Amor (Mexico)
Mrs. Liyonda (Zaire)
Mr. Choudhury (Bangladesh)
Mr. Clark (Canada)
Mr. Malmierca Peoli (Cuba)
Mr. Ndinga-Oba (Congo)
Mr. Stoltenberg (Norway)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 9 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. SEPULVEDA AMOR (Mexico) (interpretation from Spanish):

Mr. President, on behalf of the Government of Mexico, I should like to congratulate you on your well-deserved election. I should like also to assure you of my delegation's willingness to contribute to the success of your presidency. Your competence and experience are a guarantee that we shall achieve our aim.

Allow me also to reiterate Mexico's support to the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar. The initiative that he undertook last November, together with the Secretary-General of the Organization of American States (OAS), regarding the Central American conflict, as well as his recent mediation between Iran and Iraq, are proof of his unswerving commitment to the cause of peace.

This illustrious Peruvian diplomat has been entrusted with conducting the work of the United Nations at a particularly difficult time, when doubts are being expressed concerning the effectiveness of multilateralism and even the very validity of the precepts upon which the world Organization is based. In his arduous tasks he has the backing of Latin America and the developing countries. This solidarity is part of a larger contribution the aim of which is to establish an international system based on genuine co-operation among all States.

A year ago from this rostrum, President Miguel de la Madrid emphatically stated Mexico's unswerving commitment to the purposes and principles of the United Nations. That declaration faithfully reflects the strength of our foreign policy commitment in subscribing to the norms that lay the foundations for peaceful coexistence of all peoples based on respect and solidarity. They constitute the backbone of Mexico's international conduct.

(Mr. Sepulveda Amor, Mexico)

For Mexico, compliance with law and respect for the essential rules of international coexistence are basic elements of its foreign policy. It is not a matter of merely postulating universal values in the abstract, but of sustaining principles that are necessary for the preservation of national sovereignty - that is, rules of behaviour that have acquired a special meaning for us within our social system and history and are at the core of our nation's values.

Ethics and law as applied to political action necessarily lead to a search for just agreements in international relations that eliminate confrontations among States; to the establishment of dialogue in which there is real communication; to the achievement, through active and flexible diplomacy, of the conciliation of opposing interests, and to the curbing of the arrogance of the powerful - in a word, to the promotion of international co-operation as the basis for a peaceful coexistence based on justice and equality.

(Mr. Sepulveda Amor, Mexico)

Mexico repudiates all forms of intervention wherever they occur. By defending this principle we protect our own interests and thus ensure against interference in our nation's affairs. By upholding the self-determination of peoples we avoid the temptation of limiting our own sovereignty or imposing upon ourselves political models alien to us. We insist also on the peaceful solution of disputes to ensure that the community of States submits to legal order and abandons the tendency towards the use of force, power and arbitrariness in international relations.

These tenets, the application of which we have demanded without distinction, are not ours alone but a fundamental part of modern international law. Their enforcement protects the legitimate interests of the community of States in general. Hence my country's unswerving support for the work of the United Nations, which embodies the shared ideal of strict observance of the legal order.

The consistency of Mexico's foreign policy with these unchanging principles explains the policy of the Mexican Government, and the other member countries of the Contadora and Support Groups with regard to the Central American conflict. It should be recalled that in January 1983 there was a climate of confrontation and distrust in the isthmus, where mounting political tensions and the militarization of the region were the harbinger of an imminent conflagration.

The Contadora Group emerged as an example of mediation in good faith with the will to co-operate with the Central American Governments so that seemingly insurmountable antagonisms could be channelled through negotiations. We have worked towards dialogue and reconciliation among the parties to restore a climate of political trust and thus overcome the danger of armed confrontation and intervention, seeking a fair balance with regard to the political interests of the States of the area.

(Mr. Sepulveda Amor, Mexico)

The activities of the Contadora Group do not respond only to a generic imperative or the memory of foreign interference and internal and international armed conflicts that have distorted the organic development of the Central American nations. We are trying, by promoting the diplomatic settlement of disputes, slowing the arms build-up and negotiating the economic and social development of the region, to avoid the extension of confrontation and guarantee the legitimate national interests of each of the Contadora countries, while protecting the political stability of Latin America.

The violation of the legal order in the isthmus undermines the possibility of claiming one's rights. The arms race and the state of war force the conflicting parties to allocate ridiculous amounts of investments to defence. The displacement of refugees also contribute to the creation of social tension. Recent history shows, too, that regional conflicts, limited at the start, can spread beyond the original area to neighbouring regions. It is essential that our nations prevent war and find a just, comprehensive solution to Central American problems. This is a task that cannot be postponed.

In Central America there are two opposing interpretations of the world, different political ideas and contradictory feelings about Latin American history and the means of contributing to the settlement of international conflicts.

The first adheres to a system of areas of influence that even in contemporary strategic terms seems obsolete and that would make force the main motivation for the conduct of States. This approach promotes war as an instrument for hegemonic affirmation and denies the pluralism of our peoples for the benefit of a supposed national security. At the same time, it deepens contradictions within the societies, which it claims have political freedom, preventing them from developing their own institutions and denying them the opportunity to make their own decisions.

(Mr. Sepulveda Amor, Mexico)

The second sees politics as a privileged means of making history. It discusses antagonisms at the negotiating table and tries to resolve them through diplomacy. It believes that the peaceful solution of the Central American controversy is in both the short and the long term in the abiding interests of all the countries of the region. This interpretation upholds the basic tenets of Western moral and intellectual traditions - that is, a social and international order which is based on reason, that identifies human progress with intelligence and creativity and that stems from the indissoluble link between political practice and ethical principles - and affirms the concept of man as a potential for irreversible freedom.

For more than four years now we have persevered in an effort to guide the Central American conflict in accordance with this political logic. We are gratified that those actions contributed to the peace agreement signed in Guatemala last August by the Presidents of the Central American countries.

Those agreements mark a new stage in the life of the region and reflect the fundamental commitments of those of us who have struggled to carry out our task of mediation: national reconciliation through dialogue and political action; pluralistic democracy that guarantees human rights and promotes social justice; free exercise of the right of self-determination; the cessation of support for irregular forces and the corresponding obligation to refrain from the use of one's own territory for the illegal activities of those groups; and a decision to continue negotiations on security and arms limitation - in short, to foster international co-operation in meeting the most urgent economic needs of the societies of the region.

I reiterate the Mexican Government's satisfaction at the signing of the Guatemala agreement and its readiness to participate, together with the Contadora

(Mr. Sepulveda Amor, Mexico)

and Support Groups and the Secretaries-General of the Organization of American States (OAS) and the United Nations, in the International Verification and Follow-up Commission to give effect to the obligations assumed by the Central American Governments. I reiterate also our determination to contribute, in association with the member States of the international community, to the fulfilment of a reconstruction project to increase substantially economic co-operation between the five countries of the area.

Undoubtedly the Governments of Central America have shouldered their responsibility. We now need the international community's respect and assistance. Other States, especially those with interests and ties in the region, now have an obligation to co-operate with specific action in ensuring the realization of the aspirations to reconciliation of the Central American countries.

Latin America is today confronting the most serious economic crisis in its contemporary history. An adverse international atmosphere combined with age-old deficiencies in the region's production infrastructure has created stagnation with inflation and a decline in the standard of living of its communities and has reduced the possibilities of progress and development in the region.

(Mr. Sepulveda Amor, Mexico)

It cannot be denied that in great measure the crisis has its origins in outside factors beyond the control of our Governments. A series of international circumstances combined to transform us into net capital exporters: interest rates at unprecedentedly high levels, continued lowering of commodity prices and growing protectionism in the industrialized countries.

The countries of Latin America have made an enormous internal effort to adjust our economies and face the debt-servicing problem. Even so, the region as a whole has not been able to achieve its necessary development objectives.

We have noted with concern the direction that the industrialized countries wish to give to the plans to resolve the crisis. The proposed programme does not contribute to the design of an international co-operation system based on the principles of the United Nations Charter, nor does it help distribute the developing countries' burden of adjustment or reactivate in a symmetrical and balanced manner the functioning of the international economy as a whole.

In fact, when the allocation of financial flows is tied to programmes of commercial liberalization, for the purpose of providing resources in debt restructuring negotiations and obtaining new capital, the international financial organisms discredit the very foundations of the multilateral trade system: non-discrimination and most-favoured-nation treatment. Thus the developing countries' possibilities of promoting greater access by their exports to the international market based on centralized negotiations in a preferential system that compensates for disadvantages, are diminished.

If to this is added the growing recourse by industrialized countries to the imposition of new conditions for access to their markets, demanding the opening up of the service and high technology sectors, direct investment and a stricter interpretation of the norms that govern intellectual property, the conclusion must

(Mr. Sepulveda Amor, Mexico)

be that the developing countries are seeing the advent of a new plan for an international economy that does not necessarily meet their interests.

Latin America has chosen to face these challenges by strengthening and widening its consultation, co-operation and co-ordination mechanisms to achieve greater participation in the negotiation and operation of the international economic system. Through regional economic organisms and special mechanisms such as the Cartagena Consensus and the Group of Eight, we intend to strengthen the structure of an international economic order that will contribute to establishing a more solid basis for the collective self-sufficiency of the developing countries.

The regional action does not adversely affect the search for new understandings among the developing countries designed to strengthen their collective action with regard to world economy. The new directions that are proposed in the fields of currency, finance and trade necessitate attempts to reach a new consensus and new negotiating strategies so as to regain the initiative in the process of changing the international economic system.

The magnitude of the challenge demands united, logical action by all the developing countries, focusing on international co-operation that will protect their legitimate interests and prompt the industrialized countries to enter into dialogue and negotiation on all matters on the international economic agenda.

The question of development problems necessarily leads to that of disarmament. Only a few weeks ago we examined in this forum the undeniable link between these problems and the arms race, with the consequent diversion of funds and attention in the political and economic spheres, to the detriment of a more just distribution of wealth. We referred to the expenditure on the accumulation of arsenals and the resultant distortions in the international economic system.

(Mr. Sepulveda Amor, Mexico)

The existence of nuclear weapons constitutes a threat to life on this planet and, while it is true that the responsibility for eliminating the danger of a holocaust falls chiefly on the nuclear Powers, the cause of peace and disarmament is that of all States.

This is the purpose of the initiative of the Group of Six: the Heads of Government of Mexico, Argentina, India, Greece, Sweden and Tanzania have reclaimed our right to life. Their call to the super-Powers stresses two crucial themes: avoidance of the militarization of space and the prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests. Both measures would represent a decisive political advance towards the achievement of broader agreements. I reaffirm in this forum my country's readiness to collaborate towards the eventual establishment of a verification system for a moratorium on nuclear tests.

Three years ago when the Group of Six began its negotiations the disarmament talks between the super-Powers had been suspended. Today, fortunately, they have not only been resumed but offer promising prospects. My Government trusts that the negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union will soon culminate in a treaty that eliminates short- and medium-range missiles from the planet.

We are pleased to see the beginning of an understanding not only to halt the development of new weapons but to eliminate an existing category of weapons. This must be only a first step towards the reduction and eventual eradication of strategic weapons.

We insist that nuclear disarmament is a priority, but we cannot neglect the problem of conventional armaments, the development of which complicates the settlement of the various regional conflicts, in which the super-Powers are involved and which must be resolved through dialogue and negotiation.

(Mr. Sepulveda Amor, Mexico)

We demand for Kampuchea and Afghanistan the same respect for the principle of non-intervention that we claim for Central America. We demand the independence of the people of Namibia and the elimination of the odious system of apartheid. On the South Atlantic, we again call for a political agreement that will protect the inalienable rights of Argentina. We emphasize that a definitive comprehensive solution to the Middle East controversies can be achieved only on the basis of respect for and compliance with the relevant Security Council resolutions.

