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GENERAL ASSEMBLY

PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE NINTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Wednesday, 23 September 1987, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. FLORIN (German Democratic Republic)

- General debate [9]: (continued)

Statements were made by:

Mr. Shevardnadze (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics)
Mr. Ngarukiyintwali (Rwanda)
Mr. Mabrouk (Tunisia)
Mr. Hameed (Sri Lanka)
Mr. Tindemans (Belgium)
Mr. Saldivar (Paraguay)
Mr. Pinheiro (Portugal)

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

AGENDA ITEM 9 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. SHEVARDNADZE (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): The Soviet delegation has instructed me, Sir, to congratulate you on your election to the honourable post of President of the forty-second session of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

One of the rules of procedure of this Organization reserves a minute for prayer or meditation. Each session of the United Nations General Assembly is an occasion for reflection on the future of the world. Today the world is on the threshold of great changes and our thoughts are about that. For the first time in history, the idea of nuclear disarmament is close to the beginning of fulfilment. It is not a new idea. What is new is that this is proving to be possible. Only yesterday, all we could see ahead of us was a blank wall: today we can see far ahead.

Two thousand warheads are but a small part of nuclear arsenals, but that is a big enough part for its disappearance to give to the world a new vision. The agreement on these weapons is only a small part of what has happened. Something much more important has taken place: the Soviet Union and the United States have finally spoken together the first word in a nuclear-free vocabulary. When that word becomes deed, the world will also gain new knowledge. It will become convinced that nuclear weapons and security are not synonymous and that security becomes stronger when those weapons disappear.

For the present, that principle is being established in a specific case, but it is already being established in practice. The whole question now is whether we shall be able, proceeding from the same logical premise, to abandon the entire

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

nuclear arsenal rather than just a part of it, to scrap all weapons of mass destruction.

The Soviet Union is convinced that we shall be able to do so. The launching pad is small but it provides a boost to a great undertaking. The recent agreement may be followed by an accord on the reduction by as much as one half of strategic weapons - provided, of course, that the Treaty limiting anti-ballistic missile system is preserved.

Today there is an increasingly realistic prospect of a convention on the prohibition and complete destruction of chemical weapons. We can expect a productive development of the parallel process of reduction of conventional weapons based on the concept of sufficiency. There is a possibility of making headway because we have bold ideas and willingness to remove the remaining obstacles.

An affirmative answer to the question of whether it is possible to scrap nuclear arsenals will become a reality if the international community once again helps us.

There is no need to compete here for the palm of victory, which does not go well with the olive branch of peace. I could describe how the Soviet Union has worked towards the global double zero, but let others claim the credit if they wish. For that matter, if we have to compete in something it should be only in nuclear disarmament. What is important for us is that what was sought has now been achieved and the outcome is not at variance with the will of the majority.

We are moved by the enthusiasm with which the world has welcomed the agreement. It convinces us once again that we are on the right track. Listening to the voices of approval and solidarity, which drown the morose and solitary voice of the nuclear profiteers, your Soviet colleagues, without sharing the euphoria and

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

yet without curbing the optimism, keenly feel that today all of us here are truly united nations - united not merely by formal membership in this Organization but by a common destiny and a shared objective. We thank you for this wonderful feeling. It should be treasured and carried further.

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

Thank you for the atmosphere of unity of thought, co-operation and support which alone could have produced an agreement.

In this sense the agreement is yours. And the fact that it belongs to everyone is, as we see it, the best guarantee of its implementation.

"We were born to live together. And our community is like an arch which holds up precisely because its stones prevent each other from falling ..."

One is amazed by the ability of human thought to establish the supreme ethical law for all times. "We were born to live together", so wrote Seneca to Lucilius many years ago in his Epistles, but it is only today that this idea is being understood as the imperative of our time.

Today, Lenin's Decree of Peace is perceived as a message of supreme morality addressed to our time. The repudiation of secret treaties, open and public conduct of international affairs, the immediate withdrawal from the war and the rejection of War as a method of resolving conflicts reflected, even as far back as 1917, a common need, which has now become the will of the entire international community.

A long and difficult road must be traversed for human thought to become action, but it does happen sooner or later. When, in Washington, we were discussing the techniques of the destruction of nuclear warheads we were suddenly struck by the fact that only a year ago this had seemed something well beyond our grasp. Our American partners can confirm this. It is hard to find words to express this. Let us just say that the past gives a powerful impetus to the present, and the present gives guarantees to the future.

"The reality and the guarantees of a secure world" is the title of Mikhail Gorbachev's article published before this session began, and it conveys the gist of our thinking today.

A secure world is possible. It is possible because anything else is too dangerous. The possibility of a secure world is commensurate with the need for

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

it. This is the reality. As for guarantees, we see them in a comprehensive system of security. It is the natural task of the United Nations to give inspiration to and take the lead in building such a system.

This, reduced to a concise formula, is the logic of that article, which develops the doctrine of a secure world. It stems from the history of our country and is the fruit of political thinking that honestly analyses the entire preceding period.

In this context I would venture to remind the Assembly that its forty-second session coincides with the eve of the seventieth anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution. This is our celebration and we are not imposing it on anyone. The feelings aroused by the birthday of our State are ours. Nevertheless, I would venture to share with representatives my thoughts on some of the international implications of that date.

I do not think that it can be disputed that the October Revolution was one of the major events of this century and has had a tremendous impact on the destinies of peoples, not only those of the former Russian Empire. We think that the process of renovation which is under way in our country is more than just a strictly domestic affair of the Soviet Union. It is impossible to describe as purely the concern of the Soviet Union its desire to do away with one of the products of the cold war, which is the splitting of the world into hostile alliances.

All this, naturally, is also part of the objectives of perestroika - our process of change - while glasnost - openness - and dialogue are, as logically, its instruments, in both domestic and foreign policies. Between these two there exists a direct and open relationship and one cannot be implemented without the other.

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

This, and this alone, allows me, when speaking about the seventieth anniversary of our revolution, to invite you all to take thought together.

If we have a concept of a world revolution, which is most closely linked with the process of revolutionary change in our country, we make no secret of it. It is this: organizing the entire human community on the basis of recognizing peace as the supreme value of existence, human life, freedom and dignity as a general yardstick, and peaceful coexistence as a universal principle of relations among States. This concept, proclaimed in the Political Report to the 27th Congress of our Communist Party, has been substantiated by a series of practical steps taken by the Soviet Union.

Perestroika has also heralded major changes in international affairs. It should not be obstructed. But, of course, unlike the position in 1917 or 1918, in 1987 no external action could halt our revolution. Today we live in different times, and it is a different country. And that could be one of the greatest achievements of the October Revolution. The price of this was enormous. It was set by the foreign intervention and the civil war; the ruined economy and the economic blockade; terror and the attempts to subvert the foundations of our multinational State; Nazi aggression and the cold war, which was imposed on us; nuclear blackmail and constant attempts at political diktat. Not a single day passed without our having to pay the highest price.

Unlike many other revolutions, the October Revolution was almost bloodless. Unlike many others, its architects never intended to build their temple on blood; they never thought, as had many before them, that cruelty, violence and fear were the best glue for cementing their ideal.

It was the policies of conspiracy, terror and intervention against Soviet Russia that made it shut and lock its doors and cut itself off from a hostile world.

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

In order to survive it was necessary to do the maximum within the historically minimum space of time. A chronic lack of time and unending pressure on all fronts also helped create the conditions which resulted in innocent victims and irreparable losses.

We are saying this for all to hear: there is not and there cannot be any justification for that. We do more than just say it. As heirs to both victories and defeats, achievements and mistakes, we are doing our utmost to consolidate the victories and to prevent even the slightest possibility of the errors being repeated in either domestic or in foreign policies.

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

This is a distinctive feature of our perestroika, its dominant trend, any indicator of the vigour and health of our society, a guarantee of its future, of its profound internal democratism, openness and integrity. And there is no need to engage in linguistic research to try to provide listeners with an English equivalent of the word glasnost. One might go astray in a foreign language, as has indeed already happened with the same speaker, who claimed that there is no word meaning "freedom" in the Russian language. It is generally dangerous to play with words in this forum in which by no means everyone is ready to applaud insults summarily flung at entire countries and peoples. Freedom does indeed serve peace - but it is not the freedom that is interpreted as licence to interfere in the affairs of others and to finance counter-revolution as a most profitable business.

As for our perestroika, no one should be a prey to illusions. We shall not turn aside from the main road or borrow from others their norms and rules of democracy. We thank them for their advice, but we shall conduct perestroika according to our own design, on our own socialist basis. Allow us to determine for ourselves what the Soviet Union is going to be and that will be what the Soviet people want it to be.

Those who want to support us will also support the project of rebuilding international relations on a broad democratic basis. They will support the concept of a nuclear-free world and all actions to resolve the knottiest issues of world politics. For here the interests of most members of the community fully coincide.

This rostrum is not a pulpit for preaching "free enterprise". This Hall is not a schoolroom or a university auditorium in which one can teach lessons in rhetoric or lecture the international community on the manners of "good political behaviour". It is even less worthy to adopt the tone of pastoral admonition and tell the Organization that "sometimes it has strayed" and "it is time for it to come home".

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

One can say, however, that this rostrum and this Hall are the very place where new political thinking should be expressed.

However much the world is split by confrontation and hatred, it is united in facing the need to preserve itself and to perpetuate mankind.

From this objective reality there emerges another guiding light for new political thinking: in our time, the correlation between the national interest and the interest of all mankind has changed. It has changed in the sense that truly national interests cannot be opposed to common interests.

If, on the pretext that something is contrary to the interests of national security or to considerations of national prestige, one rejects everything that is born of the political thinking of the systems or governments that one does not like, then, sooner or later, this will boomerang on the genuine national interests of one's own people and State.

New political thinking must put an end to that. New political thinking will put an end to it if it is put into action. And there is no doubt that it will be, for action, unity of concept and implementation, of thought and its realization, of word and deed, are crucial conditions for the existence of mankind.

New political thinking will inevitably make its way, for it is nourished by some remarkable elements: by the accumulation of progressive political experience; by strictly scientific analysis, evaluation and forecasting of contemporary realities; and, ultimately, by the freedom of new political thinking from national narrow-mindedness that provokes animosity towards countries, groups of countries or social political systems.

In this regard, let me say that the policy of hostility towards socialism is now bankrupt, both in theory and in practice.

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

The very fact of the establishment of the United Nations contained the embryo of the new political thinking. Even at that time its principles were embodied in the articles of the United Nations Charter, which is undoubtedly one of the greatest statutory instruments of all time and of all nations.

The fact that our Organization has been functioning for over 40 years now is testimony to the triumph of mankind's common interests over narrow-minded nationalism and great-Power attitudes.

In fact, all the post-war decades have been nothing but the history of the struggle between outdated political concepts and the new political thinking that was born in the agony of war.

When life on earth depends on one's ability to destroy it 20 times over, there is something wrong either with oneself and one's trust in such a guarantee of life, or with the very idea of deterrence. Most likely, it is both.

New political thinking exposes the absurdity of the idea of safeguarding anyone's security with nuclear weapons.

However, a question immediately arises: Is it possible to ensure peace by other methods and, indeed, do such methods exist at all? New political thinking answers: Yes. And here again I should like to focus on a comprehensive system of international security.

As emerges clearly from Mikhail Gorbachev's statements, we envision its formation as a multilinear process extending over time and implemented through collective efforts.

In essence, its objective is that peace should be ensured exclusively by the United Nations and its Security Council on the basis of strict observance of the principles and provisions of its Charter.

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

I anticipate a question here: If that is your objective, then what is the meaning of your proposal? After all, the Charter of the United Nations already exists and the universal organization for peace is functioning.

Let me remind the Assembly that the United Nations was established for a world free of nuclear weapons and that its Charter was, naturally, designed to solve the problems of such a world.

Nuclear weapons gave rise to a different reality which, in the final analysis, made it impossible to use the United Nations fully as the principal mechanism for the maintenance of peace and security. It so happened that the nuclear tumour limited the scope of, and the possibilities for applying the Charter. Now the prospect of militarization of outer space threatens to erode its principles even further.

There should however be no question of adapting the Charter to the realities of the nuclear and space age or, still less, of wrecking it. The Charter is a great document, which even today contains all the necessary provisions to enable mankind to live and solve its problems without war.

However, even the Charter cannot do the impossible. No organization, no set of rules, no code of behaviour can save the world in the few minutes between the launching of a missile and a nuclear holocaust. If and when the implementation of the "Star Wars" programme begins, the "shagreen leather" of that time interval will shrink even further. And yet that programme has been touted here once again as a way "to ensure a safer world".

This is not so. And here I will refer to a person whose statements have been quoted so readily by the President of the United States - even the day before yesterday.

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

That person is academician Andrei Sakharov, who said:

"My opinion as regards this programme is different from that of the Reagan Administration... It is also wrong to assert that the existence of the SDI programme has made the Soviet Union negotiate on disarmament. To the contrary, the SDI programme impedes the negotiations."

If we are to believe an academician in one area, why should we not believe him in another, in which he is really a qualified expert and a professional?

Leave the ocean of space to peaceful vessels, so that future generations - our children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren - will not have to build space minesweepers.

Excluding the nuclear and space component from the security equation is the only path towards real security. We regard a comprehensive system of security as a kind of interim programme for reasserting the role of the United Nations and its Charter as the primary instruments for peace.

What, then, are the practical aspects of a comprehensive system? Throughout the past year the sponsors of the resolution on this question have held consultations with Members of the United Nations and discussed their proposal in international forums. As a result many things have now become clearer, our ideas have become more concrete, and an atmosphere of teamwork has arisen. The system is taking precise shape in all its four aspects: politico-military, economic, environmental and humanitarian.

In the politico-military area, it comprises the obligation of Governments not to be the first to use nuclear weapons or any force or threat of force; making military doctrines exclusively defensive in nature; making public data regarding defence expenditures and calendars of exercises and manoeuvres; the adoption by all

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

of the principle of non-offensive defence; and instituting a reliable system of verification.

We are convinced that a comprehensive system of security will also provide the key to the settlement of situations of regional conflict. That may be one of the most difficult tasks of today.

In this connection I shall venture to make a brief digression to address some ideas presented here the other day. I am referring to the statement made here by the President of the United States the day before yesterday. I am not going to relish engaging in polemics with him. The emotions aroused by the agreement we have reached, my status as a guest and respect for seniority restrain me from taking up, point by point, allegations and arguments that are groundless in the extreme. But since the President mentioned the human heart - claiming, as it were, a monopoly on having a heart while denying it to others - I should like to say the following.

It is heartless to declare regions and continents zones of special interest for the so-called free world out of which it pumps into its own economy resources belonging to other peoples. It is heartless to recruit and arm mercenaries, to proclaim them freedom fighters, and to pay millions of dollars for the murders committed by them. It is heartless to put into the hands of bandits weapons they use to shoot down civilian aircraft. The human heart is an extremely sensitive organ, and it shudders at such treatment.

Those who have not suffered have no compassion for anyone. As for us, we know what war on our own territory means. Therefore it is not for the sake of rhetorical effect that we declare our support for the efforts of the United Nations.

It plays an extremely important peace-making role in Afghanistan, where the mission of the Personal Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General

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organically combines with the policy of national reconciliation. It is now becoming increasingly clear that the Afghans themselves are able to decide the future of their own country and indeed are doing so. This new encouraging trend is in keeping with our sincere desire to withdraw Soviet forces from Afghanistan as soon as possible, and in this we are meeting with the full understanding of the Afghan leadership.

In Central America, the States of the region themselves have made impressive headway towards a long-awaited peace. Their success is shared by members of the Contadora Group and the Support Group and by all Latin American countries.

Dialogue between the countries of Indo-China and the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) has revealed promising elements. The policy of national reconciliation is also beginning to work in Kampuchea.