We wish to express our special concern over the situation in the Persian Gulf. We trust that the principles of the United Nations Charter will prevail. We call on the Governments of Iran and Iraq to resolve their differences in accordance with the recent mandate of the Security Council. The mission of good offices undertaken by the Secretary-General must be recognized and supported in order that a dignified and just agreement may be achieved.

Mexico will continue to strive for the strengthening of the United Nations system and the preservation of the basic tenets of multilateral action: dialogue and the balance of interests. To that end we shall spare no effort to strengthen the institutional forums of the community of nations. We shall also continue to participate in the informal groupings of collective diplomacy whose final aim is to strengthen those tenets.

(Mr. Sepulveda Amor, Mexico)

Hence we shall maintain our active and responsible commitment to the political efforts of the Contadora support groups, the Cartagena Consensus and the Group of Six. Similarly, we have formed, together with Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Panama, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela, a group of eight Latin American democracies to establish a permanent mechanism for consultations and concerted political action. We are making every effort to guarantee autonomy, respect and dignity for our countries and to ensure for coming generations a future of peace, freedom, democracy, economic well-being and social progress.

Next November the Heads of State of those eight countries will meet in Mexico. Their discussions could contribute to the definition of new modalities with regard to the role of our region in world affairs. We are convinced that at that meeting new proposals will emerge in order to make of Latin America a more united region that is more at one with the interests of the developing world and more willing to fight for the basic principles of the international legal order.

From its inception the United Nations has promoted understanding and co-operation among States and their commitment to the principles and purposes that emerged from a long, civilizing undertaking begun at the end of the cruel experience of two world wars. Its aim is basically to further multilateral co-operation in order to promote the shared progress of nations, to enhance the dignity of the human person, to promote respect for fundamental rights and, above all, to ensure permanent peace that banishes the scourge of war and its attendant suffering and devastation.

The drafters of the Charter were never naive enough to believe that the community of States could be built on some abstract Utopia, indifferent to the asymmetrical distribution of power. The structure given to the Security Council reveals the extent to which political realism and the need to provide the United

(Mr. Sepulveda Amor, Mexico)

Nations with the instruments for effective action defined the shape of the Organization - hence the powers vested in certain States regarding matters of exceptional importance, especially those concerning peace and security. It must be underlined, however, that such attributes are more a responsibility than a privilege, more an obligation for moderation and balance than the possibility of adapting international relations to unilateral interests.

Unfortunately, those ideals of civilized political behaviour have suffered serious setbacks. Bipolarism and efforts to consolidate spheres of influence bring about alignments that render peace and progress towards international democracy more difficult. The weakening of multilateral organizations in turn erodes the fundamental norms of international law. The arms race threatens our existence and sharpens economic imbalances. Grave regional conflicts persist and could produce wider confrontations. The development needs of the vast majority of countries represented here have not been satisfied, and they require adequate and urgent attention.

We have not yet succeeded in imposing the rule of law over the use of force, dignity and respect over the abuse of power and the aspirations of independence and self-determination over hegemonic designs. Nor have we been able to replace efforts to dominate and exploit by those who have a concentration of resources with a world of international co-operation. No one should therefore be surprised at the recurring discouragement and skepticism regarding our Organization.

But it is also true that without this forum to further and regulate the international order, relations among States would be dominated by a policy of unrestricted power. Without failing to recognize the aims and limitations of the United Nations, we should rid ourselves of the notion that it has failed, for it has registered considerable success in a variety of areas of international co-operation, as we have described on past occasions.

(Mr. Sepulveda Amor, Mexico)

That being said, it is clear that the great tasks facing the Organization make it imperative that all Member States, without exception, fully assume their responsibilities. Improvement in international life requires our concerted political will. All nations have the obligation to make concessions in secondary matters in order to agree on fundamentals, to adopt constructive approaches in order to find practical solutions beneficial to all, to be always open to dialogue while setting aside sterile confrontations and useless recriminations, to renounce all attempts at domination and unjust privileges - in short, to strengthen our genuine solidarity.

In reaffirming its unwavering determination to contribute to the full attainment of these purposes - the greatest conquest of our political culture - Mexico urges Member States to persevere in the constant effort to make reason and law prevail among individuals and nations.

Mrs. EKILA LIYONDA (Zaire) (interpretation from French): Mr. President, at this forty-second session, reflecting as it does the maturity of our Organization, it is fitting that the General Assembly should have honoured one of its most deserving servants who has devoted much of his diplomatic career to the United Nations. Hence, I am particularly pleased to congratulate you warmly on this honour, which is indeed the highlight of all the work you have done for the international community. This election means that our Assembly will enjoy the invaluable assistance of one of its most faithful supporters, a prestigious witness to both its difficulties and its greatness. As representative of a divided country, you can better than anyone else comprehend the horrors and consequences of conflicts and wars that have torn mankind apart and remain the basic raison d'être of the United Nations. I assure you, Sir, of the full co-operation of my

(Mrs. Ekila Liyonda, Zaire)

delegation both within the General Committee of the forty-second session - of which Zaire is a member - and throughout your term of office as President of the General Assembly.

My delegation wishes to express its gratitude to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bangladesh, Mr. Humayun Rasheed Choudhury, whose well-known experience and diplomatic talents contributed so much to the successful conclusion of the General Assembly's work at a particularly difficult time.

(Mrs. Ekila Liyonda, Zaire)

The delegation of Zaire is very pleased to pay tribute to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, whose ability, resolve and courage have earned him his reputation as a man who is committed to defending the cause of our Organization. From the excellent report he has presented to us and the various dangerous missions he has carried out on behalf of this Organization, it is evident that as he begins his second term of office he is endeavouring to give this Organization the renewed impetus and vigour necessary for a rational operation.

He is supported by another great diplomat, Mr. Joseph Verner Reed, whose great human and social qualities we all recognize and whom we all know as a most affable person, and whom I should like to congratulate on his appointment as Under-Secretary-General for Political and General Assembly Affairs. My delegation is convinced that the new team will prove to be extremely effective. In the great undertaking of the reforms now under way, the Secretary-General can be assured of the support and contribution of Zaire.

As the forty-second session of the General Assembly of the United Nations opens, many conflicts and hotbeds of tension and imbalances of all kinds characterize the world scene. Some States Members of this Organization, far from being inspired by the ideals, objectives and lofty goals enshrined in its Charter - particularly those that concern the maintenance of international peace and security, the development of friendly relations between nations based on respect for the principle of the equal rights of peoples, the territorial integrity of States and the attainment of international co-operation - have persevered in making demands that create threats to international peace and security.

At the same time, the most acute crises afflict much of mankind in the form of drought, famine, wretchedness and poverty.

(Mrs. Ekila Liyonda, Zaire)

According to statistics made public on 11 July 1987 by the United Nations, some 5 billion human beings face challenges that are world-wide rather than national in scope and that amply justify the concerns being expressed by all Member States in this forum, the General Assembly of the United Nations.

The United Nations, as catalyst for the contemporary values, is thus called upon to seek by all means possible the emergence of an atmosphere of trust, peace and co-operation among all the nations of the world.

Following the marking of the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations, that highest of objectives, the formation of a better world, must win the support of all Member States through a common resolve to apply Article 33 of the Charter, which calls on parties to any dispute likely to endanger the maintenance of international peace and security first of all to seek a solution through negotiation, mediation or other peaceful means of their own choice.

In this context commendable efforts have indeed been made by the General Assembly since the first special session on disarmament, held in 1978, whose conclusions, enshrined in its Final Document, should inspire all Member States of our Organization and be applied by them if we wish to save mankind from any danger of a nuclear holocaust.

Security, an essential element of peace, has always been one of the most deeply felt aspirations of mankind. States have sought to preserve their security through the possession of weapons, and some have survived because they have had them. But in our time the build-up of weapons, particularly nuclear weapons, presents an even greater threat to international peace and security.

The second special session of the General Assembly on disarmament, held in 1982, had the merit of proposing a whole series of measures designed to speed up the process of general and complete disarmament through specific proposals in the form of a comprehensive programme of disarmament.

(Mrs. Ekila Liyonda, Zaire)

The Conference on Disarmament, which meets in Geneva - my country is a member - has distinguished itself by preparing that programme under the leadership of an outstanding diplomat, a Nobel laureate, Ambassador Garcia Robles of Mexico.

Consideration of that comprehensive programme of disarmament under agenda item 66 - and this was the programme submitted by the Conference on Disarmament - will enable the General Assembly to gauge the importance of the initiatives taken by the 40 members of the Conference on Disarmament. Moreover, at its thirty-ninth session, in resolution 39/160 of 17 December 1984, adopted without a vote, the General Assembly noted that world-wide military spending had acquired a staggering magnitude and that the global trend continued to be towards a faster rate of annual increase in those expenditures.

Accordingly it decided to convene an International Conference with a view to establishing a close relationship between disarmament and development. That Conference, held recently in New York, from 24 August to 11 September, emphasized the international community's resolve to achieve disarmament and development as factors that strengthen international peace and security and promote prosperity.

However they are two distinct processes, and the Assembly recognized that one should not slow down the development or evolution of the other, for development activities cannot wait for resources to be made available through disarmament. Moreover, disarmament has imperatives that are at variance with the objective of releasing resources for development. But, above all there is a close correlation between disarmament and development, which are linked by a multidimensional relationship.

Should this close correlation between disarmament and development not encourage the nuclear Powers to ensure both the disarmament and development of underdeveloped countries and thus promote peace in the world?

(Mrs. Ekila Liyonda, Zaire)

The special responsibilities incumbent on the nuclear Powers have been cited very often, particularly those of the two super-Powers to speed up the process of nuclear disarmament so that negotiations can be held with a view to the swift conclusion of the agreement limiting strategic weapons and the adoption of measures to prevent the unleashing of nuclear war and the use of force in international relations.

(Mrs. Ekila Liyonda, Zaire)

Against this background, my delegation would join others in saying how pleased we were at the agreement concluded on 18 September 1987 in Washington between the two super-Powers with regard to the elimination of medium-range nuclear missiles in Europe. This indeed indicates noteworthy progress in a historic process of general and complete disarmament under effective international control.

The summit meeting of the super-Powers is therefore awaited with great interest with a view to the conclusion of the agreement that has now been achieved by the foreign ministers.

In addition to that agreement, my delegation would like to see other effective measures taken to prohibit or prevent the development, manufacture or use of other weapons of mass destruction, with high priority given to the conclusion of an agreement on the elimination of all chemical weapons.

My delegation is convinced that at their summit meeting, the two super-Powers will be able to achieve further and more tangible results in working towards true nuclear disarmament.

Thus we will enter a new era of détente and optimism in the relations of trust between those two super-Powers which will lead all States towards a lessening of tension at the international level and will provide guarantees to States that do not have nuclear weapons that such weapons will not be used.

While an atmosphere conducive to dialogue does prevail between the two super-Powers, this is unfortunately not the case in respect of the racial communities of South Africa, where that shameless system regarded by the United Nations as a crime against mankind - the policy of apartheid - still exists. That policy of racial discrimination denies the fundamental rights of the black majority population and thus runs counter to the most elementary principles set forth in the Charter of the United Nations.

(Mrs. Ekila Liyonda, Zaire)

The heroic, harsh and difficult struggle to combat that hateful system means that the black people of South Africa are increasingly winning the sympathy of some white liberals who had an exchange of views with leaders of the African National Congress (ANC) on this problem at a meeting held recently at Dakar.

The mobilization of the working masses in the general strike that paralysed the economic structures of white power heightened the awareness of the black combatants that they were waging a legitimate and just cause.