Real possibilities exist for the settlement of the Korean problem. The yearning of the Korean people for an easing of tension in the peninsula and the withdrawal of foreign troops and nuclear weapons cannot but evoke sympathy.

The United Nations has a detailed plan for giving effect to the resolution on the granting of independence to the Namibian people. Its implementation would also constitute a major step towards a settlement of the situation in southern Africa.

A consensus is emerging in favour of convening a conference on the Middle East problem.

In Cyprus, our Organization and its Secretary-General have also been taking vigorous action and refusing to retreat in the face of obstacles.

Here is our view of the situation in the Persian Gulf. It has become critically dangerous and might get out of control. We are not at all pleased that the development of events - which we warned was quite possible from the very outset - shows that we were right. The greater the military presence, the higher

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the probability of yet another conflict and the involvement in it of a State not belonging to the region. This is a source of great anxiety to us; it also strengthens our resolve to act in a sober and carefully considered manner and leads us once again to emphasize the question of removing the danger of a massive military presence.

In the circumstances, it is extremely important to preserve the unity in the Security Council. That is not an end in itself, but a prerequisite for implementing resolution 598 (1987). In their individual actions, each member of the Council must abide by the resolution's requirements and not violate them.

The safety of navigation in the Gulf can and must be ensured by the entire world community, on whose behalf the United Nations will be acting. If necessary, appropriate and sufficient forces should be made effectively available to it, and the Soviet Union would agree to such a decision.

It is necessary to secure, concurrently and immediately, a cease-fire between Iran and Iraq and to work for the fulfilment of the Secretary-General's mission with respect to an impartial body to investigate the question of responsibility for the conflict. The Security Council should receive a report within a clearly established time-frame. This would also make it possible painlessly to withdraw foreign naval and other armed forces from the Persian Gulf.

It is very important now, in our view, to keep our composure and render every assistance to the Secretary-General and the Security Council.

In the economic field, a comprehensive system of security seeks to promote co-operation that would be free of confrontation and would cover the entire system of co-ordinates of international economic relations. A failure to resolve issues in this area is fraught with an explosive potential which, if detonated, would spell catastrophe for mankind.

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

The picture of prosperity painted here the day before yesterday fades in the harsh light of reality. It is hard to imagine a "march of democracy" in the developing countries saddled as they are with a trillion-dollar debt. It is impossible to talk seriously of equal opportunities when a new, technological, variety of colonialism is at work.

It is imperative to act.

We believe that the international community could reach agreement to reduce interest payments on bank credits, institute further benefits for the least developed countries, limit the annual debt-service payments of each developing country to a fixed portion of its annual export earnings, accept export products of debtor nations as payment for their debts and remove protectionist barriers to their imports, and refrain from charging additional interest for loan-payment rescheduling and debt refinancing.

These, of course, are only suggestions for discussion, but even now consideration could be given to devising a programme of immediate action to ease the debt burden of the developing world.

Over the long term it is also necessary to restructure the entire international monetary system.

And, of course, nothing would be more conducive to the economic development of nations than the most far-reaching programme of disarmament.

We are familiar also with a different viewpoint which does not acknowledge the relationship between disarmament and development. There are some who explain poverty by the inability of people to work and build their own lives. This is but another form of outright racism. No people is without talent or incapable of

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

creating material and spiritual wealth. It is just a matter of different conditions that either help a people to realize its potential or thwart its efforts to do so. The elimination of economic discrimination creates favourable conditions for people to prosper economically and spiritually.

The environmental aspect of the proposed concept reflects the evolution of thinking about the relationship between man and nature. The achievement of mankind's environmental security is as imperative as the threat of an ecological disaster facing it is real. Today we must realize that the protection of the environment must be ensured on a world-wide basis. Confrontation narrows the scope for concerted action, while co-operation can expand it. Our concept provides for a set of measures in this area.

The human dimension is the primary yardstick for a comprehensive system of security. Nations can and must co-operate in establishing the best international conditions for safeguarding the fundamental rights and freedoms of the individual everywhere, democratizing internal conditions and building trust and harmony on that basis.

We should together begin to devise a broad range of practical steps in the humanitarian area, promote co-operation in eradicating apartheid, racism, chauvinism, nationalism and discrimination on those bases, deal jointly with the problems of national minorities and refugees, and safeguard the rights of emigrants.

We submit that for States and nations trust begins at home and that to a large extent it is based on the unity of words and deeds and on complete accord between political declarations and actual positions. Our domestic and foreign policy is and will continue to be guided by that principle, and we reserve our right to

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

demand the same of all other Governments, our partners. The political, social, economic and cultural rights of the individual should be safeguarded on the basis of generally accepted international instruments. That is the way it should be everywhere.

The countries that have put forward this proposal do not claim a certificate of copyright. The system of security grows out of what has already been accomplished in the process of the peaceful coexistence of nations in the post-war years. It grows out of the activities of the United Nations. It is rooted in a broad legal foundation and the treaties which restrain the arms race. It is rooted in the negotiations on the central problems of our time and the codification of human rights standards, in regional security-building processes and in the Non-Aligned Movement.

As a logical result of the development of mankind's common culture in this century, that system promises to become in the future a framework for the collective application of the creative efforts of all countries and peoples. Today, when 2,000 weapons can be removed from the face of the earth, when a historic breakthrough has been achieved in a 42-year-long trend, such a system reflects what we believe to be a genuine, irreversible process: a product of will and perseverance. For we are indeed born to live together and we shall stand together if we become an arch in which we support each other.

Our Assembly session provides the best occasion for reflecting on this. Its time should not be taken up with confrontation and hostility. I tell you frankly that the world is tired of that. There have been too many quotations intended to prove that you are dealing with the spawn of Hell. That is simply not serious or

(Mr. Shevardnadze, USSR)

well founded. There have been too many accusations that detract from the dignity of nations. It is time for us to proceed to earnest dialogue; time to get down to business.

In these moments, as we stand face to face with the past and the present, we are keenly aware that when this pause for reflection is over we shall once again have to act, and again act.*

* Mr. Jacobovits de Szeged (Netherlands), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Mr. NGARUKIYINTWALI (Rwanda) (interpretation from French): States Members of the United Nations have faithfully adhered to a well-established tradition and come to their annual meeting, arranged so that they can together consider in a constructive dialogue the problems facing the international community.

Every session of the General Assembly constitutes an ideal opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to the fundamental purposes and principles of our Organization as set forth in the Charter. The Charter charges Member States with the mission of working for peace and contributing to the development of international relations for the purpose of promoting the prosperity and economic and social progress which all peoples desire.

This Assembly provides the framework within which efforts to improve the lot of mankind on the basis of the ethical standards shared by all countries that cherish peace, freedom, equality, justice and progress are harmonized.

On joining the United Nations as its 97th Member, on 18 September 1962, the Republic of Rwanda solemnly expressed its determination to abide by those ethical standards, which are based on equal rights for all peoples and the ideal of peace and co-operation expressed in San Francisco in 1945. The Republic of Rwanda hopes that this ideal will take ever more concrete form and that the efforts of all Member States will ensure that our Organization can carry out the mission assigned to it.

Rwanda will always be among the countries eager to work in this sense. At this session the commitment we entered into in this respect in 1962 takes on a particular significance, for this is the twenty-fifth anniversary of the independence of the Republic of Rwanda and its admission to the United Nations family.

(Mr. Ngarukiyintwali, Rwanda)

In recalling this dual anniversary I wish to reaffirm on behalf of the Government of Rwanda the Republic of Rwanda's support for the objectives laid down in the Charter. This support is accompanied by the hope that the negative factors that imperil the attainment of these objectives will gradually disappear. One of those negative factors is the policy of certain countries which are reluctant to accept the principles based on universal legality; other such factors are the oppression of peoples who legitimately desire respect for their inalienable rights and the persistence of sources of tension and conflicts in the world. These factors cause acute concern at the present time when the world community should be devoting its main efforts to meeting the challenges brought about by the economic imbalances that afflict the developing countries.

Far from decreasing, the economic difficulties, on which the General Assembly puts growing emphasis, are increasing and taking on new dimensions that bode ill for the progress that all peoples desire. The world economy is still experiencing a crisis which threatens the very survival of the countries of the third world and could thwart their arduous development efforts.

The crisis is essentially structural in nature for it affects the mechanisms which govern international economic relations at the present time and has an increasingly negative effect owing mainly to the instability of financial markets, the continuing deterioration of terms of trade, the stagnation in the raw materials markets and the debt problem.

The persistence of these forces is a serious obstacle to the development efforts of the countries of the third world, which are thus caught up in a complex and dangerous spiral of the constant deterioration of the world economic situation and the inexorable reduction of their resources, their purchasing power. They are therefore in danger of falling into a state of chronic underdevelopment.

(Mr. Ngarukiyintwali, Rwanda)

At every suitable opportunity the international community emphasizes its concern over this situation, stating that lasting growth for the countries of the third world depends upon increased financial flows to them, more balanced trade and a realistic, concerted approach to solving the problem of indebtedness.

Consideration of development and economic growth viewed in these terms was a feature of the Seventh United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), which took place in Geneva last July. The pragmatism and realism that characterized that Conference should give a new impetus to the resumption of the North-South dialogue.

Among the results that give cause for optimism regarding the likelihood of finding satisfactory solutions to the most urgent economic problems facing the international community are the provisions made to implement the Common Fund for Commodities.

The developing countries whose economies depend largely on the export of their raw materials are indeed pleased that UNCTAD has attributed so much importance to this question and is considering it from the angle of reducing the negative impact of successive fluctuations in commodity prices. The international community refuses to accept the inevitability of the decline in and instability of prices confronting third-world producers which must deal with the combined effects of the crisis and the fall in their revenue in international markets, where raw material prices have collapsed and are now lower than they have been for 50 years.

UNCTAD VII showed that the time has come not for resignation but for realism, the kind of realism that should lead to new efforts to ensure development, taking into account the changes caused by an increasingly obvious interdependence which demands that there be solidarity and complementarity in the promotion of universally shared prosperity.

(Mr. Ngarukiyintwali, Rwanda)

The challenges the third world must face require such an approach, which should be geared towards solutions expressing the collective will to bring about growth and development for the benefit of all parties. In this content the commitments endorsed in UNCTAD should now lead rapidly to concrete actions with a view to overcoming, in solidarity and complementarity, the ongoing crucial problems in the area of international economic relations.

The current session of the General Assembly provides an excellent opportunity to bolster the optimism aroused in this respect by the consensus that emerged from the debates at UNCTAD VII and to spell out the priorities that were adopted with regard to improving the lot of the poorest countries.

In this spirit, with regards to the clearly expressed desire to channel a larger share of development aid to the least developed countries, the Assembly is called upon to carry out a more thorough debate with a view to having the international community clearly define the ways and means to be mobilized to overcome the obstacles standing in the way of the development of third-world countries. In particular, production capacity must be increased, as must financial resources devoted to development aid; and the constraints inherent in the external debt burden must be alleviated.

The debt problem has caused the most acute concern for the third-world countries, in particular African countries. For Africa, the external debt is a heavy burden, a bottle-neck in the development process, for it is one of the many negative factors that are undermining its ability to pay, while the imbalances in international economic trade from which it suffers are being exacerbated.

Africa hopes that its partners will take measures to alleviate its external debt burden, which is primarily linked to the economic and financial constraints flowing from deterioration in the terms of trade, together with a deteriorating ra

(Mr. Ngarukiyintwali, Rwanda)

materials prices that create chronic deficits and heighten the crisis in the entire continent, where growth has collapsed.

The international community is now well aware of the need to create a more stable economic environment in order to promote development in Africa. More than a year and a half ago the General Assembly adopted the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery 1986-1990. The adoption of that programme was not an end in itself, but an important step in efforts to strengthen active solidarity with a view to restoring African economies.

Since that time African countries have, and at great sacrifice, made certain structural changes. Africa has thus demonstrated its willingness to deal, in a responsible manner, with the serious problems jeopardizing its development. It is comforting to note that our partners, for their part, have decided to support the efforts of African countries. This commitment must now take the form of concrete action with measures making it possible to improve the international economic climate and establish development programmes enjoying a significant increase in financial resources originating from both bilateral co-operation and institutions specializing in multilateral co-operation.

That is how the constructive dialogue that marked the special session devoted to the economic problems of Africa will - above and beyond enhancing the awareness of priority aspects of the development problems facing an entire continent striving for survival - help to generate efforts aimed at promoting a more active form of solidarity.

The Government of Rwanda attaches great importance to the efforts the international community is called upon to make in this connection, in particular to foster co-operation based on consultations with mutual respect for each partner and taking into account the needs, realities and interests of everyone in order to

(Mr. Ngarukiyintwali, Rwanda)

reach a genuine contract of solidarity that leads to meeting the challenges of the times and those flowing from the expectations and aspirations that regulate the progress of individual countries and peoples on the path to development, and provides a constantly renewed dynamism adapted to the needs of the future.

Against the background of the concerns arising from the persistent economic crisis, the international community must also deal with political problems that engender insecurity, tension and even open conflict.

This is true of the explosive situation in southern Africa, which is the result of the practices of the racist minority régime in Pretoria - a régime continually at odds with the international community because of its policy of apartheid, its illegal occupation of Namibia and its acts of destabilization and intimidation against the front-line States.

The Pretoria régime stubbornly clings to its outmoded anachronistic policies. It has shown an unwillingness to change that is unacceptable and stubbornly refuses to take into account the legitimate aspirations of the South African majority. It has engaged in stalling manoeuvres to delay the independence of Namibia and made of its neighbours targets of its State terrorism.

The intransigence and arrogance of the champions of the policy of apartheid is an outrage to all countries that cherish peace, justice and freedom and are convinced that the Namibian people must exercise its right to self-determination, that the South African people must be allowed to realize its aspirations to democracy and that the countries of southern African must be allowed to enjoy a climate of security conducive to stability and development.

with regard to the problem of Namibia, in particular the Rwandese Government believes that the settlement plan contained in Security Council resolution 435 (1978) remains the only appropriate framework for a solution in keeping with the need to realize the right of the Namibian people to live in freedom and dignit

(Mr. Ngarukiyintwali, Rwanda)

In the firm belief that the ethical standards based on the principles of international law will overcome the unacceptable claims of the Pretoria régime, I cannot fail to reaffirm the unswerving support of the Rwandese Republic for the freedom fighters who are battling this retrograde régime. Similarly, we continue to support the front-line States, which the South African leaders are trying to subdue by making them the victims of blackmail, destabilization and economic sabotage.

(Mr. Ngarukiyintwali, Rwanda)

Apart from the situation in southern Africa, where the odious system of apartheid gives rise to oppression and violence, there are sources of tension elsewhere on the African continent and elsewhere in the world.

Notwithstanding the constant appeals made from this rostrum for respect for the fundamental principles of the United Nations Charter, which all States Members of our Organization are committed to respect and promote, international peace and security are endangered by the tendency to support the principle that might is right.

For certain peoples - in particular the Sahraoui people and the Palestinian people - the implementation of the principle of self-determination is still but a pious wish, while non-interference in the internal affairs of other States, respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity and the peaceful settlement of disputes are principles that continue to be violated.

The situations Lebanon, Afghanistan and Cambodia, as well as the war between Iran and Iraq, thus continue to be of grave concern to the Organization. Regarding especially the fratricidal war between Iran and Iraq, the international community must persist in its solemn, repeated appeal to the belligerents to seek an appropriate solution, in keeping with the provisions of the United Nations Charter, to their conflict.

The Republic of Rwanda believes that, faced with situations such as these, the establishment of a genuine climate of peace in the world depends on efforts by individual States scrupulously to respect the provisions of the United Nations Charter, while encouraging mutual trust and collective security and rejecting confrontation and violence.

At each session the debates in the General Assembly reflect the anxiety of the international community caused by the uncertainties that loom over the future of mankind because of the dangers inherent in the arms race.

(Mr. Ngarukiyintwali, Rwanda)

At the recent International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development stress was rightly laid on the need to promote peace, security and disarmament in the interest of increasing the resources available for the struggle for social and economic progress.

The Rwanda delegation hopes that, in keeping with the conclusions reached at the end of that Conference, specific provisions will be adopted to remove the threat to mankind posed by the arms race and to carry out the transfers that would make possible spectacular scientific conquests and impose awareness of the correlation established between disarmament and development, between the needs of security and the expectations of peoples in search of progress and prosperity.

In this context, the Government of Rwanda attaches great importance to efforts to intensify the constructive dialogue that will give effect to the conviction that security needs demand ever closer co-ordination with the stakes of development considered in the light of the solidarity and complementarity that are a necessary part of international relations.

Whenever appropriate the Government of Rwanda recalls the fact that the Organization recognizes that divided nations are entitled to seek ways and means to regain their unity, without outside interference or pressure. In this spirit, I should like to emphasize once again the Republic of Rwanda's interest in and the importance that it attaches to efforts to further the normalization of relations between the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic. We hope that those efforts, supported by the collective conscience of the German people and responding to their ardent desire to keep that conscience steadfast, will enable them to recover the unity to which they aspire as an integral part of their heritage.

(Mr. Ngarukiyintwali, Rwanda)

Moreover, and still with reference to the United Nations Charter, the Republic of Rwanda supports initiatives aimed at bringing about the independent, peaceful reunification of the Korean nation.

The United Nations embodies the sublime ideal of promoting within the international community the values and virtues inherent in aspirations to peace, freedom, justice and social and economic progress. As an institution, it is at the service of peoples which share those aspirations and of Member States, so that they may maintain and develop relations based, above all, on equality and mutual respect, as well as on the awareness that they must act together, co-ordinating their efforts to bring under control the factors and events that influence the future of humanity.

It is in this spirit that the Republic of Rwanda solemnly reaffirms its unswerving devotion to the principles of the United Nations Charter, in the hope that the dialogue and the concerted effort of Member States will give concrete expression to those principles and reinforce the role of the Organization.

In this context, we assure the Assembly that the delegation of Rwanda will play its full part in ensuring that the forty-second session of the General Assembly will contribute to the attainment of the objectives of the Organization.

In addressing to you, Mr. President, as other speakers before me have done, heartiest and warmest congratulations, I stress our conviction that your prestige, your long experience and your eminent qualities will help guarantee the success of the work that will be conducted by the Assembly under your leadership.

The delegation of Rwanda wishes also to pay a tribute to your predecessor, who directed the work of the forty-first session of the General Assembly competently and tactfully.

(Mr. Ngarukiyintwali, Rwanda)

I pay a tribute also to the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, for the steadfast commitment he has shown in carrying out his functions in such a way that our Organization can continue to serve the interests of peace, solidarity and co-operation between nations. His commitment has earned him the great appreciation of the Government of Rwanda.

Over and above the success of the work of a session of the General Assembly, the success that the United Nations has in carrying out its mission is and will remain dependent upon the determination of all Member States and of each Member State. There must be a determination to work for a new international order, which can come about only through a policy of entente and co-operation among States, nations and people. There must be a determination to participate in the building of a community based on world-wide solidarity and on co-operation that promotes mutual enrichment and development thanks to the sharing of knowledge and skill, thanks to fruitful exchanges in the spheres of the economy, education, culture, information, science and technology, and thanks to the will continually to broaden the dimensions of international relations, giving priority to those factors that foster balance and harmony.

(Mr. Ngarukiyintwali, Rwanda)

That determination must find concrete expression on every level of the relationships each State hopes to maintain and develop on the international scene, and in signing the United Nations Charter the Republic of Rwanda evidenced it. Guided by the Charter's inherent spirit, Rwanda will always play its part in efforts to bring about the triumph of the ideal to which we subscribed 25 years ago, an ideal that put the world on the path of dialogue, solidarity and complementarity with a view to fulfilling the aspirations of all peoples for peace and prosperity.

Mr. MABROUK (Tunisia) (interpretation from French): It gives me great pleasure to convey to the President the congratulations of the Tunisian delegation on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly. We are confident that, given his well-known experience and skill, he will conduct the proceedings at this important session with the utmost efficiency. I can assure him of Tunisia's co-operation with his country, the German Democratic Republic. Our two countries have always maintained excellent relations of friendship and co-operation.

I am also happy to pay a tribute to your predecessor, Mr. Humayun Rasheed Choudhury, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bangladesh, who presided tactfully and effectively over the work of the forty-first session.

Our deep appreciation and sincere gratitude go to the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Peres de Cuellar, for his dedication and for his eminently active role in the service of the Organization and in pursuance of the noble objectives of its Charter.

In mounting this rostrum, from which the world's conscience is periodically expressed, sometimes in anguish and sometimes inspired by hope, I venture to request attention so that I may enumerate a distressing series of problems that have often been raised in this prestigious forum. I have, frankly, felt tempted to limit this statement to making a strong appeal for a radical change in all of us,

(Mr. Mabrouk, Tunisia)

namely, that in our deliberations we set aside individual problems and current differences and - in our thinking, in our statements and in the formulation of our resolutions - acknowledge the absolute primacy of a common creed based on the Declaration of Human Rights and the Charter of the United Nations. For it is time - I might say it is high time - to enforce compliance with those two instruments, which are not impractical products of man's idle invention but, indeed, irrefutable commandments and fundamental precepts that govern the conduct of each and every one of us.

It is indeed high time for States in their relations to eschew their obsession with issues deriving from dogmatic allegiance and with conventional rifts that result from a kind of short-sightedness in the evaluation of international relations.

It is time for us to join together in exorcising the demons of aggressiveness, hegemonism and tyrannical power so that mankind can finally live in peace and the peoples of the world can prosper through exchanges founded on fraternal relations.

I would have liked to conclude by saying that, but this session has begun at a particularly critical time. The world is going through a period of turmoil, and the direst threats are gathering momentum in more than one region of our planet.

In addition to the long-standing conflicts that have preoccupied the Organization almost since its inception, such as the problems of the Middle East and southern Africa; in addition to the serious problems afflicting Asia, where both Afghanistan and Kampuchea are still occupied by foreign armies, and in addition to the convulsions in Central America, we now have a protracted war in a particularly sensitive region, which compounds the frustrations of the peoples of the Middle East, who have contributed so much to the development of civilization. I refer to the war between Iran and Iraq.

(Mr. Mabrouk, Tunisia)

That war is sapping the strength and potential of two fraternal peoples and may even jeopardize the future of those two great countries.

All our efforts should be directed towards bringing that tragedy to an end.

It is urgently necessary to establish a just peace, with no victor and no vanquished, in order to terminate that particularly lethal and unjust conflict, a conflict that is all the more unjust as it involves two nations whose confrontation violates the very concepts of their traditional faith, the Islamic religion, which preaches peace, brotherhood and tolerance for all mankind. The resolution adopted by the Security Council concerning the war between Iran and Iraq seems to us to offer hope by the very fact that it appropriately strengthens the role assigned to the United Nations in Chapter VII of the Charter. By assuming the task incumbent upon it, our Organization can and must enforce solutions wherever peace is threatened.

The authority of the United Nations must be the guarantee of law and peace.

That is my country's position.

Tunisia, inspired by Bourguiba, a champion of peace and the brotherhood of peoples, has solemnly vested supreme authority in international legality and the world conscience.

(Mr. Mabrouk, Tunisia)

That authority is in perfect concord with the authority deriving from the spiritual values bequeathed by the Islamic message, to which my country, while welcoming dialogue and keeping pace with progress, remains absolutely faithful.

I must express my sorrow at seeing the Islamic message perverted and bereft of its real meaning because of some individuals and some terrorist organizations deceitfully arrogating to themselves a mission of redemption while actually furthering their own political ends or unleashing a fanaticism foreign to the real meaning of that message of Islam.

Unfortunately this has been turned to their own account by the disparagers of Islam. Thus, a whole campaign of propaganda has been mounted against the sacred tenets and culture of Islam, propaganda that is sometimes based on ill will but most often on ignorance. In this all-embracing world of ours, how can we refuse to recognize the plurality of cultures, their originality, their message, their own dynamism and their evolutionary processes? In fact, the self-styled dominant cultures and civilizations simply reject what, through ignorance, they fail to understand. Let us therefore face up to the vital necessity, in an international community that has become one and indivisible, of dialogue between cultures and civilizations.

There is certainly one country which in its life, history and institutions has given us an example of such a dialogue, a country which is today enduring a tragedy that envelops its territory, its identity and its very existence, a country which certainly does not deserve such a fate - namely, Lebanon. No one with any sense of justice or respect for human values can ignore a cry that arises from the depths of his conscience, a cry that betokens his sorrow, indignation and, above all, his solidarity.

(Mr. Mabrouk, Tunisia)

Without claiming to solve the world's problems, it must be said that, by its history and geography, its culture and economy, and inspired by its universalist vocation, Tunisia is deeply sensitive to all the upheavals convulsing our modern world. Being both African and Arab, both Islamic and Mediterranean, Tunisia is situated at the crossroads of all the currents and turmoil that afflict the international community.

That is why President Bourguiba, the founder of modern Tunisia, as a profound peace-loving man, has always given priority and deep thought to all the problems that have persistently beset the region.

As regards one of the problems that is most difficult and important because of its historical and strategic implications, namely, the Middle East problem, ever since 1965 President Bourguiba has advocated recognition, as is now desired by all, of both the Palestinians and the Israelis, rejecting the racial confrontation aspect of this tragedy of historical, strategic and cultural-social dimensions.

It is now essential for all of us to acknowledge the cogency of this approach, and the Arab countries, for their part, endorsed if not the letter at least the spirit of this approach in the Fez plan, which they adopted virtually unanimously in 1982 and which constitutes a realistic basis for solving the Middle East problem and especially that which lies at its very heart, the Palestinian problem.

We are all aware, however, that for so long as Israel refuses to recognize the Palestinian personality and its right to self-determination and independence all efforts to reach a peaceful solution are doomed to failure. It takes two to negotiate and reach agreement. Fortunately, voices are now being raised in that country in favour of recognizing the Palestinian fact, which is an irrefutable reality.

(Mr. Mabrouk, Tunisia)

There is no doubt that if Israel's allies were themselves to accept this fact the international conference which we so earnestly advocate not only could be convened but would lead to the desired results. We hope that the efforts made in this direction by the Secretary-General will be successfully pursued so that the triple message of the one and only God, invoking peace and brotherhood, may once again resound from Jerusalem. Then, and only then, will genuine co-operation among all the countries of that region so crucial for the world, namely, the Mediterranean, be established.

It is always with a sort of nostalgia for the past that people speak of the Mediterranean region, overlooking the fact that even today it is the principle area in which almost all dilemmas are concentrated - and sometimes confront each other. Alas, it is precisely there that the problems and contradictions of East-West and North-South relations intersect. The establishment of peace in this region of exceptional geostrategic importance would constitute an incomparable foundation for building a more brotherly, more interdependent world.

The active participation of the great Powers in a conference on the Middle East could only help to further the necessary solutions and compromises. Moreover, they would be giving not only their own direct endorsement but also that of the Security Council and the United Nations as a whole.

It is the Security Council that must at all times be the overseer of efforts to solve all the serious conflicts that threaten international peace and security.

We shall not resort to an apocalyptic view of the future of our planet, where problems are indeed world-wide in scope. Rather, we shall strive confidently to emphasize the many signs and glimmers of hope that appear here and there.

(Mr. Mabrouk, Tunisia)

Today we are relieved - and this feeling has been confirmed by the statements we have heard - to catch a glimpse of the possibility of a return to more harmonious relations between East and West, which holds out the promise of a slowing down of the armaments race, in other words the beginning of real nuclear disarmament, and above all the hope of seeing West and East helping to solve the vital problem of peace in all regions of the world.

Indeed, such concord would, among other benefits, open the way for the normal operation of the Security Council, the only organ capable of eliminating the many disputes that are decimating the peoples of the third world in the Middle East, Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Thus, in the efforts to ensure fulfilment of the legitimate aspirations of southern Africa the Security Council has already made a major, indeed decisive, contribution by adopting resolution 435 (1978), on Namibia. This is the only way to bring about the solution of that problem, for which the United Nations will continue to bear particular responsibility until the total independence of that country.

(Mr. Mabrouk, Tunisia)

Whether Namibia or apartheid is at issue, it is also high time for the will of the Security Council - as I have already said - to become, for everyone, an incontestable rule of conduct for our countries in their international relations in a world that is at last banishing recourse to force and aggression. The sufferings inflicted by the apartheid régime on the black people of South Africa will not crush its heroic struggle for liberation. Given South Africa's refusal to compromise either on Namibia or on apartheid, the Security Council must impose the requisite mandatory global sanctions in order to stop the massacre of populations whose only crime is that they aspire to liberty. It is in the light of this problem and of all the other problems confronting mankind that we judge the scope and nobility of the role of the United Nations.

We are therefore fully confident that the Security Council will fulfil its responsibilities under the Charter.

Convinced as we are that grave dangers and perils threaten our world, we would like to believe that we are witnessing the dawn of a general awareness of the major problems of our time, be they political, economic or humanitarian.

Accordingly, only the resumption of a serious, in-depth North-South dialogue inspired by our faith in the natural interdependence of peoples - in a community in which differences in the choice of ways of life cannot override strictly human aspirations and problems - can rescue us from the economic, financial and social anarchy characteristic of our present era, an era that is marked everywhere by the resurgence of poverty and violence, by persistent and spreading unemployment and by the irresponsible destruction of our environment.

There is a major problem that persists in the minds of the international community. Because of its universal and lethal character, it must continue to engage the serious attention of our forums: I refer to the problem of

(Mr. Mabrouk, Tunisia)

international terrorism and the taking of innocent people as hostages. These attacks on people's safety and dignity constitute a challenge that outrages the human conscience. This form of violence, particularly odious because it is carried out in a blind and craven manner, is perpetrated indiscriminately against innocent victims who, by chance or coincidence, happen to be in the path of the killers or their bombs.

Tunisia proclaims once again its condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and reaffirms its intention and determination to work for the enforcement of measures proposed by the General Assembly and of all other ways and means of putting a stop to this terrible scourge.

The deterioration in the sense of humanity in countries where the need has not arisen, the frustrations generated by the situation in the Middle East, the persistence of white segregationist domination over the peoples of South Africa and Namibia, and the armed conflicts in Asia and Latin America all contribute to a distressing picture of world-wide anarchy and disorder, which is only intensified by the armaments race, the economic crisis, monetary instability and the rapid decay of the environment.

Political crisis, economic crisis, social crisis - actually we are witnessing a crisis of civilization in a world that prodigious scientific and technical advances have enfolded into a single network of interacting and interdependent influences.

It is incumbent on the international community, which now constitutes an indivisible whole, to face up to the mounting perils created by many tensions, which are, for the most part, attributable to equalities and disparities often inherited from the colonial past.

(Mr. Mabrouk, Tunisia)

It is for us to eliminate the terrible anachronisms which, at the end of the present millennium, are represented by famine, poverty and sickness, mass unemployment and destruction of ecosystems which ravage the countries of the South by instituting in their stead a new world economic order capable of ensuring the viability, peace and security of our planet and by creating decent living conditions for the populations of the developing countries.

Tunisia, like so many developing countries and so many sister countries of Africa, has agreed to make considerable sacrifices, inter alia, in the context of a thorough structural and global economic reform, being aware of the responsibilities incumbent upon it as a full member of the world economic system.

In spite of these efforts and owing to the lack of substantial support on the part of their partners, the economic and financial situation of the vast majority of developing countries has now passed the critical point and continues to deteriorate, in particular in the most vulnerable countries.