Whether it be the twenty-third summit of Heads of State or Government of the OAU or the Quebec Francophone Summit or the international forums that have considered this situation, all unanimously condemned the minority racist régime of South Africa and called upon it to enter immediately into a dialogue with the authentic representatives of the black people once apartheid had been dismantled and an end had been put to the state of emergency; once all the political prisoners had been released, beginning with Nelson Mandela; once the ban had been lifted on the ANC and other political organizations in that country.

The same applies to Namibia, which should long since have acceded to independence but which continues to be illegally occupied by the minority racist régime of South Africa, which established its system of apartheid there.

The violence and endless suffering endured by the people of Namibia have in no way diminished the spirit of the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) in its struggle to gain the freedom and independence to which the Namibians are entitled.

My delegation would like to state again that implementation of Security Council resolution 435 (1978) remains the only valid basis for a settlement of the question of Namibia. It goes without saying that dismantling apartheid will not only enable Namibia to regain its independence, will not only enable the black majority of South Africa to belong to a democratic society not based on race, but

(Mrs. Ekila Liyonda, Zaire)

it will also ensure that the independent front-line African States will not have to suffer from repeated acts of aggression, sabotage and destabilization carried out by the minority racist régime of South Africa.

In Central Africa, the people of Chad are still suffering aggression from a neighbouring African State which, since 1973, has been interfering in its internal affairs, occupying a large tract of its territory, and imposing on it an unjust war involving death and large-scale material destruction. Moreover, that African State is ignoring the principle of the inviolability of borders inherited from the time of independence and is using force contrary to the principles set forth in Article 2 of the Charter of the United Nations. It is also refusing to participate in any negotiations that are being carried on by the Ad Hoc Committee of the OAU on this conflict. Accordingly, my delegation unreservedly supports the inclusion in the agenda of the Assembly of item 140 entitled "Aggression against and occupation of Chad by Libya".

Whatever the conclusions on the matter that will be arrived at by the Ad Hoc Committee of the OAU, the General Assembly, as the forum in which all conflicts are considered pursuant to Articles 33 and 35 of the Charter, will have to take up this question with a view to finding a peaceful settlement.

From discussion of item 140 there should emerge a resolution condemning the illegal occupation of Chadian territory by the aggressor and belligerent State and calling for withdrawal from that territory, together with compensation to the Chadian people for the losses incurred.

In the north-west of Africa, there is still a conflict with regard to Western Sahara. In his meetings with the leaders of the countries concerned, the Secretary-General of the United Nations spared no effort to try to ensure a peaceful settlement of that problem.

(Mrs. Ekila Liyonda, Zaire)

As regards the Middle East, 20 years ago the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 242 (1967) which, at the time, was regarded as an important step towards the settlement of all aspects of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Although other resolutions have been adopted by the Security Council and the General Assembly on the question of the Middle East, no progress has yet been made. The convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East is still the subject of consultations held by the Secretary-General with all the interested parties. My delegation wishes him every success and hopes that the parties in conflict will no longer be opposed to negotiations in accordance with Security Council resolution 338 (1973).

Such is the cost of peace in the Middle East, for it implies justice and equality among all peoples of the region. The Arab people of Palestine, like the people of Israel, are entitled to a homeland - to a State.

Consideration of the situation in Asia leads me to look at the situation in Afghanistan and Democratic Kampuchea. Those two countries have been victims of a violation of the principles of political independence and non-interference in the internal affairs of other States and the territorial integrity of States.

(Mrs. Ekila Liyonda, Zaire)

Resolution 41/33, of 5 November 1986, is still valid, in our view, since paragraph 3 called for the immediate withdrawal of all foreign troops from Afghanistan and called on all parties concerned to work for the urgent achievement at a political solution in accordance with the provisions of that resolution and with the need to create the conditions necessary to enable Afghan refugees to return voluntarily to their homes, in safety and honour. Since those provisions have not yet been implemented, my delegation will once again become a co-sponsor of a draft resolution repeating those demands at this session.

The same applies to Democratic Kampuchea, which continues to be occupied by foreign troops. In resolution 41/6, of 21 October 1986, the General Assembly once again expressed its conviction that the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Kampuchea, the restoration and preservation of the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country, and the right of the Kampuchean people to determine their own destiny were the main factors in any just and lasting resolution of the Kampuchean problem.

There having been no satisfactory developments in this matter since then, the same provisions must be embodied in a resolution again at this session. My delegation will fully support such a draft resolution.

Still in Asia, the tension created by the division of Korea into two States persists and is symbolized by the demarcation line in Panmunjon. Appreciation of the contribution made by the peoples of North and South Korea to the work of the United Nations has often been expressed by all Member States, as it has of the contribution made by countries divided after the Second World War.

The profound aspirations and enterprising spirit of these peoples should lead the General Assembly and the Security Council to reconsider the question of their admission to membership of the Organization on the same footing as other divided

(Mrs. Ekila Liyonda, Zaire)

States, without prejudice to the consultations that are taking place between the two parties with a view to unification.

The delegation of Zaire cannot pass over in silence the disturbing problem of the Persian Gulf, where a fratricidal war continues between two non-aligned countries, Iran and Iraq, and is extending ever further beyond the regional dimension. The conflict between the two countries is becoming an oil war and is increasingly involving States flying the flags of other States in international waters.

The recent mission of the Secretary-General in the Persian Gulf pursuant to Security Council resolution 598 (1987), although it brought some hope of a peaceful settlement of the conflict, leaves the Assembly perplexed and must encourage all delegations to make use of their good offices with the countries concerned to bring to an end this war which has already lasted seven years.

In Central America, the efforts of the Contadora Group and the Support Group to bring peace and co-operation to the region deserve to be encouraged by all States.

Having reviewed the political situation and the problems of the day, we turn to economic problems. In recent years the world economic situation has been marked by a slowdown in the world economy. World production increased by only 3 per cent in 1986, as compared with 3.4 per cent in 1985 and 4.5 per cent in 1984. World production per capita increased by about 1 per cent, which is half the average increase in the 1970s.

The world economic situation was characterized in 1986 by sharp fluctuations in terms of trade caused by unprecedented fluctuations in the prices of the principal commodities produced by Zaire and in the exchange rates of currencies.

The total foreign debt of developing countries is now almost \$1,000 billion, and the ratio of debt-servicing payments and export earnings of the group of developing countries as a whole reached a record level in 1986.

(Mrs. Ekila Liyonda, Zaire)

Interest payments by developing countries to service their foreign debt, which amounted to more than \$65 billion in 1986, have continued to restrict their ability to import and to develop, while the net transfer of resources from developing to developed countries has risen to some \$24 billion for the second year running.

This sombre picture reveals to the international community the outrageous disparities between developing and industrialized countries. The latter have continued to enjoy a generally satisfactory rate of economic growth.

My delegation feels that implementation of the programmes of the United Nations Development Decades, the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development and the resolutions adopted at the seventh United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) call for a substantial transfer of resources from both the private and the public sector to the developing countries to finance their development and a satisfactory settlement of the problem of the foreign debt of those countries.

My delegation thanks all the creditor countries, and especially Canada, which has agreed either to cancel our public debts or to reschedule some of them.

Zaire will work with all those of good will for the establishment of a genuine policy of good-neighbourliness and co-operation, not only with the States of central Africa to create viable economic opportunities for the peoples of the region, but also with all States that cherish peace and justice, to ensure the victory of international co-operation.

Zaire shares the preoccupation of the United Nations with the maintenance of peace and is firmly devoted to the ideals and work of the Organization, from which it has greatly benefited in the matter of its unity and the strengthening of its independence. The best demonstration of this devotion is provided by our conduct,

(Mrs. Ekila Liyonda, Zaire)

which conforms to the principles of mutual respect between States, the sovereign equality of States, non-interference in the internal affairs of other States and respect for territorial integrity.

The unanimity of those who have spoken in this Hall in support of peace is proof of the incontestable determination of all Member States to live together in harmony, tranquillity and security. My delegation appeals to States Members of the United Nations to commit themselves to ensuring world peace.

I wish the forty-second session of the General Assembly every success in its work.

Mr. CHOUDHURY (Bangladesh) (spoke in Bengali; English text furnished by the delegation): Mr. President, it is a marvellous feeling, one of deep gratification, to be able to address so illustrious a successor as you. For me to hand over the gavel to a person of such experience was both a pleasure and a privilege. Your election is a manifestation of the high esteem in which you are held. This recognition is most appropriate in view of your many contributions to the cause of peace, progress and multilateral co-operation. It is an honour well earned. May I offer you the assurance of my delegation's complete co-operation in the discharge of your onerous functions.

Bangladesh is deeply appreciative of the significant contribution being made by our Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, to the effectiveness of the world body. His reappointment to a further term was a most well-deserved tribute to his dedication and commitment to the United Nations and its lofty ideals. He has earned the gratitude and respect of the international community by his humane attitude and deep understanding of global problems. We assure him of our continued full support and co-operation. I am positive the new Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly Affairs, Mr. Joseph Verner Reed, a capable diplomat of charming disposition, and his staff will be to you, Sir, a perennial source of support when you need it.

The United Nations - a product of our relentless search for peace, security and development in our times and a symbol of our desire to banish forever the pangs of poverty, hunger, war and illiteracy - is a sturdy monument to the values of human civilization. The hundred million people of Bangladesh, under the bold and dynamic leadership of President Hussain Muhammad Ershad, believe that to be so. Our unflinching and abiding commitment to this Organization is based on that belief. We are happy to see signs of the restoration of global confidence in this institution. We trust that the worst is over for the "last hope of mankind" and

(Mr. Choudhury, Bangladesh)

that the years ahead will bring in newer assurances for the effective functioning of the United Nations system.

Bangladesh has been playing an active, constructive and purposeful role in the international arena despite the many and varied constraints it confronts. Our activities in this sphere are guided by basic foreign policy objectives: first, to consolidate and safeguard our independence and sovereignty; secondly, to develop friendly bilateral, regional and international co-operation; and, thirdly, to co-operate with the global community in promoting the cause of peace, freedom and development. In pursuing these objectives, we adhere strictly and with scrupulous respect to the principles of sovereign equality of all nations, non-interference in the internal affairs of other States, peaceful settlement of all disputes, and the right of every nation to determine its own social, economic and political system.

Those are the principles upon which our policies are based. Those are the values that determine our external expression.

It is because of the United Nations that the world community today gives high priority to the cause of development, which in its simplest form means improving the quality of life of all people in the world, particularly those in developing countries such as our country. The United Nations has been actively involved in the process of our development since the very beginning of our nationhood. The responsiveness of the United Nations system to the needs of a country such as Bangladesh has been proved time and time again. Members are aware that my country has recently been in the grip of a devastating and unprecedented flood. Many lives have been lost and hundreds of thousands of people have been rendered homeless. Standing crops were washed away. We are grateful to the United Nations system, its agencies and the international community for a timely response with support and succour. Perhaps it is time we devised a method whereby our contemporary capabilities could be marshalled to predict and control human sufferings from such

(Mr. Choudhury, Bangladesh)

natural calamities. In this connection may I draw the attention of the General Assembly to the resolution it adopted in 1985 on "Long-term and effective solution of the problems caused by natural disasters in Bangladesh" (resolution 40/231). It is important that the international community give serious thought to the main focus of that resolution by the United Nations system to consider a long-term and effective solution of this problem. We look forward to the guidance of the Secretary-General in this regard.

Copies of the text of my statement are being distributed, wherein representatives will find the rest of what I wish to say. Mindful as I am of the financial constraints of this august body, and of the valuable time of representatives, I should like to conclude at this point.

Mr. CLARK (Canada): I should like to begin, Sir, by extending my and

Canada's congratulations and appreciation to you on your assumption of the responsibilities and office of the presidency of the General Assembly.

A year ago the atmosphere in the Assembly was heavy with a sense of crisis. The financial shortfall of the United Nations, serious in itself, was also a symptom of a deeper worry about the very existence of the Organization.

Canada, and other friends of the United Nations, used this rostrum to call for reform. I am pleased today to note that substantial reform has begun. That is both a tribute to the men and women who make this Organization work and testimony to the recognition by most nations that a strong United Nations is essential to world peace. We are especially impressed by the United Nations resolve to extend reform beyond the institutions in New York to United Nations economic and social institutions throughout the world.

For our part, Canada made a point of paying our 1987 assessment fully and early. We hope other nations will quickly pay their current and past assessments. Those that call for internal reform have a particular obligation and opportunity to encourage it once it begins. That good example would increase the pressure upon other Powers whose contributions are consistently delinquent.

During the past year this real internal reform has been matched by solid progress on many of the major issues of concern to the United Nations. Sometimes that progress occurred outside this multilateral Organization - as, for example, in the historic breakthrough on an arms agreement between the United States and the Soviet Union, in the steady pressure against apartheid mounted by the Commonwealth, and in the initiative towards peace launched by the five Presidents of Central America. But in many other cases the world's movement forward was rooted here. Those cases are worth enumerating.

(Mr. Clark, Canada)

In the ongoing war between Iran and Iraq, Security Council resolution 598 (1987) reflects a welcome political will and unanimity in the Security Council, and the Secretary-General is to be commended for his patient, persistent mediation. The Secretary-General's mission was not as successful as we all had hoped. And the speech this morning by the President of Iran can only be characterized as destructive and deeply disappointing. Therefore the Security Council should be reconvened to take the next step. Canada would fully support implementation of the axiomatic second half of resolution 598 (1987) - the application of sanctions.

At the Seventh United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the consensus statement on trade, debt and commodities may presage a new era of co-operation between developed and developing countries. UNCTAD VII was an example of an international conference for whose outcome the prognosis was uniformly gloomy. The doubters were wrong. The United Nations scored a major success.

The special session on Africa is beginning to yield concrete results, albeit there is a long way yet to go. The international community clearly now recognizes that the majority of African countries are making great efforts to turn their economies around. But the international community must equally recognize that the debt situation for many African countries is desperate and must be addressed in new and innovative ways or the entire recovery programme may collapse.

In that context, we welcome the Secretary-General's appointment of the Advisory Panel on Resource Flows. We anxiously await its report. As the representative of Zaire has just indicated, Canada is so concerned about this issue that at the Francophone Summit we announced the cancellation of official development assistance debt for several countries in francophone Africa. Next month, at the Commonwealth Conference, we will do the same for countries of anglophone Africa.

(Mr. Clark, Canada)

The Brundtland Commission has produced a blunt and clear report on the urgency of protecting our resources and environment. In that spirit, in Montreal last week nations signed an ozone Treaty controlling the emissions of chloroflurocarbons. Dr. Mostafa Tolba, Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, called it

"the first truly global treaty that offers protection to every single human being on this planet."

Our Government believes that Montreal Treaty will serve as a model for future international agreements on the environment.

The Conference on disarmament and development, which has just concluded, yielded a remarkable consensus document, holding disarmament and development as essential to international security. It graphically demonstrated the capacity of the Organization to find agreement in the most complex fields.

The World Health Organization is recognized as a crucial resource for gathering the statistics and carrying out the planning that are necessary as countries struggle to master the world-wide AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome) epidemic.

Within its own doors, the United Nations has made social strides in another field: the equal rights of women. In 41 years there had not been even one woman permanently appointed as an Under-Secretary-General. Now there are three, and we in Canada take particular satisfaction that the first woman appointed is an outstanding Canadian, Madame Therese Paquet-Sevigny, Under-Secretary-General in the Department of Public Information.

(spoke in French)

There have been other achievements in the past year: the successful Vienna International Conference on Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking; the coming into

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force of the Convention against torture; the International Maritime Organization draft convention on maritime security; and the progress made on verification by the United Nations Disarmament Commission, with which Canada is proud to be associated. This is proof of the worth and vitality of the United Nations and clear evidence of the advantages to be derived from continuing to confront the world's problems together.

The great purpose of the United Nations is to extend the reach of peace and justice in the world. Sometimes, as in the war between Iran and Iraq, its role becomes most acute when all other efforts have failed. In other cases it can encourage regional initiatives that may lead to peace where peace is threatened, or focus international attention upon injustice that must end. I want today to speak of one initiative that we must encourage and one injustice that we must end.

(Mr. Clark, Canada)

The initiative is in Central America, where the presidents of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua have joined together in a genuine effort by all parties to settle their differences peacefully. The surprisingly positive outcome of the Guatemala summit meeting was the result of many factors. They included the foundations laid by Contadora and the Contadora Support Groups, the preparatory work of the Central America countries and the concessions made at the summit by each of the five presidents. That achievement was applauded by us all. But it was only the first of many steps along a difficult road.

(continued in English)

Canadian aid to Central America has been steadily increasing, as has our funding and our acceptance of refugees. We have expressed our view that the root problem in Central America is poverty, not ideology; that the real need is development assistance, not military activity, and that intervention by outside Powers will only aggravate the tension. We have supported the Contadora process and have made available to Contadora the expertise Canadians have acquired in the techniques of peace-keeping.

Immediately after the Guatemala summit two senior officials of our Government visited Central America to discuss what more Canada might do. I will be visiting the region myself later this autumn.

Canada supports the initiatives of the Central America presidents. We are prepared to provide our expertise in the design and development of verification and control mechanisms which, once peace is possible, can help it endure. The disputes must be resolved by those actually involved in the conflict, but Canada is prepared to contribute to that process in any direct and practical way open to us.

The injustice to which I referred earlier is apartheid. Canada's position is clear and on the record. We have acted upon all of the sanctions recommended by the Nassau Conference of the Commonwealth Heads of Government. We have imposed a

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ban both on new investment in South Africa and re-investment of profits. We have banned the importation of coal, iron and steel. We have banned the promotion of tourism and ended air links. In the first six months of 1987 Canada reduced its imports from South Africa by 51 per cent. Furthermore, we have made it clear that, if other measures fail, we are prepared to end our economic and diplomatic relations with South Africa. We are helping the victims of apartheid with scholarships, legal aid and other assistance. We contribute substantially to the development of the front-line States, both bilaterally and through the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference (SADCC). We apply our influence, whenever it is effective, to build the pressures against apartheid.

The Prime Minister of Canada met with the leaders of Zimbabwe and Zambia and Botswana in Victoria Falls in February, and I visited southern Africa six weeks ago, a visit which included a meeting in Pretoria with the South African Foreign Minister. Oliver Tambo visited Ottawa a month ago and met with our Prime Minister and other Canadian leaders. Early in September it was our honour to act as host to the second summit of La Francophonie in Quebec City, which condemned apartheid and established a scholarship programme for black South Africans. Next month, in Vancouver, we shall act as host to the heads of Government of the Commonwealth, the international family to which South Africa once belonged.

We are at a critical stage in the campaign to end apartheid. There must be no relenting in that campaign, no pause in the pressure, because a pause might suggest that apartheid is acceptable, and it is not. The pressure against apartheid must continue and increase, and the challenge, in the United Nations and elsewhere, is to find peaceful and effective means to build that pressure. It is not enough to ask others to act.

It is Canada's view that the sanctions imposed upon South Africa have been effective, both economically and psychologically. While the Government of South

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Africa has reacted by limiting liberty even more, growing numbers of individual South Africans have reached out for reform, in meetings in Lusaka and Dakar and in the private contacts, which we must multiply.

The instability in southern Africa is both an ally and a product of apartheid. One of the most wrenching conversations I have had was with Canadian aid workers in Mozambique who fear that the projects they build to help people will become targets of terrorists and put at risk the very lives they are working to improve. An essential part of the challenge in southern Africa is thus to bring more stability to the front-line States.

Before I conclude my remarks I want to applaud again the new vitality that has been injected into the global arms-control and disarmament process through the important announcement that the United States and the Soviet Union have agreed in principle to eliminate intermediate and short-range nuclear missiles. Radical reduction in nuclear arms has always been the core of Canadian policy in this area. We should celebrate the fact that this is the first time a prospective agreement will actually eliminate nuclear weapons. That is just the initial step in a long and difficult process, but, with continued determination and resolve, we can hope to move to agreements on strategic weapons, on chemical weapons, on conventional weapons, and on a comprehensive test ban.

I began by talking about the atmosphere of crisis which was so pervasive as we met last year. Today, we must all surely take satisfaction from the atmosphere of hope that surrounds us: hope, because both globally and regionally there is a recognition that a peaceful and secure world is of universal benefit and worthy of relentless pursuit; hope, because the social and economic evils that beset us are being addressed in a meaningful way; and, finally, hope, because this Organization of ours, the United Nations, is reasserting its capacity to play the central role that it was created and designed to play in dealing with the ills that still plague

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the international community. The United Nations agenda stretches before us - Afghanistan, Kampuchea, Cyprus, peace in the Middle East between Israel and the Arab States, an end to terrorism, and the fundamental human struggle to eradicate hunger and injustice. Somehow, it feels as though we are closer this year than last to tackling that agenda.

Mr. MALMIERCA-PEOLI (Cuba) (interpretation from Spanish): My delegation expresses its warmest congratulations to you, Sir, a worthy representative of the German Democratic Republic - a bastion of peace and socialism in Europe - on your assumption of the presidency of this important forty-second session of the General Assembly.

We have all heard with great satisfaction about the positive results of the talks held in Washington between the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the USSR, Comrade Eduard Shevardnadze, and the Secretary of State of the United States, Mr. George Shultz. The progress made towards an agreement on the banning of medium- and short-range missiles by the United States and the USSR deserves our fervent best wishes. It is the result of the efforts made for many years by the USSR - and especially of the initiatives of the General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Comrade Mikhail Gorbachev - and the efforts of the peace-loving forces to halt the arms race and eliminate the dangers of nuclear confrontation.

A long time has passed since the signing of the last disarmament agreement, and we look forward to the early completion of the agreement to which I have just referred, so that it may initiate a process to end the arms race, a process for peace and life.

The meeting held in the Federal Republic of Germany between the President of the Council of State and Ministers of the German Democratic Republic, Comrade Erich Honecker, and the Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany, Mr. Helmut Kohl, constitutes a meaningful expression of a new moment of hope in our international relations and of a desire to initiate a new trend towards dialogue, understanding and co-operation. This is a time for advancing negotiations to solve the conflicts and disputes of recent years, which have created hotbeds of tension jeopardizing the future of mankind.

(Mr. Malmierca-Peoli, Cuba)

Sadly, in a few days our America will mark the twentieth anniversary of the death of an illustrious son of our continent, whom the people of Cuba have the fortune of counting as one of their best offspring and from whose legacy of ideas and action we have benefited. I should like to recall the following paragraph of the outstanding statement delivered by Commander Ernesto Che Guevara to the General Assembly at its session 23 years ago:

"We realize that today the Assembly is not in a position to demand explanations for ... acts; yet it must be clearly established that the Government of the United States is not the guardian of liberty, but rather that it is perpetuating the exploitation and oppression of many of the world's peoples and of many of its own citizens". (Official Records of the General Assembly, Nineteenth Session, 1299th plenary meeting, para. 135)

That assertion was an expression of its time. The reality is that the trends of the policies of successive United States Administrations - zigzagging but not changing in their essence - have not differed in any way from that definition, which has become even more valid in recent years.

Between 1981 and 1985, the present United States Administration managed, at a specific historical juncture, to implement a brutal and aggressive policy aimed at imposing contested imperialist values through the use and threat of force and the obstruction of the negotiation process, thereby preventing progress on disarmament agreements and the solution of regional problems, and with the overt purpose of imposing its military superiority and hegemony over the socialist community.