The extremely serious problem of the developing countries, external debt and the mounting flow of capital from our countries to the developed countries clearly illustrate the unacceptable and suicidal perversion of the world economy. Current debt management would actually only contribute to a dangerous increase in economic, political and social pressures on the world system as a whole. Nevertheless we continue to nourish the hope that the North-South dialogue, which was finally resumed at the last session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), will be strengthened by addressing all questions relating to development and growth and will co-ordinate the action of the Organization itself with the action of all bodies making up the United Nations system, for development must not remain a challenge or a mere, albeit fervent, aspiration. It must become a wish and a reality.

(Mr. Mabrouk, Tunisia)

The economic, monetary, trade and financial problems facing mankind as a whole have never been so great and never before have so many people, with the world population explosion, aspired to a better life.

Never have the differences between the communities of our world and within these communities been so shocking and inadmissible as they are today.

Perhaps there is no instant cure or magic solution for the present tragedy of the current rapidly worsening imbalance between the overfed minority of humanity, living in superabundance and waste, on the one hand, and the majority, living in malnutrition and deprivation, on the other hand. Moreover, one cannot remain indifferent to the resources and sums of money expended on armaments when famine is ravaging millions of people and threatening millions more.

These are the main concerns that Tunisia wishes to share with the international community. There are others, more directly and more specifically relevant to our country, such as the Western Sahara conflict, which constitutes a major obstacle to the progress of the people of our region towards realizing their aspirations to form a Maghreb community.

Such a formation is certainly in the nature of things, but it has become more necessary than ever because of the close proximity of one of the world's greatest economic groupings, one which embraces all the traditional economic partners of the countries of our region within the European economic communities.

This indicates how extremely urgent our crucial and vital need has become to co-operate with this strong European entity because of the added power that we would acquire from the formation of a Maghreb economic community based on the planning of our industrial projects and on the smooth operation of our economic structure.

(Mr. Mabrouk, Tunisia)

It explains the importance we attach to seeing the obstacle of the Western Sahara problem removed once and for all, so that our community can develop and assume the leading role that is expected of it, especially by Africa and the Arab world.

We are particularly indebted to the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, for his persevering and imaginative efforts to find a solution to this thorny question. We consider that these worthy efforts are justified by the importance of what is at stake. By resolving the crisis and clearing the way for setting up a coherent and homogeneous Maghreb community, the Secretary-General will have helped to introduce an element of equilibrium, of political, economic and strategic stability, of co-operation and of prosperity into three regions of the world at present in deep distress: Africa, the Arab world and the Mediterranean.

It is, nevertheless, a fact that the whole world - not to say the universe - is confused and threatened by a destructive lack of order.

Never before has man been, thanks to scientific progress and the development of prodigious technologies, so powerful in the material sense. Never before, however, has he been so vulnerable and helpless, like the sorcerer's apprentice, overwhelmed by the forces, energies, weapons and achievements of his own creation, whose technologies he masters so well but which he uses so badly. For we know that science without conscience is soul-destroying.

It is, however, striking that the future is every day becoming a more shared future, in a world where pollution for some people generates sickness for others, where war directly involving some people may lead to death and desolation for everyone else, but where the advancement, enrichment and abundance of some people have not, unfortunately, led to prosperity for all.

(Mr. Mabrouk, Tunisia)

Thus, if we want peace, security and development to be more than a mere slogan, we must all accept the comprehensiveness and interdependence of our responsibilities, so that we can join together in building a future that is no longer conceived and achieved in fear and anxiety, but is based on a fervent and irrepressible zest for life and hope.

With respect for human rights, and unfailingly inspired by the Charter, we shall turn that hope into reality and life will thus fully enjoy the values given it by the Creator.

Mr. HAMEED (Sri Lanka): Let me at the outset convey to the President the warm and sincere felicitations of Sri Lanka on his assumption of the presidency of the General Assembly at its forty-second session. Sri Lanka and the German Democratic Republic have enjoyed a fruitful association of co-operation in bilateral and international affairs, an association which has been further strengthened by exchanges of visits at a high level between our two countries recently.

A special word of gratitude is due from us to the Foreign Minister of Bangladesh, my friend and colleague from the South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation (SAARC), for his outstanding contribution to the forty-first session as President.*

To strike a personal note, it is now a decade since I first addressed the General Assembly as Foreign Minister of Sri Lanka. For the last 10 years I have had the opportunity to observe the vagaries of the international situation, both economic and political. Many of the items I saw on the agenda in 1977 have elude settlement. This has not always been for want of solutions. For many of these problems the General Assembly has, often by consensus, prescribed solutions based

* Mr. Engo (Cameroon), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Hameed, Sri Lanka)

on the principles and purposes of the Charter. Unfortunately, those prescriptions have not been dispensed, nor have solutions been implemented. However, I will not outline the reasons for this sad state of affairs. They are very well known.

Permit me to look at the global economic situation. The 1980s are already being characterized as the lost decade of development. The development process as a whole stands disrupted. For many developing countries it is a tragic tale of economic stagnation, with falling living standards and negative growth rates. Adverse socio-economic consequences of these developments have led to social and political unrest. The prospects for growth and development for many of us remain increasingly unfavourable. If the developing countries are to break out of this vicious circle, there has to be a revitalization of the development process. This will be possible only in an international economic environment that is supportive of such efforts.

The assessment of the world economy which emerges from the World Economic Survey 1987 is clear. World economic growth, as the Survey points out, is weak and fragile, and the prevailing uncertainties point downwards. It is equally clear that if the negative influences are not reversed in time, they could move the world economy closer to a global recession. Therefore, the urgent imperative is for the launching of policies and measures towards the stimulation of world economic growth. This has to be accompanied by an effective reinvigoration of development and trade on the basis of international economic co-operation.

The present modest economic recovery in the industrialized countries has slowed down further in the last two years. The macro-economic and deflationary policies pursued by them in recent years are responsible for this underlying situation. They have had only negative consequences for the third world, as they have precipitated protectionist policies, restrictive trade measures and a decline in third world exports.

(Mr. Hameed, Sri Lanka)

The situation relating to commodities is critical and prices have slumped since 1980 to their lowest levels in the last 50 years. What is more, there are little signs of an improvement. Several developing countries, such as Sri Lanka, which face huge losses in export earnings as a result of falling commodity prices and the deterioration in the terms of trade, find their development efforts seriously disturbed.

There is, however, a silver lining to the present gloomy situation and that is the increasing realization by the major market-economy countries of the need for greater co-ordination of their macro-economic policies and recognition of the interlinkages of issues of commodities, trade, monetary and financial policies. This awareness must be seized and broadened and deepened. The notion of interdependence will have to be transformed into a global and co-ordinated approach reinforced by concrete policies and actions.

It is heartening, therefore, that recent developments have recognized the need to address common concerns in a mutually beneficial way on the basis of international economic co-operation. At Punta del Este in September last year Ministers from developed and developing countries alike adopted a bold and ambitious agenda in launching the Uruguay round of multilateral trade negotiations. That was aimed at a greater liberalization of world trade and the strengthening of the international trading system. Again, as recently as July this year, in Geneva, the Seventh United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) adopted by consensus the Final Act of that Conference. That decision represents a political commitment by the international community to work towards the revitalization of development, growth and international trade through multilateral co-operation. It remains for the international community collectively

(Mr. Hameed, Sri Lanka)

to honour commitments that have been undertaken and to implement them faithfully and effectively.

Before turning to the international political and security situation I should like to refer briefly to the current situation in Sri Lanka. Last year I detailed the efforts of President Jayewardene to resist a threat to impose a separate State unacceptable to the vast majority of the people in Sri Lanka. I also detailed the endeavours of the Government to reach a negotiated political settlement with the Tamil community to redress their grievances. Today I am able to state that a new situation has been brought into existence by the signing of the India-Sri Lanka accord in July this year. The wisdom and statesmanship that led to that accord have been widely acclaimed both within and outside the Assembly. Today, terrorism is virtually at an end, with only some sporadic in-fighting between rival terrorist groups which have not yet surrendered all their weapons. Negotiations have been almost completed on the question of the devolution of political and administrative functions to the provincial councils. There will be an interim administration for the Northern and Eastern Provinces pending the transfer of responsibilities to an elected provincial council. A referendum will take place a year thereafter to ascertain the wishes of the people of the Eastern Province on the question of a merger with the Northern Province. We are hopeful that violent divisive and separatist tendencies in the Northern and Eastern Provinces will give way to the democratic process which has nourished Sri Lanka's political life for over half a century.

The year 1987 was designated by the United Nations General Assembly the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless on a proposal made by the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka in this Assembly in 1982. As a consequence we have witnessed impressive programmes of national and international activities to focus

(Mr. Hameed, Sri Lanka)

attention on the problem of adequate housing and to formulate enduring solutions aimed at satisfying a basic need. On 12 October the Assembly will devote two plenary meetings to the observance of the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless.

We see hopeful signs in the international political situation. We welcome the proposed summit meeting between the leaders of the United States and the Soviet Union. The agreement in principle to dismantle intermediate-range nuclear forces signals the removal of an entire class of weapons of a particular range from the arsenals of the major military Powers. The threat of global extinction has not by any means been removed, or even substantially reduced. Yet agreement is in the course of being reached on intermediate-range nuclear forces and its positive impact on the international scene make this perhaps the most significant step of the century in disarmament initiatives.

Despite the easing of tension in many sensitive areas, much more remains to be achieved before we can enjoy the fruits of lasting peace and security. The horrific destructive power of nuclear weapons must itself be destroyed and a genuine process of disarmament under adequate verification must be set in motion. The nexus between disarmament and development was explored barely a fortnight ago by an International Conference held under the aegis of the United Nations. The Conference reached the clear conclusion that disarmament and development are the two pillars on which enduring international peace and security can be built and that an arms race and a more sustainable world order are not compatible. There is no denying the complexity of the issues involved, but the high-level political participation in the International Conference was indicative of our collective willingness to address those complexities and to find solutions through multilateral co-operation.

(Mr. Hameed, Sri Lanka)

Next year we shall gather in New York again for the third special session of the General Assembly on disarmament. That session must not slide back from the achievements of the first special session on disarmament.

Sri Lanka had the honour and privilege of introducing in the Assembly in 1977, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, the resolution calling for the convening of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

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The rationale of special sessions of the General Assembly on disarmament is that the imperative of disarmament affects, not only the nuclear-weapon States and those who have military muscle, but all nations.

Nuclear disaster would make no distinction between those who can use these weapons, those who possess them, and those like us who do not fall into either category. The joint acceptance by the leaders of the United States and the Soviet Union of the fact that a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought, needs now to be translated into further reductions and the elimination of nuclear weapons beyond the intermediate nuclear forces. As an interim measure, negotiations for a comprehensive nuclear test ban should be conducted not only bilaterally but multilaterally as well. The Conference on Disarmament can be brought into service to negotiate the necessary agreements. This multilateral negotiating body has demonstrated its capacity in its efforts this year to complete a draft convention on chemical weapons.

Few ages have faced such frightening challenges. To retreat from the nuclear race requires greater courage than to persist in a contest to exhibit military superiority. To extend this rivalry and to put weapons in outer space is to thwart the powerful development potential of the last frontier of mankind. Sri Lanka hopes to continue with other nations its efforts to reach consensus on a resolution that would help to prevent an arms race and to promote peaceful co-operation in outer space in the interest of all humanity.

Another initiative in disarmament and international security in which Sri Lanka has been engaged is the implementation of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace. We have offered to host one of the Ad Hoc Committee meetings in Colombo next year. This meeting is of course to be distinguished from the Colombo Conference on the Indian Ocean, which is now scheduled to take place by 1990.

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There is another area of marine activity, economic in character, in which Sri Lanka has taken an initiative. I am happy to state that early this year, we hosted in Colombo the Ministerial Meeting on Indian Ocean Marine Affairs Co-operation. The Conference formulated a long-term programme of co-operation and a plan of action to provide a basis for concrete co-operative action among the Indian Ocean States. The Ministerial Meeting also set up the 17-nation Indian Ocean Marine Affairs Standing Committee, which held its first meeting immediately after the Ministerial Conference. The second meeting of the Standing Committee was concluded successfully early this month in Colombo.

We derive considerable satisfaction from the progress achieved so far by the South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation (SAARC) for promoting regional co-operation. The agreement reached in identifying terrorist offences for the purpose of extradition is indeed a significant breakthrough. The Bangalore Summit Declaration recognized the importance of the principle that each member State of SAARC should not permit the use of its territory for terroristic activities by terrorist groups against another member State. The last Ministerial Meeting held in New Delhi mandated a group of legal experts from SAARC countries to draft a regional convention on terrorism. I am happy to state that the group of legal experts who met in Sri Lanka this month have formulated a draft convention on terrorism which will now come up for consideration before the Council of Ministers in Kathmandu, early in November this year.

A call has been made for an international conference to seek a just and lasting solution to the problems of the Middle East. The fate of an entire people, the Palestinians, continues to be in jeopardy. It is our view that until Israel withdraws from Palestine and other Arab territories it occupies, and until the rights of the Palestinians are restored, no lasting settlement to the cluster of

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issues known as question of the Middle East can be achieved. Sri Lanka will continue to support the just struggle of the people of Palestine under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization, whose participation is indispensable in the negotiations for a durable settlement. The Arab Peace Plan adopted in Fez in 1982 continues to be relevant in this regard.

The plight of the people of Lebanon has become a part of the Middle East question. Sri Lanka calls for the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Lebanon to permit the sovereign exercise by the Government of its authority over all its territory.

In the adjacent Gulf region, relations between two fellow members of the non-aligned countries, Iran and Iraq, have deteriorated into a wasteful war, which exacts a terrible toll on their peoples. Regional stability has been affected and there looms the threat of a wider conflict. Sri Lanka welcomes the initiative leading to the visit by the Secretary-General of the United Nations to the area, and supports every effort to find a settlement acceptable to both parties.

The Central American region presents no less a tangled web of issues, which can only be complicated further by unwarranted foreign intervention. The Guatemala Accord, a regional initiative, offers a blueprint for the construction of a solid edifice of peace. We hope that the initiative will lead to stable relationships among the countries concerned on the basis of sovereign equality, mutual respect, and the peaceful coexistence of differing political and economic systems. The international community must appreciate the wishes of the Governments of this region and respect their desire to develop their societies politically and economically in accordance with the aspirations of their peoples.

(Mr. Hameed, Sri Lanka)

Closer home, the situation in South-East Asia has been adversely affected by developments in Kampuchea. South-West Asia likewise has been affected by developments in Afghanistan. In both situations, Sri Lanka has consistently called for the withdrawal of foreign troops and affirmed the right of the peoples in the respective countries to resolve their problems and determine their political destiny without outside interference, pressures, subversion or coercion.

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Sri Lanka supports the desire of the Korean people to reunify their homeland peacefully, through direct dialogue, without foreign interference and in conformity with the principles of the North-South Statement of 4 July 1972.

Foreign troops have occupied a portion of the Republic of Cyprus, bringing about a de facto division of the island and exacerbating the internal issues concerning the relationship between the two communities in the Republic. Sri Lanka fully supports the call of the Heads of State of the Non-Aligned Movement for the immediate withdrawal of all occupation forces as an essential basis for the solution of the Cyprus problem.

The situation in South Africa offers a curious mix of the best and the worst in human endeavour. Racial bigotry that has been cynically institutionalized and piously justified in the system of apartheid displays the worst in man. What inspires us in this otherwise bleak situation is the spirit and determination of the majority people of South Africa to resist oppression, to endure suffering and overcome subjugation. Repression has only strengthened their resistance and reinforced their drive for freedom and majority rule. Comprehensive mandatory sanctions are internationally accepted as the most effective means to dismantle this ugly system of apartheid. Sri Lanka reiterates the call for the release of Nelson Mandela and others so that they can be brought into the mainstream of political life.