Reagan, in a unique and exemplary manner worthy of better endeavours, implemented and followed the essence, spirit and letter of the Santa Fe programme. This May 1980 Santa Fe programme undoubtedly represented the philosophy of pillage, the expansion of so-called spheres of influence and the prevalence of force in

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international relations. The direct reflection of this policy was soon evidenced in the arms race. Between 1980 and 1986 the military budget of the United States doubled. In essence, the Santa Fe document stated that "war and not peace is the rule in international affairs", that "detente is death", and that the United States did not have to struggle to preserve the status quo but, rather, had to struggle to improve its relative position in all spheres of influence.

Reagan, with an apparent halo of success - having obtained barely 26.7 per cent of the votes in the United States - intoxicated by power and the prospect of playing a leading role in history, launched a truly anachronistic and senseless crusade, which was tolerated or supported by his main allies. Important agreements that had been reached as a result of perseverance, consistency and realism in approaching the international situation were denounced or rejected - for example, the significant SALT II agreements. Tensions in international relations increased, thereby adding fuel to the fire of various international conflicts. Reagan proclaimed and exalted his alliance with dictatorial régimes and with the supporters of the most ignoble causes in southern Africa and the Middle East, in Central America and the Caribbean, in the southern part of the American continent. In so doing, he stopped all criticism and condemnation of human-rights violations by his allies, for the purpose of protecting an alliance devoid of principles or decency.

Anyone who took up arms against the independence of peoples had the support of the United States. Whenever a banner was hoisted in favour of independence and social justice, the United States tried to force it down. Accordingly, it increased its acts of aggression against Nicaragua, its threats against Cuba and its support of the Zionists in the Middle East, as well as its close solidarity with the racists in Pretoria and with the Savimbi and Renamo bandits in Angola and

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Mozambique. It closed ranks with British imperialists in the military occupation of the Malvinas Islands - which jeopardized the credibility of the Rio Treaty - and invaded the tiny island of Grenada, in its best gunboat style. In that period, the Israeli invasion of Lebanon and the siege of Beirut took place; prominent international leaders such as Indira Gandhi and Olof Palme were assassinated; the USSR suffered in a very short time the loss of its top State and Party leaders, Comrade Leonid Brezhnev and his successors, Comrades Andropov and Chernienko. The summit conferences of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Organization of African Unity could not be held as scheduled.

The Reagan Administration, imbued with a spirit of victory, its eyes and ears closed to world realities, tried to demonstrate that "in war there is no substitute for victory", in conformity with Mr. Reagan's view that the mistake of the Viet Nam war was not to have waged it but to have lost it.

Such triumphalism met with serious obstacles at the end of 1986, when Reagan suffered major defeats inside and outside the United States which shook his already dubious credibility and his unquestionable power. Early in October he suffered his greatest setback in foreign policy - soon to be more than surpassed - when, respectively, the House of Representatives and the Senate, the latter still with a Republican majority, overruled the presidential veto of economic sanctions against South Africa. That veto was inspired by the fallacy of "constructive engagement", or "silent diplomacy", proclaimed by Reagan. In the November legislative elections, the Democrats regained the majority in the Senate and strengthened their control over the House of Representatives, despite Reagan's personal efforts, his 40,000 kilometres of travel and his visits to 18 States. That significant defeat coincided with huge budget and trade deficits and the forecasts of a forthcoming economic recession. In November the so-called Irangate and Contragate manure bomb

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exploded, with brutal virulence. The final act of this tragicomedy has yet to be played out.

At the same time, there were major political processes and developments aimed at the relaxation of international tensions and at the opening of a new era of understanding among States - although many of the processes had originated years before, and some had found a sympathetic hearing in the General Assembly.

Let us recall some of those milestones.

Addressing the thirty-fourth session of the General Assembly in his capacity as Chairman and on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, Commander Fidel Castro presented the all-important demands of the underdeveloped world. He said at that time:

"... unequal exchange is ruining and impoverishing our peoples and must cease. Inflation, which is being exported to us, is impoverishing our peoples and must cease. Protectionism impoverishes our peoples and must cease. The existing imbalance in the exploitation of sea resources is abusive and must be abolished. The financial resources received by the developing countries are insufficient and must be increased. Arms expenditures are irrational; they must cease and the funds thus released must be used to finance development. The international monetary system prevailing today is bankrupt and must be replaced. The debts of the least developed countries and of those in a disadvantageous position are burdens which are impossible to bear and to which no solution can be found and they must be cancelled. Indebtedness oppresses the rest of the developing countries economically and must be relieved. The wide economic gap between the developed countries and the countries seeking development, instead of diminishing, is being widened and must be closed ...".

(A/34/PV.31, pp. 42 and 43-45)

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Eight years have passed since then. The only thing that has changed is that the unequal exchange is even more unequal; the ruin of our peoples as a result of inflation and protectionism is worsening; the imbalance in the exploitation of the resources of the sea is abusive; the allocation of financial resources to the developing countries is diminishing and is tragically insufficient; the international monetary system remains bankrupt; the debt of the relatively least developed countries has long since gone beyond rationality and simply cannot be paid. In short, the economic gap between developed and developing countries is wider and has grown unbridgeable.

When the Contadora Group was established in January 1983 it was like a wind of hope amidst the imperial storm. Its aim was to contribute to a peaceful, political, negotiated solution to the Central American conflict. It was later joined by the Support Group and was recently enhanced by the important Esquipulas II agreements.

The seventh summit Conference of Non-Aligned Countries took place in New Delhi in March 1983. That summit conveyed a clear message, and took a firm anti-imperialist, anti-colonialist stand against zionism, racism and apartheid, in favour of peace and of the peaceful negotiated solution of international disputes, against the arms race and the rule of force, and in support of a new international economic order.

Also in March, but March 1985, Mikhail Gorbachev was elected General-Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. He gave the socialist society of that great country new ideas and a realistic and dynamic stand in the present world, with new approaches and methods for the creative application of the Soviet principles of peace, disarmament and coexistence under present conditions.

Very soon the influence of solid proposals oriented towards disarmament and the establishment of a climate of détente, of international safeguards and

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security - in other words, a climate of peaceful coexistence - was felt. Among them are the Vladivostok proposals and the August 1985 unilateral moratorium, broadened at the Reykjavik meeting of October 1986, where Comrade Mikhail Gorbachev proposed, among other important ideas, the working out of a draft agreement aimed at reducing strategic weapons by not less than 50 per cent and eliminating them completely during this century.

However, Reagan's stubbornness in attempting to perpetuate the strategic defence initiative, which includes research and testing in outer space and opens a new era in the arms race, frustrated the possibility of reaching agreement at that epoch-making meeting. But we should not be pessimistic. The Reykjavik meeting proved that, at this crucial time for mankind, dialogue is both possible and necessary and that open, realistic dialogue not aimed at the military superiority of one side over the other may lead to agreement.

In June 1986 the International Court of Justice decided in favour of ending military activities against Nicaragua.

The Organization of African Unity (OAU) summit conferences resumed. The chairmanship passed from Abdou Diouf of Senegal in 1985, to Denis Sassou-Nguesso of Congo, Chairman for 1986, and recently to Kenneth Kaunda, President of Zambia and current Chairman of that outstanding organization.

The eighth summit Conference of Non-Aligned Countries, held in Zimbabwe in September 1986, confirmed the firmness of its principles in the struggle against imperialism, colonialism, neo-colonialism, against racism, including zionism, and apartheid. The summit, which took place in a country bordering the racist Pretoria régime, constituted an exceptional expression of the international will to eliminate apartheid and attain the independence of Namibia. It also gave new impetus to the struggle for international peace and security, for the establishment

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of a new international economic order, for disarmament and for the development of third-world countries.

Since the Harare summit Conference, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries has continued its intense activity, focusing on the issues of greatest importance and tension, namely the peace message addressed to the General-Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Comrade Gorbachev, by the Heads of State or Government and its delivery to the Government of the United States; the New Delhi meeting of Heads of State or Government of the Africa Fund Committee and its appeal for strengthened support for the struggle of the front-line States and liberation movements in southern Africa; the decision of the extraordinary meeting of the Co-ordinating Bureau on the situation in Latin America and the Caribbean, and, most recently, the visit to Nicaragua of the Foreign Minister of Zimbabwe during the meeting of the Contadora and Support Group Foreign Ministers, to reiterate our solidarity in support of a peaceful solution of the Central American conflict and our rejection of the United States aggression and interference in the region; the solidarity, expressed at the meeting of the Committee of Nine on Palestine, with the struggle of the Palestinian people to exercise their rights and establish an independent State in their homeland, and in favour of the early convening of an international conference on peace in the Middle East; and the Brioni meeting of non-aligned Mediterranean States and its appeal for the strengthening of co-operation and peace in the region.

In June 1987, at the Extraordinary Ministerial Conference of Non-Aligned Countries on South-South Co-operation, the Pyongyang Declaration and Plan of Action for economic co-operation was signed; simultaneously, at Harare, the Conference of Ministers of Information advocated the establishment of a new information order.

On 7 August, the five Central American Presidents signed the epoch-making Esquipulas II agreements with an express will to search for peace in the region.

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Between 1981 and 1986 - as evidence of the rejection by nations of the United States policy of force - the voting pattern of all regional groups in the United Nations showed less coincidence with United States votes. The number of Member States whose votes coincided with those of the United States in more than 60 per cent of the time declined by more than half. That is, only half the countries which voted with the United States more than 60 per cent of the time in 1980 did so in 1986 - and their number was small. Moreover, at the forty-first session only 10 countries voted with the United States more than 60 per cent of the time.

The deterioration in the living conditions of the peoples of the third world, the increasing erosion of their economies and the worsening inequalities in the terms of trade in the Western industrialized world continue their galloping course. The international economic situation, particularly that of third-world countries, has become untenable. The low prices of major commodities; the protectionist measures applied by highly industrialized countries; the escalating increase in external debt and interest rates; and the curtailment of external financing and the conditionality of lending by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, including supervision of the domestic policies of recipient countries - all paint a gloomy picture of the prospects of underdeveloped countries.

Moreover, the spiralling arms race has further aggravated this dramatic economic picture and the prospects for development.

In late August and early September, the International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development was held. It affirmed the need to seek a solution to such an urgent situation. At the same time the idea that there will be no peace without development is, in Cartesian language, an obvious and inescapable truth. Cuba welcomes the positive results of that Conference, which, though marked by the absence of the United States, which bears principal

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responsibility for the arms race, nevertheless engaged in a complex, delicate and constructive negotiating process in which recognition of the inevitable link between disarmament and development and of the urgent need to devote resources released by disarmament immediately to development prevailed.

In recent years, our peoples have waged a prodigious struggle against the unbearable burden of external debt. Commander Fidel Castro, in particular, has courageously and decisively denounced that situation internationally. He has demonstrated objectively and unquestionably that the external debt is unpayable and that writing it off would not suffice to eliminate the misfortunes of our peoples unless such action was linked to the establishment of a new international economic order and to the necessary relationship between debt and disarmament.

(Mr. Malmierca-Peoli, Cuba)

Many meetings attended by thousands of delegates from the most representative sectors of Latin America and the Caribbean were held in Havana in recent years with the purpose of considering and discussing, with vigour and courage, the external debt problem: economists, jurists, workers, students, journalists, women, the military, priests, peasants, statesmen and personalities in the fields of the arts and sciences with profound knowledge of the Latin American reality and actors of the drama our region is enduring participated in those meetings, which were convened in the light of historic inequalities brought about by centuries of imperialist, colonialist and neo-colonialist exploitation.

As this brief summary shows, even if a number of particularly relevant events are necessarily missing, these are times of hope: the seemingly successful drive of the Reagan Administration has come to a halt and fallen back; the fruitful activities of important international organizations have strengthened and a climate of negotiations is felt in Europe, Central America, southern Africa, Afghanistan and South-East Asia. We should do our utmost to keep up this momentum.

The United Nations should contribute with all its influence to achieving peace and political solutions to conflicts and disputes among nations. The efforts undertaken by the Secretary-General, Javier Perez de Cuellar, for contributing to putting an end to the fratricidal war between Iraq and Iran are a good example of this.

The world is facing the dilemma of peace and war. We have no right to ignore the outcry of our peoples; we have to prepare ourselves to live in peace. We have to create mechanisms which inspire and ensure confidence among peoples, security among States and peaceful and productive coexistence among nations. We have to lay the foundations for future relations so that the generations of the twenty-first century do not live in shame of their parents' legacy.

(Mr. Malmierca-Peoli, Cuba)

Twenty-five years ago next October, the world was on the verge of a nuclear war. A quarter of a century later, notwithstanding the severe economic blockade imposed upon us by imperialism, notwithstanding all types of aggressions, including attempts against the lives of our leaders, notwithstanding the enormous resources used against Cuba, our revolution has been and will continue to be an unassailable bastion of Latin American dignity, firmness and fortitude.

When the major contributor to the United Nations withholds its contribution and does not fulfil its obligations under the pretext of differences between the executive and legislative powers, it is really attempting to impose its interests on the United Nations, thus impairing the interest of the great majority of the Members of the Organization. In these circumstances, General Assembly resolution 41/213 cannot be implemented. We must demand that the United States cease this niggardly policy.

There is no doubt that such a policy of force and blackmail has not succeeded, thanks to the unity and cohesion of dignified and independent countries, which allows us to say that multilateralism - the United Nations - continues to show, with commendable impetus, our positions, our rights and our demands in the pursuit of a world without war, of equality and equitable peace for all.

We welcome today the negotiating will expressed by the five Central American Presidents, as reflected in the Esquipulas II Agreements, even in the face of resistance by certain circles in the present United States Administration, which attempt to maintain aggression, blockade and destabilization against the legitimate Government of Nicaragua.

Cuba considers that the independent attitude of the countries signatories of the Guatemala Agreement is a new event in the history of the region. The huge efforts exerted over the years by the Contadora and Support Groups in pursuit of a

(Mr. Malmierca-Peoli, Cuba)

Latin American solution to the serious Central American crisis contributed considerably to that.

We must pool our efforts and take concrete actions in order to achieve the implementation of those important agreements and be determined to adopt necessary measures for the economic reconstruction of Central American countries. We must continue to support the efforts of the Contadora and Support Groups in favour of peace in Central America.

Nicaragua has the right to live in peace and is entitled to exercise its sovereign right to choose the options it deems most appropriate to satisfy its national needs. We must support those who struggle in favour of liberty and dignity in El Salvador and in every corner of a continent where the ideas of Bolivar, Marti and Juarez are increasingly reaffirmed.

The record of these years reaffirms that the unity, firmness and awareness of the problems and of our strength to tackle them successfully is an undeniable fact. Today we may assert that the policy of confrontation is undergoing serious setbacks and we witness certain negotiating trends that, although they are slow, are making progress. This proves that our peoples are able to make their desires for peace prevail.

We welcome negotiation efforts, such as the process aimed at achieving the dismantling of medium-range missiles in Europe, and the national reconciliation plan chartered by the Government of Afghanistan and its contacts with the United Nations Secretary-General in the search of a just and equitable solution, which will guarantee peace and security in the area.

The Indochinese peoples in South-East Asia are working hard to find formulas leading to a peaceful negotiated process beneficial to the entire region through a flexible and constructive dialogue.

(Mr. Malmierca-Peoli, Cuba)

We support the policy of national reconciliation formulated by the People's Republic of Kampuchea in the pursuit of peace for all its people, without distinction of class, ideology, ethnicity or religion.

On southern Africa, as expressed on 1 August in Havana, Cuba and Angola are in a position to make their common position flexible on the basis of the principles of the November 1984 Platform and its annex, with a view to promoting the constructive aim of a just and honourable agreement which may bring about the independence of Namibia, the security of Angola and peace for all States in southern Africa.

Cuba will maintain its stand of internationalist support and solidarity with the Government of the People's Republic of Angola in accordance with the Agreements signed with the Government of that sister nation. Cuba shall contribute to the maintenance of stability and prevention of any aggression against the People's Republic of Angola and, in an active and effective way, shall work for real peace in the region. Essential for that purpose are the independence of Namibia, under the leadership of the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO), its sole and legitimate representative, and the definitive elimination of the ignominious apartheid régime.

We must redouble our efforts and render our solidarity to the people of South Africa for the total elimination of apartheid; to the people of Puerto Rico for the achievement of their freedom and independence; for the convening of the peace conference on the Middle East with the participation of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO); and for the solution of the long and bloody conflict regarding the recognition of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the establishment of its own State. There will be no solution to the Middle East conflict unless the Palestinian problem is solved, under the leadership of its sole and legitimate representative, the PLO. We should continue to support the just cause of the Lebanese people for its national unity and peace, the security of its

(Mr. Malmierca-Peoli, Cuba)

people and respect for its territorial integrity and non-aligned status. We support demands for the withdrawal of the Moroccan troops and administration from Western Saharan territory as the essential condition to hold the referendum on the self-determination of the Sahraoui people; for Argentine sovereignty over the Malvinas Islands; for the aspiration of the Comoro Islands to recover sovereignty over Mayotte and for the return of Madagascar's rights over the Malagasy Islands of Glorieuses, Juan de Nova, Europa and Bassas da India. We should provide firm and active support to the people of Cyprus, a non-aligned country struggling to defend its independence, national unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity. We support initiatives to convene an international conference, under the auspices of the United Nations, which may lead to progress towards a solution to the situation that now endangers its territorial integrity and national existence.

The Indian Ocean demands a greater will from the States responsible for its militarization in order that they reverse their nefarious policy. Meanwhile, we must continue to exert efforts for the early realization of the desire to transform the Indian Ocean into a zone of peace. Contrary to our long-standing endeavours to demilitarize the Indian Ocean, we witness with shock the spread of military forces in the Persian Gulf, which jeopardize its security and pose a serious threat to security and peace in the area and world-wide. Let us increase our demands for the elimination of all military presence from that sensitive area.

We must recall the situation prevailing in the trusteeship of the Pacific Islands, where the Government of the United States in an arbitrary, unilateral and illegal manner has sought to consolidate and perpetuate its colonial presence.

We denounce attempts to prevent the independence and sovereignty of so-called Micronesia.

(Mr. Malmierca-Peoli, Cuba)

We reiterate our categorical support for the legitimate Bolivian demand to recover direct and useful access to the Pacific Ocean, with full sovereignty over that access. We denounce the absence of will on the part of the Chilean régime to continue the negotiations initiated between the two Governments to find a just solution.

We demand strict compliance with the 1977 Torrijos-Carter treaty on the Panama Canal, and reject manoeuvres by the Government of the United States to violate it and perpetuate its domination and military presence in the isthmus.

We reiterate our firm solidarity with the sisterly Democratic People's Republic of Korea, arduously struggling for the realization of its people's desire for peaceful reunification and the withdrawal of United States occupation troops from the south of the peninsula.

We support the position of the People's Democratic Republic of Korea that Korea must not enter the United Nations in the present state of partition, and that entry must wait until it succeeds in reuniting the country. We also support the co-sponsorship of the forthcoming Olympic Games by both States, as an instrument of unity and peace between nations.

We advocate a speedy solution of the regrettable conflict between Iran and Iraq, which should never have begun, and which continues to cause irreparable losses to both peoples. We support the redoubling of efforts by the United Nations to find a peaceful solution, just and honourable for both sides, thus ending this fratricidal war, which has been going on now for more than seven years.

We are firmly convinced that it is more than ever imperative to co-ordinate our action, our unity and our struggle to impose what we desire: détente, dialogue, peace, and development.

From the very dawn of the Revolution my Government and people, have suffered the harassment, blockade and aggression of a powerful neighbour. We have learned

(Mr. Malmierca-Peoli, Cuba)

to live with imperialist aggression and pressure. Although that was not our wish, it is the reality we have had to face. We stand for peace and negotiation in international relations, especially in our continent and with our neighbours. We have never practised an aggressive or hostile policy. Our sole "sin" may have been the exercise of the right of our people - enshrined in the United Nations Charter and in any international forum - freely to choose its own system and its own principles of genuine national independence.

Benito Juarez, an illustrious Latin American leader, said, "Respect for the right of others is peace." We regret that the Government of our powerful northern neighbour does not apply this thinking in its international relations.

We have resisted, and shall continue to resist. We have seen different administrations come and go, while our Revolution has developed and become stronger, hoping that the good sense, wisdom and genuine tradition of the American people will prevail, and that the need for coexistence will be recognized.

We have learned the importance of unity and cohesion in order to resist and overcome. Today, more than ever before, in view of international initiatives seeking paths to negotiation and a new state of relations, we reaffirm our permanent and irrevocable attachment to peace and coexistence.

Mr. NDINGA-OBA (Congo) (interpretation from French): The choice of you, Sir, at the beginning of this session to assume the important duties of President of the General Assembly at its forty-second session is a tribute not only to you as an experienced, well-informed diplomat, with qualities and merits recognized by all, but also to your country, the German Democratic Republic, whose aspirations and central position in Europe mark it out for the path of international peace and co-operation. It is a country with which Congo has excellent friendly relations.

(Mr. Ndinga-Oba, Congo)

I am pleased to offer you, Sir, the warmest congratulations of the Congolese delegation and to express our particular pleasure at seeing you preside over the work of this session. It goes without saying that my delegation will spare neither time nor effort in helping you discharge your important mandate.

I wish also on behalf of the Congolese delegation to thank and pay a tribute to your illustrious predecessor, Mr. Humayun Rasheed Choudhury, for the ability and dedication with which he presided over the previous session.

To the Secretary-General of our Organization, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, I present the greetings of the Congolese Government and its thanks for his co-operation and his kindness to us when Colonel Denis Sassou-Nguesso was Chairman of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). Indeed, thanks to the good understanding between them, co-operation between this world Organization and the Pan-African Organization increased in quality and effectiveness, to the benefit of our common goals.

Lastly, I wish to take this opportunity to welcome the appointment of Mr. Joseph Reed as Assistant Secretary-General for Political and General Assembly Affairs. His dynamism and ability will, I am sure, be a real asset to the Assembly and the Secretariat.

This forty-second session is beginning in an explosive and depressing international atmosphere - explosive because of an increase in hotbeds of tension; depressing because for most countries of the third world the economic crisis persists; inasmuch as the reorientation of economic policies and the specific measures taken have responded only partially to the need to check the disease.*

* Mr. Pinheiro (Portugal), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Ndinga-Oba, Congo)

The state of affairs that I have described illustrates disturbingly and irrefutably how meeting mankind's most immediate aspirations, particularly the aspirations for peace and security, demands a greater political will, a pooling of all possible efforts and energies, to ensure a stable strengthening of the ideals of the Charter of the United Nations and the promotion of their practical influence on the conduct of nations.

In that regard, I wish to share with the representatives of the international community present today some thoughts that inspired the people and Government of the People's Republic of the Congo in the light of lessons learned from the carrying out by our country and its President, His Excellency Denis Sassou-Nguesso, of an important mandate at the head of the OAU.

As President Denis Sassou-Nguesso has reaffirmed, the United Nations remains the irreplaceable, universal framework, which the world will always need, for assessing, identifying and settling problems involving coexistence on our planet - hence, the need constantly to have recourse to the United Nations and to make the principles of the Charter and the rule of law the mandatory basis for all action that may have international consequences.