Apartheid has also kept Namibia captive. What is particularly tragic is that in this situation too the international consensus that would bring independence for Namibia - Security Council resolution 435 (1978) - has not been implemented. South Africa's strategy to buy time has prevented freedom for Namibia. The obstacle to Namibian independence remains South Africa's intransigence. The courageous struggle of the people of Namibia, under the leadership of the South West Africa

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People's Organization (SWAPO) must reach its inevitable conclusion, and the international community must hasten this process.

Beyond South Africa and Namibia, apartheid has spawned unbearable horrors on the front-line States, such as the massacre of civilians in Mozambique earlier this year. We strongly condemn these actions that seek to destabilize independent countries through such cold-blooded acts of terrorism against innocent civilians.

Every year we gather here in New York to examine the international situation and to consider what our collective wisdom has to offer in dealing with issues of common concern to us. Pessimists may say that we are cataloguing failures of the United Nations and indulging in rhetoric. The measure of success or failure of the United Nations will depend on what we, the Members of the United Nations, would wish the Organization to be. For small non-aligned countries like Sri Lanka, the moral authority of the United Nations and its Charter and the international accountability it entails are important bulwarks of our security and independence.

Recent developments in some areas have augured well; if not decisively bringing about solutions, at least offering in their wake promises for the future. Patient efforts over a sustained period have had a beneficial cumulative effect, ushering in new hopes, nurturing fresh optimism and yielding new avenues to overcome the failures of the past. These efforts must continue within the framework of the United Nations if decisions are to command the confidence of the international community and to stand the test of time.

Mr. TINDEMANS (Belgium) (interpretation from French): Last week the General Assembly unanimously elected Minister Florin to the presidency of its forty-second session. I congratulate him warmly, especially since his diplomatic experience is the best guarantee of the harmonious unfolding of our work. The relations between his country and my own, which have been excellent for a long

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time, are undergoing a remarkable development. My delegation will be happy to contribute, within its means, to the full success of his difficult task.

I should also like to thank his predecessor, Minister Choudhury, who guided the work of the forty-first session with exemplary efficiency.

I wish also to pay a particular tribute to the Secretary-General, to his professional qualities, his diplomatic talents and relentless dedication. His efforts to resolve international problems, in particular the conflict in the Gulf, deserve our support and gratitude. In his report to the General Assembly, the Secretary-General affirms his conviction and hope that there will be improved multilateral co-operation, facilitated by a new vision and the necessary pragmatism on the part of Member States. I fully share these conclusions.

As in previous years, I wish to make a plea for true universality of the United Nations system. I cannot, therefore, fail to mention the question of the Korean peninsula. I should like to reiterate that Belgium is in favour of the admission of both Koreas to the United Nations, and in this context, my country expresses the hope for a positive conclusion of direct dialogue between both parties.

In his capacity as current President of the Council of Ministers of the European Community, my Danish colleague, Mr. Ellemann-Jensen, has eloquently presented from this rostrum the way in which the 12 member States of the European Community approach the international questions on our agenda. I wish to thank him warmly; and I hasten to stress that Belgium closely associates itself with the statement he made.

I should like to focus my remarks on a theme which is particularly dear to me namely, the human dimension of international relations.

(Mr. Tindemans, Belgium)

Two years ago we solemnly celebrated the fortieth anniversary of our Organization. It gave us an opportunity to reflect on the purposes of the United Nations, as inscribed in the Charter, and to evaluate their implementation in all fields. Possibly the picture we drew then of the world situation was not an encouraging one, but all Member States did, nevertheless, renew on that occasion the pledge they had made when adhering to the Charter.

It was indeed a pledge, a profession of faith. The peoples of the United Nations have declared in the Preamble of the Charter their determination:

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

The Preamble, which contains the entire philosophy of the United Nations, speaks of social progress, tolerance, common interest, justice and peace: the constituent elements of a universal faith.

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We made this pledge with conviction, some in 1945 and others as they gradually attained independence. Belgium, for its part, enthusiastically joined the founding Members of the "United Nations for a better world" as early as at the San Francisco Conference.

In past centuries my country had the sad privilege of being the battlefield of European Powers. Successive foreign occupations have fashioned the personality and way of life of the Belgians: we are deeply attached to freedom and democracy; we loathe war; our common sense, our spirit of tolerance and conciliation are such that our adherence to the Preamble of the Charter is today as in 1945, marked by fervour and great sincerity. Nobody has expressed those feelings better than my illustrious predecessor Paul-Henri Spaak, who presided over the first session of the General Assembly.

But reality falls considerably short of pledges. The United Nations may indeed have prevented the outbreak of a third world war. None the less, numerous wars or conflicts continue to plunge families into mourning; millions of individuals suffer from malnutrition and lack of basic health care; fundamental freedoms are flouted in many States Members of our Organization; economic imbalances are not being reduced; and the totalitarianism of some and the fanaticism of others have swollen the flows of refugees, who are unprovided for and often unwelcome.

Hence public opinion is asking some questions and wants to know how the United Nations is endeavouring to implement the credo of San Francisco. Young people, who are the driving force of the better world we all await, are anxious and restless. They realize with bitterness that international relations are not founded primarily on respect for the individual but are essentially inspired by exacerbated ideological considerations, fanaticism and State selfishness, which have little

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concern for individual and family welfare. In these conditions it comes as no surprise that a sometime sizeable segment of public opinion turns its back on the United Nations.

Two years ago we embarked together upon collective self-examination, but I cannot shake off the impression that debates in the United Nations, in New York and in Geneva, sometimes take on an unreal form and often disregard the human dimension without which all multilateral co-operation is condemned to remain sterile.

My experience of international relations goes back far enough to keep my optimism intact. This optimism is warranted, I sincerely believe, by a certain number of recent developments on a few essential issues: East-West relations, regional conflicts, world economic problems, and human rights. Allow me to dwell upon some of them.

The Final Act of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE), which I was honoured to sign on behalf of my country in 1975, is, in so far as it concerns East-West relations, a balanced achievement that tries to overcome the divisions built on the ruins of the last war in Europe. As the emanation of the will of 35 States to foster and develop in mutual respect and tolerance a Europe free from violent conflicts, the Final Act of Helsinki also embodies the hopes for peace of mankind as a whole, since it is true, without a doubt, that a European war would inevitably lead to world tragedy. The Final Act demonstrates our common will to proceed in a particular direction - towards harmonious relations between States. It shows also that for my country and its partners it is essential that in the field of human rights, as in humanitarian matters, the idea must prevail that States exist to serve their citizens, not the other way round.

For us, the human dimension is the essence of relations in Europe. True to its long-standing tradition of struggle in the name of human liberty, from the

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beginning of CSCE Belgium did everything to ensure that in what became the Helsinki Final Act there were appropriate commitments ensuring the improvement of the conditions of life of the individual.

The debates at meetings in Belgrade, Madrid and Vienna have demonstrated that the implementation of the provisions of the Final Act in the field of human rights and human contacts has not as yet fully lived up to the hopes of the signatories. Certainly there has been some progress, but it is insufficient, as is clear from the number of violations that have been denounced.

The basic principle that laws must be made for man is too often forgotten and supplanted by the concept of man as servant of regulations. That is what guided Belgium's action in the drafting of the Final Act and, later, in the implementation of that instrument and its corollary documents.

The Vienna meeting, which opened on 4 November 1986, gave Belgium the opportunity to make its views known and to take appropriate initiatives. In this spirit, Belgium, in agreement with its partners and allies, prepared a proposal the concept and eventual implementation of which should lead to considerable improvement in respect for human rights among all 35 States members of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe. That proposal is based on the actual text of the Final Act. It envisages a system of information and representations to Governments in which the individual, as such, has a role to play. Furthermore, it proposes the convening of bilateral meetings to consider litigious cases and a notification procedure for cases or particularly difficult situations. It also offers the possibility for all States to ask for and obtain special meetings of the Thirty-five to discuss and resolve situations or specific cases.

This system is completed by the convening of meetings and conferences on the human dimension of CSCE, which will evaluate the implementation of the system,

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assess the circumstances and possibly recommend new measures. This text constitutes a logical and coherent set of proposals, the driving force for progressive action.

In the chapter on the "Third Basket", the Final Act, in addition to the general provisions on "principles", also went into specific themes of fundamental and immediate interest for the free and entire fulfilment of the human being: human contacts, information, culture and education.

At the meeting in Vienna, Belgium was also very active in those fields. It submitted proposals pertaining, inter alia, to the right of the citizen to be aware of his rights, a ban on arbitrary arrests, and the rights of national minorities. In the same spirit Belgium has shown its desire to foster progress in matters of freedom of religion, thought, conscience and conviction, freedom of information and working conditions for journalists. Proposals such as those should, in our opinion, be supported unanimously by all signatory States.

Belgium has also contributed to proposals aimed at improving economic co-operation among participating States while at the same time stressing the part that the individual can and must play in such relations, which also contribute to his personal fulfilment.

Finally, in conformity with its traditions, Belgium has also used the framework of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe to foster new progress in the fields of confidence-building measures and conventional armaments balance. I shall elaborate later on this subject, in which the human element is predominant.

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In dealing with these important issues of security, disarmament and arms limitation I shall restrict myself to a few points of priority interest to my country since the essence of our views has already been stated by my Danish colleague, Mr. Ellemann-Jensen, on behalf of the Twelve.

The first point that must be made is that the international context and climate are more relaxed than before. We have witnessed over the past few months a series of developments that are unquestionably positive in terms of both East-West relations and disarmament and arms limitation. The odds in favour of meaningful agreements are better than at any other time in recent history. This is the case in particular with regard to intermediate-range nuclear missiles, as shown by the developments of last week. It is true also in respect of the question of a total, comprehensive ban on chemical weapons.

The agreement in principle on the global elimination of intermediate-range nuclear missiles reached in Washington by the United States and the USSR has historic import, as was rightly pointed out by one of the protagonists. It will, indeed, be the first time that negotiations will have led not merely to the beginning of a reduction of nuclear weapons but also to the effectively supervised elimination of an entire category of such weapons.

Belgium and its allies have done everything possible in the efforts to arrive at this agreement. Since it is directly affected by the question of intermediate-range missiles, my country has a particular interest in it.

An agreement of this kind is clearly to be sought on its own merits, given its importance in both the European and the global context. Without seeking to establish a direct link, the agreement on intermediate-range missiles augurs well for speedy and positive result in strategic arms reduction talks. Like its partners, Belgium favours a 50 per cent reduction in the strategic capacity of both

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super-Powers, so long as this is carried out in conditions that maintain balance and stability.

In this context, the problem of the use of space for military purposes clearly remains. We do not think that the possibility of including a defensive element in the strategic balance should be ruled out a priori. The essential point is to retain what we have already achieved: the anti-ballistic missile Treaty. Clearly this requires a common interpretation and a readiness to envisage to the future, if need be, on the basis of a mutually agreed transitional régime. Here too, we should guarantee stability at the lowest possible level of forces.

In agreement on intermediate-range nuclear missiles would have a considerable impact on the overall handling of arms limitation and disarmament questions, especially if it could be followed by a strategic arms reduction treaty. A substantial reduction in the nuclear arsenals of the super-Powers leads inevitably to questions about the balance of conventional forces.

It is certainly possible to dream of a nuclear-free world, but we should begin in a more realistic way by creating simply a less nuclear world, on the understanding that, for Europe at any rate, any progress in this field must be through a balanced reduction in the level of conventional forces.

For this reason, my country looks forward to the beginning next year of new negotiations on conventional stability at a reduced level of forces in Europe as a whole.

Reverting to nuclear issues, the question of a test ban must not be seen as a goal in its own right but rather in the overall context of nuclear disarmament. Belgium believes that realism and a gradual approach are required.

At the last session of the General Assembly, I suggested that, while conducting negotiations on a total halt to nuclear testing, the nuclear Powers, in the first place the two super-Powers, should agree to systematic prior notification

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of all tests and to an exchange of technical data which would make possible progress towards a solution of the remaining problems with regard to verification. It would be useful to couple such exchanges of information with the gradual implementation of a system of verification which, having been tested during nuclear tests, could ultimately ensure reliable verification of a general and complete test ban.

The most recent round of talks between the United States and the Soviet Union, in Washington, confirms that their differences of opinion have narrowed. Negotiations are soon to begin. The advantages of a gradual approach now seem to be recognized, and we welcome this.

Another priority for Belgium is the speedy conclusion of a convention on the total prohibition of chemical weapons. The urgent need for such an agreement was unhappily underlined once again this year by the use of these horrifying weapons in the Iraq-Iran war. For the first time in that conflict, civilian populations were the victims. Belgium notes with satisfaction the progress made on this subject in the Conference on Disarmament, thanks to the positive attitude of all the countries concerned. The acceptance by the Soviet Union, after that of several other countries, of the principle of challenge inspections made it possible to eliminate a major obstacle. We may thus hope that the Conference on Disarmament will soon succeed in formulating a coherent set of measures to prevent violations by making them detectable.

In our opinion the international verification organization will be the cornerstone of a system of verification of chemical disarmament. It should be enabled to begin its work as soon as possible after the entry into force of the convention. I announced during my statement at the Conference, and I am pleased to repeat here, that my country would consider favourably acting as host to that

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international organization should the Conference request it to do so. In that way my country, the first on whose soil these terrible weapons were used, more than 70 years ago, would place itself at the service of the international community and all mankind in order to contribute to the total elimination of these inhuman weapons.

Our delegation, together with its partners, will redouble its efforts to attain its goal of eliminating chemical weapons as quickly as possible, and appeals to all the other participants to help to resolve the problems, the technical aspects and complexity of which I do not underestimate.

Although questions of disarmament and arms limitation are global in nature, I have tried to show that our approach, both world-wide and in Europe, is one and indivisible.

The International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development concluded its work with the adoption of a final document. Belgium welcomes that positive outcome of a Conference that was called upon to analyze for the first time the complexity of the link that might be established between those two concepts that dominate international relations.

For Belgium, both two concepts have their own purposes and logic, and should not be considered as mutually dependent. The link that might be established does not have an exclusively financial dimension. Realism compels us to take into account also the right to security, which is essential for the fulfilment of the aspirations of mankind. Security needs should, however, be evaluated as objectively as possible.

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Without a doubt, underdevelopment is not only a severe threat to the security of States but also an impediment to the thriving of individuals and societies. Hence solutions to such a serious problem must be found world-wide. In this search for solutions, it is not advisable, in my view, that we should try to draw a distinction in the world between the guilty and the innocent parties. Belgium insists on allowing an open-minded, scientific and realistic spirit to prevail.

Numerous regions in the world are badly shaken by bitter conflicts some of which have lasted for 40 years.

In the Middle East, suffering and violence are daily realities. The parties concerned, opposed to one another for far too long, are unable to apply in their relations the principles and purposes of the Charter. Civilian populations are the first victims of this situation.

However, the idea of an international conference on the Middle East has made progress. My Danish colleague has voiced here the views and aspirations of the 12 Member States of the European Community in this regard. At the beginning of this year I had the privilege to make, on behalf on the Twelve, a trip to the countries most directly involved in the painful Middle East problem. On behalf of my colleagues, I tried to bring positions closer to one another, while recalling the necessary human dimension of a peaceful, just, global and durable settlement. I thought I could detect goodwill on the side of my interlocutors. This made me very happy and restored my hopes.

The large number of victims of the Gulf war cannot leave us indifferent, whatever the political, strategic and economic interests at stake. Let us, however, leave it to the Security Council to try to humanize this conflict, and then to resolve it. Its cruelty and inanity have shocked and outraged the international community.

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While maintaining strict neutrality in the conflict between Iraq and Iran, Belgium has decided to participate in a purely defensive operation of minesweeping in order to ensure respect for the principle of freedom of navigation in international waters.

In southern Africa, positions are polarized to the detriment of the populations involved. It is urgent to establish a genuine dialogue in South Africa and to allow the Namibian people to exercise its right to self-determination.

In Central America, rays of hope are appearing. With all my heart I call for an agreement between the countries in the region, based on co-operation, tolerance, non-interference, democracy and the humanization of relations between States and between individuals. I shall not restate the European Community's wish to make a contribution to this effect; my Danish colleague dwelled on it yesterday in his statement on behalf of the Twelve.

Finally, in Asia, the Afghan and Cambodian peoples are still unable to determine freely and sovereignly their destiny, and this in spite of repeated appeals by the overwhelming majority of Members of our Organization. The Afghan refugees, whose fate I have witnessed during a recent visit, deserve, in our opinion, more attention from the international community.

When we consider these various conflicts and their consequences, it is not surprising that numerous men and women in the world should ask: What meaning do we give to the obligations Governments have accepted under the Charter? What does the goodwill we proclaim in all circumstances stand for? Why are we sometimes brought to trample underfoot the principles of international law though we have reaffirmed them in many resolutions and statements of our Assembly? Mankind needs peace, security, justice and economic and social progress to survive. We need finally to have our deeds match our words.

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In the economic field, the interdependence of nations has become the leading issue of our debates, and I welcome this. I note, however, that the North-South dialogue is not making progress, that more and more countries have a tendency to withdraw within themselves, or even to wage bitter economic wars. Markets are closing, monetary relations remain unstable, export earnings of developing countries are decreasing, foreign indebtedness rises. The standard of living of populations remains a constant preoccupation. How can we in these conditions preserve human dignity?

World economic recovery is still too slow and uncertain. But it is the urgent duty of us all to co-operate, in solidarity, in creating the necessary conditions for a resumption of genuine growth of the world economy, which would benefit in a fair and balanced way both the industrialized and the developing countries. Like other speakers before me, I welcome the consensus which was reached last July in adopting the Final Act of UNCTAD VII. This consensus, remarkable in itself, augurs well for the outcome of the multilateral trade negotiations in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT).

These expressions of international solidarity are all too rare; that is why I should like to express my real satisfaction on this occasion. Indeed, it is common knowledge that there is very often a direct link between economic stability and peace. Together they form the basis for the advancement of the human person, something to which we have committed ourselves when adhering to the Charter.

I have tried to put the emphasis on the human dimension in international relations. No one will be surprised therefore if I now also touch upon the problems of terrorism, drugs and AIDS - acquired immune deficiency syndrome. In spite of their fundamental differences, each of these problems is directly related to the preservation of the physical integrity and the life of human beings. I

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mention them as instances where international co-operation aimed at the individual must be strengthened urgently, in conformity with the respective fields of competences of the institutions of the United Nations system and leaving aside any narrow political considerations.

The human rights situation around the world is far from satisfactory. Much remains to be done. Belgium acknowledges the unity and interrelation of all human rights - political and civil on the one hand; economic, social and cultural, on the other.

My country has stressed the importance of the latter category of rights when it voted in favour of the Declaration on the Right to Development (resolution 41/128), adopted by the Assembly last year. We cannot, however, accept pre-conditions for the exercise of civil and political rights.

Belgium considers that respect for these universally recognized and accepted rights is given to varying interpretations depending on geo-political systems, ideologies and cultural environments. For this reason, I stressed five years ago, from this rostrum, the importance my country attaches to the promotion and protection of human rights at the regional level.

In 1986 Belgium again became a member on the Commission on Human Rights, where it is contributing to the fullest extent possible and with the utmost impartiality, to the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms. The Commission on Human Rights should be given the means fully to carry out its mandate. Its action should not be hindered by extraneous considerations.

My Danish colleague presented the views of the Member States of the European Community on reform of the procedures and structures of our Organization, following General Assembly resolution 41/213.

In my view, the ultimate goal is to restore a climate of confidence between the Organization and all its Members, so as to enable the United Nations to assume

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its mission with renewed efficiency, in keeping with the Charter's preamble. Let us not forget, however, that such confidence presupposes the full support of our countries' public opinions, media, non-governmental organizations, and all men and women, above all, youth. Indeed, for the realization of their profound aspirations young people rely more and more upon fair and dependable international co-operation

Man's happiness is indeed linked to the humanization of international relations. My statement today has no other purpose than to recall this truth, which is too often overlooked.

Mr. SALDIVAR (Paraguay) (interpretation from Spanish): At the outset of my presentation to the General Assembly at its forty-second session, I should like to convey our most respectful greetings to the President, Mr. Peter Florin, representative of the German Democratic Republic, and to express our best wishes for the successful conclusion of our work under his presidency, and the hope that from this session there will emerge important resolutions that would effectively ensure international peace and security.

We also extend our greetings to the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, whom we ask to accept our appreciation for his tireless dedication to the United Nations goals of peace and development. This Organization is fortunate to have him, not only as its most eminent official, but also as a citizen of the world committed to achieving peace and development for all.

The Republic of Paraguay comes once again to this forum with the sincere intention of supporting every initiative that could assure mankind of a day of peace and full development. It does so in the firm belief that each State Member of this Organization, as a servant of international law, is convinced of the importance of the existence of the United Nations and of its role of protagonist in bringing about a time of peace and security for all.

In these circumstances, and considering the role the United Nations should play in the world, we fail to understand the attitudes of many countries - whether they be super-Powers, permanent members of the Security Council or Members of this Organization - attitudes that undermine, that sap their support and reduce the level of their active participation, thus weakening the Organization's ability to intervene in critical situations. This problem, already one of long standing - the problem of the lack of a leading role for the United Nations in world conflicts - is totally, the unwarranted. On the contrary, it demands of every country an effective attitude that could redound to the greater, the universal prestige of our

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Organization and the effective application of our entire legal and moral power for bringing about just solutions to conflicts that, at this very moment, beset humanity.

When we review those critical events that have taken place since 1945, we are obliged to say that, because of the aforementioned weakening of the role of the United Nations as a leader, every country should see to it that the decisions taken by the General Assembly, which are adopted to prevent or solve conflicts, are brought into line with true justice and contain positive formulas - pragmatic and fair formulas - capable of resolving crises by peaceful means and achieving effective peace through negotiation. Unilateral, partial decisions, or those that do not embody the immutable principles of international justice, do the United Nations system no good. By contrast, the adoption of decisions on the basis of different criteria - criteria based on world harmony and strict respect for the Charter - could promote a more effective way for our Organization to become involved.

The Government of Paraguay wishes to pay a special tribute to all bodies within the United Nations system, but in particular to the United Nations Development Programme, whose activities are related to the progressive accomplishment of all the vital projects that are being implemented in our country. This type of United Nations assistance is not only effective for developing countries like Paraguay, but also serves the ceaseless quest for a better standard of life and progress for all nations.

The Republic of Paraguay is continuing to make strides in peace and democracy. It has been doing so steadily since 1954, assuring justice and freedom for all our people. The nation is effectively governed by the rule of law, and thus enables its citizens to develop further and perfect our democratic

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institutions, guaranteeing a political life based on the widest possible participation and a multi-party system.

The Government of the Constitutional President of the Republic of Paraguay, General of the Army Alfredo Stroessner, is based on popular consent, freely expressed in fair elections. It has the popular and democratic support of the Colorado Party, a political organization which, on 11 September 1987, commemorated a hundred years of constitutional life in Paraguay.

Throughout its rich history, Paraguay has struggled and made sacrifices to defend the immutable principles of international law. We seek to ensure constant respect for the individual identity and the independence of all States and, in strict reciprocity in our international conduct, we have called on other States faithfully to observe the same principles, never, in any circumstances or in any way whatsoever, accepting interference by other States in the domestic affairs of Paraguay - affairs which are of concern to, and have to be dealt with, only by Paraguayans.

We wish to bring to the attention of the General Assembly the spirit of integration that has guided the regional policy of the Republic of Paraguay, a policy based on peace and co-operation with our neighbours. This has made possible the construction of the hydro-electric projects at Itaipu, under conditions of equality of rights and duties, with the Federative Republic of Brazil - projects that are already generating the electricity needed for the development of a vast region. The same applies to the Yacyreta project involving ourselves and Argentina. This project is in an advanced stage of construction.

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Both demonstrate the serious determination of the Government of Paraguay to make progress. These, added to the facilities provided by our Atlantic neighbours, such as the ports of Paranagua in Brazil, Nueva Palmira in Uruguay, Antofagasta in Chile and Matarani in Peru constitute favourable indicators of our relations with neighbouring sister nations. Our trade with Bolivia is expanding through the Transchaco route, in harmony with the spirit of that same policy.

The report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization deserves our fullest support. We know of the Secretary-General's unalterable determination to find a solution to international problems. This report schematically summarizes all the achievements in that difficult field, as well as the frustrations faced as the result of a wide range of intervening factors that are beyond the control of the highest-ranking official of the United Nations.

We highlight the work done by the Secretary-General and subscribe to his central, vital concepts, which lead the Organization towards fulfilment of the purposes laid down by the founders of the United Nations, in a changing world beset by adverse factors, so that peace may be made a tangible reality and fellowship among nations may foster progress and efforts to achieve international justice.

We cannot fail to mention the sources of possible world conflicts that are of concern to the Republic of Paraguay and to all mankind - for example, the conflict in the Persian Gulf, which has reached such dangerous proportions that it could at any moment lead to a more widespread war, with incalculable consequences. We believe we speak for men and women throughout the world when we ask the United Nations to make every possible effort to put an end to that hotbed, which has its origin in the war between Iran and Iraq, compounded by a number of factors that imperil world peace. We call upon the States involved in that conflict to accept the decisions of the United Nations.

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The regrettable escalation of events in Latin America confronts us with evidence of another source of conflicts whose outcome is unpredictable. In this area of the world, there is intervention by two super-Powers with broad interests in the region. The countries of the region that make up the Contadora Group and the Support Group have been working, with our encouragement, to bring about peace. It is essential that peace be achieved and that all the countries of the region refrain from adopting partisan positions. This applies particularly to those that are acting in the service of a super-Power, whether directly or indirectly. We condemn such action on the basis of the principle of non-intervention.

The conflict in the Near East does not seem to be of concern to the world at the moment, possibly because the region has for so long suffered the absence of the peace that is essential for nations, peoples and States. The Republic of Paraguay has proclaimed in all forums, the need to ensure implementation of Security Council resolution 242 (1967) in the search for effective solutions to the problems in this high-risk area of conflict. We believe that the Palestinian people have the right to a homeland, just as the State of Israel has the right to live in peace within its boundaries.

The Government of the Republic of Paraguay has condemned, in this forum, the intervention of a super-Power in Afghanistan, in a clear-cut demonstration of that Power's lack of regard for international justice and the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of other States. We take this opportunity to reiterate, on a universal basis, that the application of this principle, which is central to our Charter and to human rights, is the sole guarantee of peace and harmony among nations at differing economic and social levels.

We are also concerned by Viet Nam's intervention in Cambodia. That intervention, which is dangerous from all points of view, generates the

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intervention in that country by a super-Power on the one hand and by another country, also a permanent member of the Security Council, on the other.

The Republic of Korea has always worked for the peaceful reunification of the two Koreas. Unfortunately, its efforts have not been crowned with success, for reasons that cannot be attributed to that country, a defender of freedom. The Republic of Korea, a law-abiding country that respects the international desire for coexistence, has a legitimate desire to become a Member State of our Organization. We support that legitimate desire of the Republic of Korea, which is in keeping with the principle of universality of the United Nations and with an effective international order, and believe that the possibility of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea also being admitted should be kept open.

The problem of the Malvinas Islands has had a number of consequences, which once again, demonstrate that disputes should be resolved by effective, pragmatic negotiations. The Republic of Paraguay calls upon the two countries involved - Argentina and the United Kingdom - with both of which we have ties of friendship, to adopt this procedure so as to find an amicable, felicitous solution to the dispute over sovereignty. In this spirit, we advocate negotiations between the parties.

We cannot help but voice our concern when we turn to the subject of disarmament, a vital issue in the times in which we live. The arms race and the business of purchasing and selling conventional and nuclear arms themselves engender pressure and hostility and pave the way for armed conflict. Disarmament is a necessity for all States, and that necessity becomes even greater when we realize that many less developed countries that are in desperate straits because of the deterioration of the international economy are spending million of dollars on arms of various kinds. We live in peace and we believe in peace. In that spirit

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we call upon all States to end the arms race, which is a shameful affront considering the sad fact that thousands upon thousands of children are dying because of starvation and malnutrition.

The Republic of Paraguay, which won independence on 14 May 1811, values the work on decolonization being done by the United Nations. We applaud this work since we support the principle of the self-determination of peoples as long as application of that principle is not linked with interests alien to the legitimate interests of the peoples meant to win independence.

On the basis of that position, we believe that the people of Namibia are entitled to independence. Further the Republic of Paraguay supports in all forums the principle of territorial integrity and the full sovereignty of peoples. We should like, on the basis of non-intervention in internal affairs, to see the withdrawal of foreign troops from the countries of Africa.

There is one scourge that horrifies all people the world over but none the less continues to undermine the moral and legal order of our world. We refer to terrorism, which afflicts various individual countries as well as the international community. The time has come to ask ourselves what has been done to cope with this irrational, inhuman monstrosity to ensure that it ceases to take innocent lives. Terrorism cannot be legitimized in any circumstances. Countries that encourage terrorism based on the fact that there may exist underlying causes that trigger so irrational a reaction must, even if some of those causes exist, change their views in keeping with the dignity that must govern the system of relationships within the international community.

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We cannot tolerate terrorism because it is unjustifiable that certain territories should serve as training-camps for terrorists and still less that such territories should be used as sanctuaries for terrorists.

The time has come to state categorically that the United Nations has two options: it can persuade all countries to condemn this irrational and inhuman conduct and to work together to eliminate the hotbeds of terrorism. Otherwise, our Organization will lack credibility in these matters and will be irrevocably forced to admit its inability to wipe out a practice that is a crime against mankind. But this is not to say that the United Nations should not continue to consider, with zeal and diligence, the elimination of the probable causes of this universal scourge. Those causes, however, can never explain the criminal violation of the right to life of its innocent victims.

The Republic of Paraguay supports the policy of the United Nations to end all forms of discrimination against women. It has been many years since the law enshrining the civil and political rights of Paraguayan women was promulgated in recognition of an established fact and of the active part women had played in our national life.

In a spirit of fairness we must also recognize that the North-South dialogue has so far produced no results whatsoever. The rich industrialized countries continue to set incredibly low prices for the raw materials produced and exported by the developing world. This ignoble policy is the root cause of many of the problems of the developing world. The deterioration in the terms of trade leads to the regrettable fact that many countries are unable to pay their debts and are not in a position to reach the stage of full development they require in order for their people to attain a life of dignity.

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Although the Republic of Paraguay is not in the same position as other fraternal countries with regard to external debt, we express our solidarity with all those countries that are facing such a situation. This issue requires not only financial and economic solutions, which are of prime importance but also political solutions, because no country can resign itself to zero progress when there are collective needs to be met in order to forestall situations that may endanger not only the peace but the freedom of peoples in the developing countries.

Our Organization must identify itself fully with the legitimate requests formulated by countries in the unfortunate position of being unable to repay their debts. The rich industrialized countries must take a stand, not out of selfish and restrictive motives but in a common desire to consolidate peace and democracy through justice in the international economic arena.

All attempts and programmes formulated to resolve this disturbing problem of the burden of external debt in the world must inevitably be based on the recognition of the exporting countries' inalienable right to receive really fair prices for their raw materials exported to international markets.