Therefore, the financial crisis facing the United Nations is above all a crisis of confidence. The uncertainty to which it gives rise is merely a reflection of a posture that does not take into account the march of history, one that wishes to replace multilateralism by a bilateral - even unilateral - approach to the regulation of international affairs.

(Mr. Ndinga-Oba, Congo)

Today the frontiers of peace, security and development can be measured only in the constantly growing dimensions of mutual understanding and the extent of implementation of the principles of justice and equity in international relations. We also have to take into consideration the extent and diversity of the various individual experiences and situations, outside of models imposed by force, intolerance and threats.

We are therefore concerned with the situation in Latin America, Asia, the Middle East and, in particular, Africa, because of the crises which have crystallized in Namibia and South Africa and the critical economic situation in Africa as a whole. We know that the United Nations has studied these problems, but we fear that they may simply become part of the litany intoned at international conferences.

Central America is one of the areas of most acute tension in the world. At the eighth Summit Conference of non-aligned countries, last year in Harare the Heads of State and Government

"condemned the escalation of aggression, military attacks and other actions against Nicaragua's sovereignty, political independence, territorial integrity ..." (A/41/697, p. 104)

or that of other States of the region. In this context, it is more than ever necessary to stress that it is incumbent on all of us to follow with interest and to support the Contadora Group and the Support Group, in view of the praiseworthy efforts that they have been making recently to promote peace.

As we know, these efforts led to the adoption last August in Guatemala City of a peace plan which was accepted by all the parties concerned. In many respects it offers a real chance of resolving the misunderstandings that exist or might exist between States in the subregion. We trust that all other States will refrain from actions that might interfere with this peace process.

(Mr. Ndinga-Oba, Congo)

In South-East Asia, regarding Kampuchea, we venture to hope that the agreement signed on 29 July 1987 between the Vietnamese Foreign Minister, representing the countries of Indo-China, and the Indonesian Foreign Minister, representing the member countries of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), will be mutually respected, in the interests of the peoples of that part of Asia.

Today, all observers agree that there is some evolution in the situation in Afghanistan and that the various parties concerned seem to agree on a fair number of issues. Naturally, therefore, we support the efforts of the Secretary-General with a view to the settlement of the problem in the interests of the Afghan people as a whole.

In the Korean peninsula the concentration of large armed forces along the military demarcation line clearly constitutes a threat to peace and security. In order to ease the tensions and help to speed up the peaceful reunification of the peninsula, a number of initiatives have been taken to reduce the armed forces there. The response to those initiatives and others and the interest evinced throughout the world are encouraging signs of good will favourable to the restoration of peace and security in that area, and thus worthy of the attention of this Assembly.

Continuing tension and insecurity are features of the situation in the Middle East, which continues to be a matter of concern to the international community. For several years now the General Assembly has been seized of the Middle East crisis without there being any glimmer of a real settlement.

As was reaffirmed by the General Assembly in its resolution 41/162 A, adopted on 4 December 1986:

"a just and comprehensive settlement of the situation in the Middle East cannot be achieved without the participation on an equal footing of all the parties to the conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization ..."

(Mr. Ndinga-Oba, Congo)

The international community's support for the convening of a conference on peace in the Middle East gives ground for great hope, in our opinion. We trust that all interested parties will refrain from imposing pre-conditions that might delay the convening of such a conference and that they will be able to take up the substantive problem, namely, peace in the Middle East and self-determination for the Palestinian people.

The Iran-Iraq war and the tense situation in the Gulf have had disastrous consequences to date for the people themselves and for the economies of the two warring parties, seriously threatening international security. In associating ourselves with the initiatives recently taken by the Security Council, through the adoption of resolution 598 (1987), Congo appeals to the two parties to end the conflict. We support the diplomatic activity of the Secretary-General in this connection, and call on all States to refrain from any interference or action that might hamper the efforts under way, pursuant to paragraph 5 of Security Council resolution 598 (1987).

As for Chad, a neighbour and brother of Congo, we note with satisfaction the progress made in the process of national reconciliation. However, there remain other problems.

The Ad Hoc Committee of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), which is meeting now in Lusaka, Zambia, under the presidency of El Hadj Omar Bongo, President of the Republic of Gabon, is trying to settle the Chad-Libya border dispute. We firmly support those mediation efforts, in which Congo has always been actively involved.

Today, by general agreement, the question of Western Sahara seems to be at a deadlock. This is particularly deplorable in that we know - because we were closely involved in this - that the Chairman of the OAU and the Secretary-General

(Mr. Ndinga-Oba, Congo)

of the United Nations have made intensive efforts to bring about a lasting solution. The active co-operation of all the parties concerned remains indispensable to the success of the joint actions of the OAU and the United Nations, as set forth in the relevant resolutions adopted by those two Organizations.

Africa is being eaten away by the gangrene of apartheid, one of the most shocking anachronisms of our century. Despite many appeals and threats, most of the people of South Africa continue to live in a permanent state of siege; Nelson Mandela is still in prison and along with him are many political prisoners who have been arbitrarily detained. The destabilization of the front-line States has not stopped.

Until the apartheid system is dismantled - a system which has been declared here to be "a crime against humanity" - there are no grounds for South Africa's joining the ranks of free Africa or of the international community. Thus, we shall continue to call for decisive measures against the Pretoria régime as demanded by the South African tragedy and the growing impatience of the international community.

On 10 November 1986 the General Assembly adopted resolution 41/35 B, reaffirming its support for the struggle of the people of South Africa and condemning the activities of transnational corporations and financial institutions that have continued to co-operate with that country.

South Africa, which incidentally is tranquilly building up a military force which is a threat to the peace and security of the continent, has continued for eight years to reject with impunity the implementation of Security Council resolution 435 (1978), which was designed to facilitate Namibia's accession to independence.

(Mr. Ndinga-Oba, Congo)

To preserve the credibility of the United Nations, the Security Council, which last July adopted an important decision on the question of the Gulf war, indicating in particular that there was a possibility of recourse to Chapter VII of the Charter, will, we feel sure, be consistent in its actions and consider taking the same firm attitude with regard to South Africa to ensure the application of a decision that was adopted unanimously and whose application is therefore mandatory. I refer to resolution 435 (1978).

(Mr. Ndinga-Oba, Congo)

Faced with this situation, Africa has outlined new approaches, committed more resources, mobilized further energies. The success of the Africa Fund is but one illustration, judging by the significant contributions made to it from the Congo - 200 million CFA francs - and from Africa and elsewhere for a total of \$US 110 million as of 25 May 1987.

Brazzaville, the capital of the Congo, this year hosted historic meetings for the continent, including, inter alia, an international symposium in May 1987 on the topic "Writers condemn apartheid", in which 400 representatives from various countries and international organizations participated; and the First Congress of Scientists in Africa, held from 25 to 30 June 1987, which, in the view of the scientists themselves, was a great success.

At the end of that Congress, a non-governmental organization called Panafrican Union of Science and Technology was founded, with Brazzaville as its headquarters; the Congolese Government is donating a large building and a grant of 50 million CFA francs - that is \$US 150,000 - for the new organization.

In addition, the Organization of African Unity has declared 30 June African Scientific Renaissance Day to be observed yearly.

Thus for the first time in Africa the awareness and creativity of scientists and researchers has been called upon so as to benefit from their contribution to the liberation and advancement of the continent.

As President Denis Sassou-Nguesso said here last year,

"Africa is aware of the vital nature of what is at stake, namely, mastery of both sciences and adopted techniques ... which are the real key to tomorrow's world. Africa does not wish to and cannot fail in that undertaking." (A/41/PV.17, p. 17)

(Mr. Ndinga-Oba, Congo)

When in the first half of this year President Denis Sassou-Nguesso visited various capitals of the world - after having visited North Africa last year - he was able to gauge the degree of understanding and mobilization of public opinion in those countries and the positions of their Governments vis-à-vis Africa. There were some signs of hope which deserved to be reflected in the efforts and mobilization of the African countries. That this is what we wanted to see: real commitments by Africa's partners in implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action for African economic recovery.

The best we can say today is that several international agencies have already taken certain measures aimed at starting the implementation of the Programme of Action; similarly, recently at Venice the summit meeting of the seven most industrialized Western Powers recognized the need to increase official development aid to Africa as well as the particularly distressing situation of Africa's debt.

In any event, a global assessment of the implementation of the Programme will take place only next year. However, we wish here once again to pay tribute to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, whose interim report indicates the efforts he has made towards the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action for Africa.

In dealing with questions of survival and development in Africa, we are getting into an area where there is a very deeply felt common concern on the part of all developing countries, as was demonstrated last July at UNCTAD VII.

Indeed, for a decade now - if not longer - most developing countries have adopted reform and readjustment policies whose effects have turned out to be as uncertain as the situations they were designed to correct.

Illusions about what could be achieved from the sacrifices undertaken by the poor peoples have been commensurate with the uncertainty in which the international

(Mr. Ndinga-Oba, Congo)

climate is floundering. Split between the virtues of callous selfishness and professions of faith in a liberalism that would bring salvation, many developed countries have in fact been busy destroying their own reference system instead of giving it the credibility to which they invite the developing countries.

Hence, instead of market laws, we have protectionism, overpricing of manufactured goods and quasi-dogmatic underpricing of commodities. What is more, repayment of debt is seen as the sacred duty of the debtor country, under pain of the harshest economic sanctions regardless of ability to pay.

On the other hand, there is extreme distrust of the idea of reorganizing the machinery of international trade and the transfer of resources, at a time when the exchange rates of the main currencies are out of control and interest rates are maintained at extremely high levels.

Debates at UNCTAD VII once again revealed these shortcomings of the international economic system. The matter of the entry into force of the agreement on establishing the Common Fund for commodities, which had been so often been postponed, alone reflects the reality of the tragedy of those countries - and they are legion - whose resources basically come from the sale of commodities.

Like most developing countries, the People's Republic of the Congo now finds itself faced with all these problems, aggravated as they are by trends which are hardly propitious to promoting growth in the developing countries. However, co-operation between my country and international agencies, on the one hand, and with other partners at the bilateral level, on the other, has never been ambiguous, for loyalty and mutual interest of the partners have always been the basic elements of that co-operation.

It is essential that these elements be preserved; there is nothing more absurd than seeing countries that are rigorously and in good faith applying adjustment

(Mr. Ndinga-Oba, Congo)

policies being at times forced into a kind of rebellion against the basically unfair rules of the game.

A few weeks ago in New York the International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development was convened. It had the merit of highlighting the incalculable risks in the uncurbed use of resources for death rather than for life.

The Congolese delegation welcomes the adoption by consensus of the Final Document by that Conference. Of course the document did not live up to everyone's hopes, nor did it meet all concerns. It covers up the concerns that were hardly concealed in originally polarized positions, some of which were brought closer only at the cost of numerous concessions, that even at times sacrificed the very objectives of the Conference. But the very contents of the document must be characterized as a highly political act because, far from simply limiting itself to historical reality, the document establishes the basis for a process which must be continued and strengthened with real political will so as to achieve the objectives of disarmament and development as set forth in the Charter.

That consensus, together with the Final Act of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), constitutes an act of faith in multilateralism as an instrument on which international co-operation must be based.

It is in the same spirit that we must hail the agreement in principle arrived at just a few days ago between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on medium- and short-range missiles. We venture to hope that that opening will strengthen the current trend towards the objective of disarmament.

(Mr. Ndinga-Oba, Congo)

In a world which in the final analysis is governed by imperatives as questionable as those of the manufacture and sale of increasingly costly weapons to countries daily engulfed and consumed by emotion and distrust, there is very little margin for peace and security. But this pessimism in no way implies despair. Our presence here at the United Nations is, after all, testimony to the resurgence of which the human spirit is always capable.