In the face of the painful developments in economic relations between the industrialized North and the developing South, the real needs of developing countries have given rise to certain aspirations. We refer to economic and technical co-operation between developing countries. The United Nations, in all its forums, including the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), must use its prestige to back up this effort which is being promoted throughout the world, for the most part through specialized organizations on the regional level.

We must, finally, come to the conclusion that raising the standard of living of the developing peoples is a moral duty on the part of our Organization and of those countries that already enjoy high standards of living that enable them to

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enjoy fully the many benefits that are unattainable in the developing countries. In this context what is required is a carefully implemented effort to achieve a better economic position for the raw-material-producing countries or for those countries that are just beginning industrial development.

The Government of Paraguay is fully aware that there is an acute financial crisis at the United Nations. The developed countries, for reasons the developing countries cannot fully comprehend, have curtailed their contributions to our Organization, thus decreasing the total amount of moneys available. This financial crisis has an effective political dimension, since, in the short term, our Organization will have to make cuts throughout its system, cuts that will adversely affect programmes currently being implemented throughout the developing world. This will obviously have an adverse effect on the scope of the activities of our Organization and work to its detriment.

We are fully aware, moreover, of economic stagnation and recession. We understand the scope of those problems, which are causing serious difficulties to the super-Powers in the commercial sphere and affecting the balance of payments. Nevertheless, the times in which we live compel the United Nations to depend on the contributions it needs for it to do its work throughout the world, contributions that must come from those industrialized countries fortunate enough to enjoy wealth and development.

The problem of Lebanon merits a special place in my statement. It can be considered to be included in the aforementioned serious conflict in the Middle East. However, in view of the conditions now prevailing, conditions which, if they were to persist, could spawn new and tragic developments, we feel that we must give it special consideration.

The principles of the self-determination of peoples and the territorial integrity of States have been set aside in Lebanon by the reign of irrational

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violence and have been replaced by political intransigence and the polarization of the conflicting parties. Paraguay holds unswervingly to the need for a peaceful settlement of disputes. It joins the concert of countries demanding this in order to ensure the existence and integrity of Lebanon on the basis of legal equality and peaceful coexistence among its citizens, to whatever ethnic group they belong.

As for the question of Cyprus, the Republic of Paraguay is hopeful that that problem, which is long standing in the United Nations, can find a just and balanced solution through negotiations, avoiding violent confrontation and any violation of international law. We hope that United Nations intervention may lead to just solutions that take into consideration the rights of the countries concerned in the conflict.

If all practical instruments to reach a happy conclusion in the current situation are not brought into play, the problem of Cyprus could well become yet another of the unending crises in today's world, which is truly and wholly interdependent. Armed conflict in one part of the world is not limited to that region but can have unpredictable repercussions and ramifications throughout the rest of the world.

The developing world has immense prospects in the new Law of the Sea. The Republic of Paraguay, as a developing landlocked country, firmly believes that that instrument, which has been given the world to redress irritating and dangerous injustices, represents a new step forward by mankind in its painstaking quest for a better distribution of the world's wealth amongst nations. On the basis of that belief, Paraguay has ratified the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and will support that process, which redounds to the prestige of the Organization and which may, in the future, be a source of truly lasting satisfaction.

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The Republic of Paraguay has co-operated and will continue to co-operate with our Organization's Commission on Human Rights. In the course of that co-operation it welcomed the visit of an independent advisor in 1986, who travelled throughout our country and became fully aware of the actual situation in Paraguay. That same person, in pursuance of his work, which Paraguay continues to welcome, will visit our country again before the end of 1987.

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This is a demonstration of Paraguay's co-operation with the United Nations, which is dedicated to the promotion of human rights. Our Government responds immediately to all inquiries received from United Nations organs dealing with human rights, on the understanding that with the co-operation of Member countries these organs will intensify their work to the benefit of our Organization.

We warmly support the loyal co-operation of the United Nations with the Organization of American States and the Latin American Economic System. We value such co-operation and we see it as having a positive and realistic significance in the interdependent world we live in - a world whose problems always require global solutions. These assertions are valid in the political sphere, but their validity is even more apparent in the economic field.

My Government enthusiastically supports the proposal put forward in this universal forum by the Republic of Brazil for the declaration and establishment of a zone of peace and co-operation in the South Atlantic. This valuable initiative for world peace and for free and progressive interplay in the South American continent deserves the attention of all international organizations which must work out specific programmes for this vital area of the world, in the arduous tasks of achieving peace with justice, equal opportunity and economic growth for everyone without exception.

We can state with absolute certainty that men and women the world over look to the United Nations and its task with faith and confidence. They are at the very core of the efforts we make here on behalf of peace and progress for mankind; and they place their trust in our Organization and in the spirit of those who convene here to represent their Governments in order to foster the ideals and commitments of the founders and ensure for all the inhabitants of the globe the blessings of peace and the establishment of justice in international relations.

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We bear witness to our sharing this noble spirit and to our commitment that we shall work united in order to achieve these objectives and ideals, without which life would have no meaning, and to ensure a future free of storm clouds obscuring mankind's vision.

We must freely shoulder our responsibility to bequeath to our children and our children's children the happy world future generations will expect - a world without discrimination, without error, without injustice that engenders exasperation and dejection; and a creative atmosphere with joy, peace and moral fulfilment.

The PRESIDENT: We have one more speaker on the list and two delegations have indicated their wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply. I must draw attention to the fact that the right of reply may be exercised on a specific subject, but the delegations concerned may wish to consider the possibility of replying in greater detail when they make their main statements later. I mention this merely because of the lateness of the hour. It is for the delegations to choose and if either of them would rather reply during the main statement it intends to make it can so indicate to me. Otherwise I shall be happy to call upon them tonight.

Mr. PINHEIRO (Portugal) (spoke in Portuguese; English text furnished by the delegation): First of all, allow me to congratulate the President on his election to such an eminent post. We are certain that his well-known merits will be a decisive contribution to the success of the work of this forty-second session of the General Assembly.

Likewise, I should like to pay tribute to the outgoing President, Mr. Rasheed Choudhury, for the competent manner in which he carried out the duties of the presidency.

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In such a troubled period of international life, it is for me a special pleasure to address this Assembly as Foreign Minister of a Government which, under the leadership of Professor Cavaco Silva, was able to find for Portugal a balance between political stability and economic and social development and the fulfilment of the ideals of freedom, democracy and solidarity.

These have been, after all, important goals of the United Nations ever since its creation 40 years ago, and they have become a constant source of inspiration to Governments and men of good will.

The United Nations has acquired a long and rich experience as a mediator. This is no less remarkable than its ability at the same time to preserve, over and above everything else, a legitimacy of its own that defines it as the irreplaceable instrument for co-operation and understanding among the peoples that make up the Organization.

I have already referred to the role of mediator played by this Organization and its contribution to the settlement of conflicts. However, I am pleased to mention here an example where calling upon this role was not needed and an exclusively bilateral settlement was reached, thanks to the understanding among nations and to their good will in the search for a solution of their differences.

I am referring to the agreement signed between the People's Republic of China and Portugal on 13 April 1987, establishing the necessary conditions for the transfer of the exercise of sovereignty over the territory of Macau, to begin in 1999. It should be noted that from the beginning of such negotiations there was no dispute over the title of sovereignty, which the Portuguese Constitution of 1976 had already acknowledged as belonging to China.

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Tribute should be paid not only to the conditions embodied in this agreement, but also to the atmosphere of good understanding that prevailed throughout these negotiations and allowed for the safeguarding and strengthening of the bonds of friendship and co-operation that already existed between our two countries. New perspectives are now opened in our relations with the great nation of China.

Nevertheless, there are instances in which countries should, or have to, resort to the mechanisms established in the Charter of this Organization in order to look for an equitable settlement of disputes. This was the case of Portugal in relation to East Timor. Unable to fulfil its obligation as the administering Power and, in view of there having been no practical results after seven years of condemnation of the occupation of the Territory by Indonesian forces, Portugal decided to request the intervention of the Secretary-General.

We are still relying on the mandate under which the General Assembly, in its resolution 37/30 in 1982, requested the Secretary-General to search for an equitable, universal and internationally acceptable solution to the question of East Timor. Further consultations and useful contacts have been carried out within the framework of that mandate, keeping the dialogue open in the hope of reaching positive results. Hence, we have agreed once again to the postponement of the debate called by the General Assembly, in view of the progress report of the Secretary-General issued on 8 September.

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Our sincere disposition actively to co-operate in the fulfilment of the mandate carried out by the Secretary-General is based, as we repeatedly stated, on clear-cut underlying principles: the absence of any sort of claim over the territory of Timor, which is closely linked to us by historical bonds; the search for a dignified settlement that will respect the religious and cultural identity of the people of Timor, and the fulfilment of its legitimate aspirations; respect for the right of the people of East Timor and of any other people freely to decide upon its collective destiny in full compliance with the fundamental and unquestionable principle of self-determination, in accordance with resolutions 1514 (XV) and 1541 (XV) of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

My Government pays particular attention to the measures affecting the humanitarian conditions of the people of East Timor and sincerely welcomes the Secretary-General's intention closely to follow such developments "so as to promote future and constant improvements in the conditions of the Territory".

Therefore we participated in the work recently carried out in Geneva by the Sub-Commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and the Protection of Minorities, which, in the framework of the issue of the violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms, approved a resolution on the situation in East Timor.

Portugal has recently been elected by the Economic and Social Council to membership in the Human Rights Commission. As an applicant, my country was fully aware of the particular responsibilities entailed in such membership. But it was likewise inspired by the possibility of making a more decisive contribution in this field since human rights are one of the main items of Portuguese foreign policy.

We cannot talk about human rights without bearing in mind that in many areas of the world millions of people are still denied safeguard of the most fundamental right, the right to life. We firmly believe that international peace and security, as well as the social and economic development and progress of the different

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nations, can be fully achieved and safeguarded only if they are based upon respect for and implementation of human rights, social justice and each individual's freedom to choose and pave his own destiny.

Since we firmly believe in these principles, we cannot share the misleading concept that State sovereignty can be invoked to prevent international safeguard of human rights, not even if lack of social and economic development is used to justify lesser observance of and respect for civil and political rights. On the contrary, the implementation of human rights should, in our opinion, be a primary concern in the assessment of the major problems that afflict the international environment today.

In this regard we cannot stress enough the paramount importance of the role that the United Nations and its several organs and specialized agencies have been playing and should continue to play. Important legislative work is being carried out based upon the principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. As a parallel development, we believe that the international community should embark on a concerted effort to reinforce the systems of surveillance and verification of the implementation of human rights. Measures like the appointment of special rapporteurs, the creation of task forces, the presentation of reports, the organization of international conferences and congresses on specific subjects or specific cases of presumable violation of human rights, wherever they may occur, have proved to be fruitful and should be promoted and reinforced in the future. I should like also to acknowledge the important role played by non-governmental organizations since safeguard of human rights is a task that we should all embrace and one that affects us all.

In the same framework please allow me briefly to refer to another subject of increasing concern in today's world, namely, the systematic practise of violent acts carried out by organized groups that do not respect the democratic order

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prevailing in our countries. These actions, no matter who perpetrates them or why, directly jeopardize personal rights, freedoms and safeguards, such as the rights to life, to freedom and to security.

For these reasons we have always upheld adherence to and full respect for the spirit and letter of the conventions drawn up by the specialized agencies within the United Nations system. Similarly we positively support the consensus expressed by the approval of resolution 40/61 of 9 December 1985. That agreement deserves our tribute inasmuch as it was the first time that a consensus was reached on such a difficult issue having such a wide range of implications, and we are firmly convinced that we should pursue actions in accordance with the spirit of such a resolution. In our opinion, this is a problem that, given its gravity and urgency, should be carefully addressed by the whole international community.

On 1 July this year the European Communities took a significant step forward in the process of a new European development: the enforcement of the European Single Act.

Portugal considers this initiative, together with the related reforms now under way, to which we have actively contributed, a demonstration of great vitality. It stands for both adaptation to an internal reality to which new elements have added richness as well as diversity and adjustment to the development of the political, economic and technological conditions of the latter years of our century, which are undergoing rapid and profound mutations.

We consider that Act a valid attempt to meet coherent challenges that the community will have to face simultaneously: on the one hand, an external challenge; on the other, an internal one. Overcoming the external challenge will entail the possibility of reinforcing and giving broader meaning to the constructive position that the Community has been taking on the international scene. The internal challenge entails the need to secure a balanced development process within

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territorial boundaries, which may allow for the reduction of the existing gap between countries and regions and the reinforcement of internal cohesion.

It is essential to find the appropriate solution to both challenges so that the community and its members may, as we all wish, fully assume their responsibilities in the political and economic spheres at an international level.

After all, there has been a constant effort to achieve international openness and co-operation; evidence of that is provided by the recent revision of the co-operation agreements with the Lomé countries and the southern Mediterranean countries.

Along the lines of a policy of co-operation and assistance to development, I should like to stress that my country has this year completed its full-fledged adherence to the Third Lomé Convention. This is a framework between the European Economic Community (EEC) and 66 countries of Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific, which will allow us considerably to extend our actions to underdeveloped countries and hence reaffirm the bilateral co-operation policy that we have endeavoured to accomplish.

I should like to mention here the work carried out by many of the countries that participate in the General Assembly within the "Uruguay Round" of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). This round of negotiations, broader than any previous one, should attain results leading to a sound change in economic international relations. Portugal is determined actively to contribute to the success of this round of negotiations, and here and now we renew our unquestionable support for the Declaration of Punta del Este. Nevertheless, the success of such negotiations should stem from the concerted action of all the participating countries. Each country's capacities and a fair distribution of responsibilities should be taken into consideration so as to attain complete transparency, free of artificial protectionism, in international trade. That is the essential basis for

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the carrying out of structural changes and reforms that lead to the necessary conditions for the optimal use of existing resources. Hence it is appropriate to recall the conclusions of the UNCTAD meeting. In one single document it was possible to express a concerted assessment of the economic international situation and to list a series of specific political actions to be implemented within the next few years by the developed and developing countries. The climate of dialogue achieved during the conference allowed for a sound analysis of multilateral economic co-operation. This is an essential factor in the North-South dialogue, which is such a pivotal item in international relations.

It is well known by all that co-operation with Africa, in particular with Portuguese-speaking African countries, is of paramount importance to Portugal. It is for us a crucial matter of top priority at both the political and the cultural levels.

The priority attributed to the African coast and to the African continent in the celebrations that Portugal is holding before the turn of the century commemorating the Descobrimentos, the adventure of our maritime expansion and the encounter of peoples and civilizations, speaks for itself.

I wish to express here the hope that the United Nations may become involved in these celebrations, a clearly universal event.

As many have acknowledged, Portuguese expansion was, as a famous sociologist put it, more of a maritime and exploratory expansion than a conquering one. Cultural roots are deep, and all recognize the special bonds created by such a heritage, for which we are willing to expand and intensify the co-operation and dialogue between Portugal and all African countries that are Portuguese-speaking or that share our historical heritage. Accordingly, Portugal has undertaken serious efforts to promote our already reinforced common solidarity, and has widely proved that.

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This co-operation, apart from bilateral action in different sectors, also encompasses very valuable multilateral programmes - for example, our participation in the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference (SADCC), a body which has achieved year after year increasing political and economic solidarity, giving special priority to the problems of development.

Moreover, it is with serious apprehension that Portugal views the series of developments taking place in southern Africa: the considerable deterioration of the social and economic conditions of the population, and the escalating instability and tension. Underlying this situation are two factors that have been vehemently condemned by the international community: the present internal framework of the Republic of South Africa and the deliberately provoked destabilizing outbreaks that have been afflicting countries of the area, namely, Angola and Mozambique.

Likewise, Portugal has unequivocally denounced and condemned, both within the United Nations system and elsewhere, the immorality and injustice entailed in apartheid. The dismantlement of apartheid is an essential condition of the achievement of equitable solutions to the conflicts and problems besetting South Africa today.

Thus, it is essential that the South African authorities pursue a dialogue with all the political and social groups that try to make a decisive move towards the definite elimination of apartheid and the establishment of conditions that will ensure more effective access to political participation, employment and social justice for all the communities of the country. Only with the courage, decisiveness and true sense of responsibility required at this historic moment will the governing classes in South Africa avoid a process of internal confrontation.

Similarly, Portugal views with great concern the continuous postponement by the Republic of South Africa of the exercise by the Namibian people of the right

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self-determination. Twenty years after the adoption of resolution 2145 (XXI), which ended South Africa's Mandate over Namibia, the question of the independence of that Territory is not yet solved, owing to South Africa's persistent demands, which delay the implementation of Security Council resolution 435 (1978).

Portugal's position in this matter is well known. Portugal has repeatedly declared that the solution of the question of Namibia is of primary concern, and has consistently upheld the independence of the Territory, in keeping with Security Council resolution 435 (1978). Portugal has also repeatedly expressed its firm opposition to any act capable of further delaying the attainment by the people of Namibia of their right to self-determination.

South Africa should respond constructively to the appeals voiced by the international community and abandon the position of confrontation that it has adopted, particularly against Angola. Portugal has vehemently condemned this position on the part of South Africa.

My Government is firmly convinced that the solution to the problems that afflict South Africa lies in the creation of conditions leading to the widening of a genuine and constructive dialogue. This is the spirit of the Nkomati agreements and of the contacts we have carried out in the region. Without pretending to find solutions to problems that others will have to solve, we believe that it is our duty to contribute in the best possible way to a peaceful, concerted settlement of the conflicts that so dramatically beset such important areas of the African continent.

It is with deep concern that my country views the constant worsening of the living conditions of the people of Mozambique and the acts of extreme violence that have recently been perpetrated against them by groups involved in a process of spreading instability, which my country vehemently condemns.

Angola, too, is living in particularly difficult times. There, too, the population is afflicted by the widespread instability and conflict that prevail in

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most countries of southern Africa. We pay a tribute to the pragmatism that the political leaders in Angola have demonstrated in their search for a global solution to the problems that afflict the country. Also worthy of praise are the reopening of the dialogue aimed at a solution of the problem of Namibia and the recent announcement of important economic reforms. Portugal firmly supports and encourages such measures.

I should also like to address here the recent unanimous election within the United Nations system of a renowned diplomat and legal expert from Cape Verde to the presidency of the Preparatory Commission for the International Sea-Bed Authority and for the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea. I am certain that with all his merits he will make a decisive contribution to the work of that body, whose success is of great interest to a country with such maritime traditions as Portugal.

I should also like to refer with great satisfaction to the views set forth at the last meeting of the five Heads of State of Central America in the city of Guatemala. The results achieved at that meeting are a promising step towards the creation of the atmosphere of mutual confidence which is so essential to the preservation of peace, respect for political freedoms and the social and economic development of the area. Nevertheless, the promise can be kept only if specific actions are taken that will embody the safeguards for the exercise of civil and political rights that are an essential part of the Guatemala document.

In spite of the progress achieved in this vast area of America, we remain concerned about the overwhelming need for further efforts so that the serious economic problems that afflict many Latin American countries may be overcome. It is not always easy to make a profound diagnosis of the causes of the problems that affect these countries, but the international community should do away with solutions that have proved to be unsatisfactory and turn to more innovative ideas.

(Mr. Pinheiro, Portugal)

I am convinced that the developed countries have an important contribution to make in this area. I firmly believe that we should seek constantly and persistently a new set of formulas for co-operation with Latin America.

I also pay a tribute to the increasing solidarity that the Latin American countries have demonstrated. Examples of this solidarity can be found in the endeavours of the Contadora Group and the Support Group - namely, the establishment of a mechanism for periodic political consultations between the member countries of these two groups and of closer contacts between Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay. These measures are the starting point of a process of gradual integration that will have major consequences in the area.

I turn to disarmament. I will not dwell on this vast and complex subject, since my colleague from Denmark has already addressed the issue on behalf of all the member countries of the European Communities. I would simply re-emphasize that Portugal will continue to participate actively with the allied countries in all the actions carried of the international community in this field that may lead to effective reinforcement of international security.

In our opinion this will occur only in an atmosphere of greater mutual trust, achieved through a continued, sound East-West dialogue, without jeopardizing the delicate balance of power, which in today's world, remains the most solid safeguard of security and stability in international relations.

It is in this spirit that we carefully observe the positive developments in the current negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union. Moreover, I cannot fail to make a special reference to the agreement on the dismantlement of medium-range missiles in Europe achieved recently in Washington. We hope that this measure will contribute not only to a more secure Europe, but also to greater stability and collective safety, which it should never impair.

(Mr. Pinheiro, Portugal)

It is with deep concern that we have noted in the last few weeks the deterioration of the situation in the Gulf region. We join whole-heartedly in all the urgent appeals from all corners of the world for an end to all acts of violence and intimidation, so as to achieve a cease-fire in the area as the pre-condition of the establishment of an environment of understanding in which genuine solutions may be found.

In accordance with Security Council resolution 598 (1987), which is a good example of the unity at present prevailing in the international community, we uphold freedom of navigation and free trade in every part of the world, and cannot accept that principles universally accepted and enshrined in international documents signed by every nation should be jeopardized.

We likewise fully support the endeavours of the Secretary-General in the search for peace and a lasting, dignified agreement that may lead to the ending of the conflict that has been undermining Iran and Iraq. We are confident that the Secretary-General's decisiveness may become a crucial element in this issue, as long as both parties prove willing to search for peaceful solutions, without any reservation.

As for the conflict between Israel and the Arab countries, we are convinced that underlying the problems faced by the region is the postponement of solutions. Together with other countries of the Common Market, our country will do everything possible to reach realistic, balanced and lasting solutions to this issue, taking into consideration the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and the need for withdrawal from occupied Arab territories and recognition of the right of all the nations of the area to peaceful coexistence.

(Mr. Pinheiro, Portugal)

It is thus with great hope that we face the reopening of the dialogue between Europe and the Arab countries. We firmly believe that invaluable benefits can stem from a more perfect understanding and more conscientious consultation with the large family of Arab countries.

We cannot fail to mention Afghanistan and stress once again the wish of Portugal to see that country, free of the presence of foreign troops and external pressures, find peace, and with that peace be granted the right to self-determination.

Another country that has had to bear the occupation of foreign troops for several years now is Kampuchea. In that case also the international community and in particular the Secretary-General should spare no effort in the search for a just and peaceful solution that will safeguard the territorial boundaries and the independence and free will of that people.

I began by stating that the ideals embodied in the Charter are still valid today; indeed I consider them part of the goals that move Governments and men: peace, economic and social progress, respect for the individual and the freedom and independence for each nation. It is for this Organization, especially the Secretary-General, Mr. Perez de Cuellar, in whom we fully trust, to fulfil the difficult mission of continuing and renewing that noble and worthy task.

We are confident that lasting solutions to the present financial crisis will be found, solutions that will satisfy all and hence contribute to the support for and prestige of the actions of this forum. Only then will this Organization be able to fulfil its original pledge and play the role that is its right.

In this connection I should like to pay a tribute to the Secretary-General for his initiatives directed towards a stricter rationalization of expenditure and more

(Mr. Pinheiro, Portugal)

efficient management and tighter control of human and financial resources. Such measures, of course, are applicable to the whole United Nations system, including the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), which should not only be subject to a more strict and efficient management but also regain its universal vocation. These were the main reasons that led my country to nominate for the director-generalship of UNESCO a Portuguese whose well-known and undeniable merits would ensure the rapid and effective achievement of those goals.

Allow me in conclusion to emphasize again the total devotion of my country to the success of the United Nations as an instrument of peace and progress in the international community.

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

Ms. MAUALA (Samoa): Earlier today the Minister of Foreign Affairs of France made reference to recent events in New Caledonia. I should make it clear, on behalf of the seven members of the South Pacific Forum who are Members of the United Nations that the French interpretation of the referendum of 13 September is not shared by New Caledonia's colonized people or by its neighbours in the region.

We shall take the opportunity of the joint statement to be delivered on our behalf by my Prime Minister in the general debate and statements under item 18 of the General Assembly's agenda to make our position on New Caledonia entirely clear.

Mrs. TON NU THI NINH (Viet Nam): The delegation of Viet Nam wishes to reply partly to the statement of the Foreign Minister of China, who this morning made incorrect remarks about Viet Nam.

(Mrs. Ton Nu Thi Ninh,
Viet Nam)

In South-East Asia and Kampuchea at present there are "some signs of movement" (A/42/1, p. 4), to quote the Secretary-General's report on the work of the Organization. In fact, meaningful developments have been and are taking place that are leading to a promising but sensitive juncture. China, however, remains one of the few countries not to heed that evidence; to put it bluntly, China is bent on ignoring an evolution which is not to its liking.

The Indo-Chinese countries have matched their professed goodwill with concrete deeds. Each year since 1982 Viet Nam has effected partial withdrawals of its forces from Kampuchea. Yet another partial withdrawal has been announced for this year and the totality of its forces are to be withdrawn by 1990. In the event of a political solution, Vietnamese forces will be withdrawn earlier. China, for its part, has made repeated vocal calls for Viet Nam's total and speedy withdrawal from Kampuchea, but the truth of the matter is that its deep-seated wish does not match its words. As a matter of fact, China wishes to see Viet Nam bogged down indefinitely in Kampuchea, for it serves China's selfish interest to maintain the tension in the region.

It is no revelation to state that it was China itself that supported the genocidal Pol Pot régime that caused the death of millions of Kampuchean, including close relatives of Prince Norodom Sihanouk, and that waged wars against neighbouring countries. Today, regardless of world-wide condemnation of the perpetrators of genocide, China persists in keeping Pol Pot's remnant forces and sustaining them in their activities, to undermine and hinder the Kampuchean people's revival and rehabilitation. It is none other than China which is attempting by all possible means to thwart an eventual process of negotiation towards a settlement of the Kampuchean question through political means.

(Mrs. Ton Nu Thi Ninh,
Viet Nam)

After eight years of tension everyone wishes the Kampuchean problem to be settled and lasting peace to be secured in South-East Asia. On the other hand, it is China's intention to prolong the Kampuchean people's sufferings and instability in South-East Asia so as to serve its self-interest.

The facts are that in dealing with the Soviet Union China invokes three obstacles, among which is the Kampuchean question, and yet it still undertakes talks with that country without pre-conditions. In contrast, China sets pre-conditions in order to reject talks with Viet Nam while leaving no stone unturned in trying to hinder efforts towards negotiations between the Kampuchean sides and between the countries of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Indo-Chinese countries to settle the Kampuchean question.

China engages in talks on Kampuchea with countries not directly concerned with that question but does its utmost to prevent dialogue between the two sides of Kampuchea and between ASEAN and the Indo-Chinese countries, which would offer a real possibility of solving the Kampuchean problem.

All this proves that China does not want to settle the Kampuchean question and tries to prevent others from doing so. In the past, China has been wont to act in this fashion. During the Viet Nam war, until 1970, China tried its utmost to prevent Viet Nam from negotiating with the United States. Yet, by 1971 China was negotiating directly with the United States behind Viet Nam's back to settle the war in Viet Nam for the sake of its own interests.

Today however everything does not rest solely in China's hands. Viet Nam believes that China is a great country, with considerable prestige and a major responsibility in world affairs, particularly in South-East Asia. Differences between Viet Nam and China are but transient; the friendship between the two

(Mrs. Ton Nu Thi Ninh,
Viet Nam)

countries and the two peoples is there to stay. Let us hope that China will soon make a constructive contribution to the solution of the problems of South-East Asia and Kampuchea.

The PRESIDENT: I must call attention to the fact that more

representatives here now asked to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

Provision is made for this under rule 73 of the rules of procedure, but most of the topics that we are discussing are covered by items on the agenda of the General Assembly for this session.

(The President)

Some of the delegations that have indicated their wish to exercise the right of reply are also on the list of speakers and will, of course, have an opportunity to speak later. I would therefore appeal to them to be as brief as possible in their replies.

Mr. SISOWATH (Democratic Kampuchea): My delegation is not at all surprised at the reply just given by the representative of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, criticizing the excellent statement on the problem of Kampuchea delivered this morning by Wu Xequian, the Foreign Minister of the People's Republic of China, whose people and Government uphold great justice in support of the struggle of the Cambodian people against the flagrant invasion and occupation of my country by Vietnamese armed forces.

The People's Republic of China, along with more than a hundred other peace- and justice-loving countries of the world, continues to render strong moral, political and diplomatic support to the Cambodian people and to the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea, in this very august body, each year, in our just struggle against the armed presence of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam for a totally free, independent and non-aligned Cambodia.

The Socialist Republic of Viet Nam continues to deceive the international community by spreading the false information that the situation in Cambodia is a matter between Cambodians. It is in fact a war of aggression, imposed upon us by the presence of more than 140,000 Vietnamese occupying forces.

A peaceful settlement can be achieved in my country only when the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, which is the root cause of the problem, agrees to have an honest, meaningful, constructive discussion, face to face, with the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea, under the distinguished presidency of Prince Norodom Sihanouk.

Mr. BLANC (France) (interpretation from French): There was no criticism of Samoa or of the countries of the South Pacific Forum in the statement delivered this morning by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of France. Therefore my delegation cannot but be astonished at the comments made by the representative of Samoa on behalf of those countries.

The delegation of France will not reply to those comments. The answer has been given by the electors of New Caledonia, who, on 13 September last, rejected, by referendum, the option of independence, choosing the retention of the status of the territory as a member of France.

France feels that no one else should tell free citizens what choice it is incumbent upon them to make. The New Caledonians have democratically chosen to remain within the Republic of France. Their choice is one that others must imperatively accept.

Mr. SHI Jicheng (China) (interpretation from Chinese): The Chinese delegation feels indignant at the attacks and the abuse of the Vietnamese delegation concerning the statement made by our Foreign Minister and the position of the Chinese Government.

Viet Nam, with the support of a super-Power, committed aggression on Kampuchea. This brought about a great disaster for the Cambodian people and caused destruction. It also threatened the peace and security of South-East Asia. It is condemned by all peace-loving peoples the world over.

This world Organization, in recent years, has adopted resolutions demanding that Viet Nam withdraw all its troops from Cambodia. But Viet Nam remains intransigent. It persists in its aggression and refuses to withdraw its troops from Cambodia.

On the contrary, Viet Nam has attacked China, alleging that China wants Viet Nam to be bogged down indefinitely in Kampuchea. This is totally absurd. The

(Mr. Shi Jicheng, China)

aggression by Viet Nam is condemned by all the patriots in Kampuchea, and Democratic Kampuchea is supported by China and all other peace-loving countries in the world.

In the circumstances, Viet Nam proposed a so-called political settlement. China has never been opposed to political settlements, but we call upon Viet Nam, first of all, to withdraw all its aggressive troops from Kampuchea. Only in those circumstances can we talk about a political settlement. The aim of the so-called political settlement by Viet Nam is to get through political means what they cannot get from the battlefield: that is, to consolidate and to perpetuate the fruits of its aggression.

The Chinese delegation would like to advise the Vietnamese delegation that if it persists in aggression and remains hostile to the international community, if it refuses to implement the resolutions adopted by the United Nations, it will not serve the Viet Nam authorities themselves.

The only right thing is for Viet Nam to withdraw all its aggressive troops from Kampuchea as early as possible and let the people of Kampuchea, under the guidance and leadership of Prince Norodom Sihanouk, solve their internal problems by themselves.

The meeting rose at 7.30 p.m.