It is for us all, the men and women of today, who are building our own future, to try to build a new world - and it is to that that the People's Republic of the Congo, for its part, has decided fully to commit itself.

Mr. STOLTENBERG (Norway): I should like first to congratulate Ambassador Florin on his election as President of the General Assembly. I am confident that with his experience he will guide the Assembly's work to a successful conclusion.

The strengthening of the United Nations is the theme of this statement.

We are meeting in the General Assembly at a time when it is more evident than ever before that the problems facing the world community can be solved only through joint international action. This is also a time of the year when we usually take stock of the state of our Organization. We do this in the knowledge that the many complimentary words uttered during the celebration of the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations two years ago have been followed by an extremely difficult period for our Organization.

This year we may have better opportunities than we have had for quite some time to move forward. As the Secretary-General has stated so aptly in his report, there is "in the midst of a perilous sea, a light but favourable wind."

(A/42/1, p. 2) That wind of change became significantly stronger last week, after the historic breakthrough in the negotiations on nuclear weapons between the United

(Mr. Stoltenberg, Norway)

States and the Soviet Union. I should like to join others in welcoming the fact that the two nations have agreed in principle to conclude a treaty on all land-based, medium-range nuclear missiles. Rather than freezing nuclear arms at existing levels, as in previous accords, the new emerging agreement will break new ground by eliminating entire categories of United States and Soviet nuclear missiles.

It is our sincere hope that the impending agreement will open the way towards further progress in other critical areas of arms control and disarmament. All possible avenues should now be explored to reach agreements on strategic nuclear forces, on chemical weapons and on a comprehensive nuclear test-ban treaty, as well as on reductions in conventional forces. These new developments will contribute to an improved international climate and provide the basis for the solution of the many problems on the United Nations agenda.

What are the problems facing us today as Members of the United Nations? To answer that question we need look no further than to two documents now before the General Assembly: the Secretary-General's report on the work of the Organization and the report by the World Commission on Environment and Development, "Our Common Future".

The Secretary-General's report gives us a lucid overview of the state of the world today, including the many areas where armed conflicts are raging or threatening. The most burning of those issues is the Iran-Iraq war and the spread of that conflict to the Gulf area. That war has been going on for more than seven years. It has brought untold suffering to the populations of the two countries. It threatens international shipping and the supply of oil to other nations. As Members of the United Nations, we need to make every effort to stop it, both in the interest of the two nations concerned and to maintain international peace and security.

(Mr. Stoltenberg, Norway)

The report by the World Commission is a global agenda for change focusing on three main areas: first, it stresses the preservation of the environment, which is of vital importance not only to our own generation but also, even more, also to future ones; secondly, it highlights the interlinkage between economic growth, development and the environment; and, thirdly, it demonstrates the interdependence between nations and thus the need for strengthened multilateralism in a field where all countries - East, West, North and South - have a common interest. The report thus gives us a long-term strategy for sustainable development. It makes it very clear that there is no rational alternative to strengthened international co-operation in the interrelated issues of environment and development.

Both the Secretary-General's report and the report of the World Commission point to the extremely difficult situation still facing many developing countries. The impending ecological crisis, the problems caused by drought, new epidemics and other disasters, the political and social unrest in many countries, the heavy load of the debt burden - all are problems which require both pragmatism and vision. I very much agree with the Secretary-General that we need both, that many of these problems cannot be dealt with in isolation, and that a greater understanding now seems to be emerging of the interrelationship between economic and social - and, I should like to add, ecological - problems.

The States Members of the United Nations have shown repeatedly that a genuine political will to act together to solve international problems can often be found, especially in times of crisis. The individual wills of nations may not always be shared. Nevertheless, we need to ask ourselves: when there is a will, do we have the tools? How can we, the States Members of the United Nations, continue our efforts to strengthen the United Nations as the most important instrument for handling the many pressing problems facing the world community today?

(Mr. Stoltenberg, Norway)

At the outset of the forty-first session last year, the United Nations was confronted with what is sometimes described as the worst crisis in its history. The consensus reached last year on steps to improve the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations proved, however, that the Member States could rise above their differences when the very viability of the Organization was at stake. I agree with the Secretary-General that the consensus reached last year "could signify a historic turning point".

(Mr. Stoltenberg, Norway)

We now need to discuss how we can continue the reform process to increase the efficiency of the United Nations. Organizational reforms cannot be the subject of one-time decisions. A reform process must be continuous and orderly, involving both member Governments and the responsible leadership of each individual organization. The member Governments have a direct interest in the sound financial management of the Organization. At the same time we, the member Governments must, out of obligation and self-interest, respect the rights and duties of the Secretary-General as laid down in the Charter.

At this point I should like to pay our compliments to the Secretary-General for his very active and constructive follow-up on the decisions taken last year. There are many interesting observations and proposals in his reports to which we will give further careful study. On this occasion I shall concentrate on four aspects.

First, concerning the strengthening of the fact-finding capabilities of the Secretary-General and the Secretariat, we welcome the establishment of a separate Office for Research and the Collection of Information. The strengthening of the early-warning capability of the Organization will help to identify potentially dangerous situations before conflicts break out. This could be an important step to make the United Nations better prepared to fulfil its tasks in the maintenance of international peace and security. We hope that this will lay the foundation for an even more active role on the part of the Secretary-General and the Organization in preventing and settling disputes.

Secondly, concerning the financial situation of the Organization, my Government agrees with the Secretary-General that prolongation of a situation of financial crisis will have an adverse impact on programme implementation, on orderly management and on the morale of the Secretariat staff. The financial

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soundness of the Organization should therefore be restored as soon as possible. That can come about only if all Member States accept the collective responsibilities inherent in the Charter of the United Nations. In this context we should perhaps examine ways and means which would make the Organization less financially dependent on any one nation or group of nations.

Thirdly, concerning the related subject of the peace-keeping operations of the United Nations, those operations have long been considered to be potentially the most important and innovative contribution that the United Nations can make to maintaining world peace. The Secretary-General's report mentions several areas where such operations could make extremely important contributions - in Namibia, in Central America and in the Gulf. We also have the suggestion that peace-keeping mechanisms be used for preventive purposes. But we also know the financial problems facing present United Nations peace-keeping operations. It is becoming increasingly difficult to find countries that are willing to provide contingents for a peace-keeping force and acceptable to the parties. I believe that new and serious thought should be given to measures which could improve the present highly unsatisfactory situation. It should not be necessary to have new crises, conflicts or wars before this problem is given serious consideration by the members of the Security Council.

Fourthly, concerning follow-up on the reform process in the economic and social fields, my Government will continue to take an active part in the special commission established by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) to study the intergovernmental structures and functions of the United Nations system in the economic and social fields. Like many other countries we welcome the very constructive proposal put forward by the Group of 77 at the meeting of the study group earlier this month for the strengthening of ECOSOC. We also find an

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interesting proposal in the Secretary-General's report on making ECOSOC a council of ministers for economic and social affairs in the world, with much more integrated responsibilities than it has today. In this connection let me even give support to the proposals to strengthen forward-looking and policy-planning functions within the Secretariat to make possible a more system-wide approach to these issues.

During the last year we have made high demands of the Secretary-General and the Secretariat to implement the strict austerity measures inherent in the decisions taken last year. We, the member Governments of the United Nations, now need to consider how we may get our own act together to follow up our consensus of last year in order to give new political impetus to our Organization.

One such step would be to increase the level of political participation in the meetings of the central bodies of the United Nations. Two years ago we saw the important meeting of more than 60 Heads of State or Government in New York on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of the Organization. We have also seen that the Security Council more and more often meets at the ministerial level when important issues are debated, the latest such occasion being during the adoption of resolution 598 (1987) on the Iran-Iraq war. We believe that this practice should be encouraged, regularized and perhaps institutionalized. In this context I also welcome the participation of Heads of State and Government at the General Assembly. I have already expressed our support for the Secretary-General's proposal to increase the level of participation in ECOSOC to that of ministers.

Perhaps we could also examine more informal ways through which representatives of Member countries could meet at political levels to discuss how we could strengthen the United Nations.

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One way in which we could strengthen the position and the influence of the United Nations would be to make more use of the machinery provided to us by the Organization to tackle the political problems facing us.

My Government will make clear its position on individual issues when the relevant agenda items are discussed later in the session. In this statement I shall concentrate on only a few issues.

The finding of a solution to the conflict between Iran and Iraq and the prevention of a further escalation of the conflict should continue to be given the highest priority by the United Nations. The Norwegian Government supports Security Council resolution 598 (1987), and we strongly appeal to the parties to respect the terms of the mandatory resolution, which was adopted unanimously by the Council, under Articles 39 and 40 of the Charter. We welcome the personal involvement of the Secretary-General to establish direct contacts with the leaders of the two parties and the report on his recent mission to the area. We would encourage him to continue his efforts to bridge the positions of the two parties. No stone should be left unturned in attempts to find a peaceful solution to this tragic conflict.

We support the diplomatic efforts led by Under-Secretary-General Diego Cordovez as the best hope of reaching an early negotiated solution to the problem of the occupation of Afghanistan.

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We should not forget the dangers created by the lack of progress in the peace process in the Middle East. My Government supports the convening of an international conference on peace in the Middle East under the auspices of the United Nations as the best way of establishing real contacts and negotiations between the parties to the conflict.

In November this year it will be 10 years since the Security Council imposed a mandatory arms embargo against South Africa. The United Nations embargo needs to be implemented more strictly and to be made more comprehensive. Norway will continue to work with other member nations to strengthen the oil embargo. It is our view that comprehensive and mandatory sanctions adopted by the Security Council remain the most effective means to exert pressure on the South African Government.

In Central America, there are encouraging signs of a momentum for peace. Norway has always supported solutions in the region, for the region and by the region. Thus, we support the peace plan adopted by the five countries of the region in Guatemala in August. We will continue to work with other nations to see if there are ways in which we can further support the peace process.

While we are meeting here at the highest State and Government levels to discuss the problems of common concern it is vital to remember that the United Nations is much more than its 159 Member States. At the outset, the Charter states: "We the peoples of the United Nations". To fulfil the intentions behind this sentence we need also to strengthen and further develop the ties between the United Nations and non-governmental organizations.

Over the past 40 years we have experienced a remarkable structural change. Much of this change has been brought about by public pressure, with people ahead of Governments. We have seen the importance of the work of non-governmental organizations in a whole range of areas, such as human rights, women's

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emancipation, disarmament, the North-South dialogue and environmental protection. This clearly shows that the establishment of closer links between the United Nations and non-governmental organizations is not only in the interest of the latter, but also in the interest of the Organization.

My statement, as I hope the Assembly has understood, has concentrated on the situation of the United Nations solely. Representatives may ask why. The explanation is that for a country such as Norway a strong United Nations is of major importance. It actually means a strengthening of our ability to take care of our national interests.

A weak United Nations means that more decisions with direct implications for our country will be taken without our participation in the decision-making process. For us, active involvement in the many activities of the United Nations in tackling the many problems facing the world is not an act of charity; it is in our own interest.

The PRESIDENT: I now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

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 5 minutes for the second and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mrs. BAILEY (United States of America): I regret the most unfortunate, inaccurate and intemperate statement of the Minister for External Relations of Cuba. He sought to poison the atmosphere of the forty-second session of the General Assembly, but he failed. We shall have ample opportunity to rebut his false charges during the course of the session.

Mr. CABALLERO RODRIGUEZ (Cuba) (interpretation from Spanish): We had hoped that the delegation of the United States would reply to the very important statement made by our Minister and we would have been ready to respond. It seems however that the United States representatives are not capable of reacting at the moment to what our Minister said and will have to have recourse to their computers the arsenals of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to find lies with which to respond. We hope that they will be able to prepare their response tonight with the help of those resources so that we can then respond.

The meeting rose at 6.20 p.m.