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PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE ELEVENTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Thursday, 29 September 1988, at 3 p.m.

<u>President:</u>	Mr. CAPUTO	(Argentina)
later:	Mr. VAN LIEROP (Vice-President)	(Vanuatu)
later:	Mr. CAPUTO (President)	(Argentina)
later:	Mr. VAN LIEROP (Vice-President)	(Vanuatu)
later:	Mr. CORDOVEZ (Vice-President)	(Ecuador)
later:	Mr. DLAMINI (Vice-President)	(Swaziland)

- General debate [9] (continued)

Statements made by:

Mr. Sepulveda Amor (Mexico)
Mr. Lenihan (Ireland)
Mr. Loncar (Yugoslavia)

Address by Mr. Brian Mulroney, Prime Minister of Canada

Statements made by:

Mr. Malmierca Peoli (Cuba)
Mr. Nguza Karl i Bond (Zaire)
Mr. Fernandez Ordoñez (Spain)
Mr. Abdullah (Oman)
Mr. Goebbels (Luxembourg)

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

AGENDA ITEM 9 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. SEPULVEDA AMOR (Mexico) (interpretation from Spanish): I should like to begin my address by congratulating the United Nations and its Secretary-General upon the award of the Nobel Peace Prize to the peace-keeping forces, as announced this morning. We welcome the fact that this award has been made to a body that is essential for the effective functioning of the United Nations. It symbolizes a clear recognition by the international community of the commendable work performed by the United Nations for the genuine security of all States.

On behalf of the Mexican Government, I extend my warmest congratulations to you, Mr. Caputo, the Secretary for External Relations of the Republic of Argentina, on your well-deserved election to the post of President of the General Assembly for this session. Sir, your diplomatic experience and ability will contribute to the success of our endeavours. In the performance of your delicate task, you may count upon the support of the Mexican delegation. The solid ties of friendship that unite our peoples and Governments allow us to renew and reaffirm shared aspirations that should ensure the success of this session of the General Assembly.

I also wish to express our especial confidence and trust in Mr. Perez de Cuellar. The international community knows that the changes that we are experiencing in international affairs have been made possible to a large degree by his political contribution and his talent for negotiation. The work carried out by our Secretary-General renews our faith in the United Nations system, reinforces the Organization's prestige, and helps to overcome the crisis of multilateralism. We are proud that Mr. Perez de Cuellar, a Latin American politician and diplomat, has so commendably advanced the causes of peace, justice and international law.

(Mr. Sepulveda Amor, Mexico)

When President Miguel de la Madrid's Government was initiated in December 1982, the international situation was particularly difficult. Tension had increased among the great Powers, and disarmament negotiations had been suspended. The great Powers had also assumed antagonistic positions with respect to various trouble spots around the world. The East-West confrontation was making the international climate more tense. The United Nations was the target of criticism, because it seemed incapable of responding to the needs for peace and security.*

* Mr. Van Lierop (Vanuatu), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Sepulveda Amor, Mexico)

The United Nations as a whole, including the specialized agencies, was the target of unfair criticism, which served to distort its true role.

A number of countries attached importance to bilateral relations and demanded conduct in accordance with their own short-term interests and strategic goals. This served to weaken the multilateral system and that was compounded by a financial crisis, deliberately caused by those who sought to gain influence consistent with their foreign policy. The United Nations was the target of mean financial treatment as a result of that shortsightedness, which we would all like to see overcome. Mexico never agreed to the unilateral decisions taken by the major contributing Powers, which refused to meet their obligations as a means of bringing pressure to bear upon the Member States and the Organization, breaking the rule of universality in one of the most important specialized agencies. The lesson is clear: without the political will on the part of Member States it is impossible to find a solution to the crisis of multilateralism and of the international Organization.

To the political and military confrontations was added the most serious problem in present-day international life, that of the great inequalities between the developing South and the industrialized North. The dialogue to establish a new international economic order was broken off. In the 1980s the aspirations of the South to negotiations that would lead to a better distribution of wealth and the resources so essential for well being and development were frustrated.

The results of that crisis afflicted above all the poorest nations. In this paradox of history, the poorest, those in greatest need to promote social development with new resources, became exporters of capital and wealth to the international financial centres - that is, to those that already enjoyed resources in abundance.

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We are pleased that the Organization and the Secretary-General have played a leading role in these recent changes. We also welcome the progress that President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev have achieved in the field of disarmament. Paramount importance must be attached to the signing and ratifying of the Soviet-American Treaty on the elimination of their intermediate-range and shorter-range nuclear forces - the INF Treaty. We call for the rapid conclusion of other treaties on a significant reduction in strategic weapons and on the elimination of chemical weapons. The agreements prove that even the most difficult matters can be resolved with sufficient political will and determination. They also show that security and balance are not necessarily synonymous with the escalation of armaments and that diplomatic negotiations are essential for the solution of the most difficult problems, solutions that guarantee the legitimate rights and genuine national interests of all parties.

It is true that barely the first steps have been taken in the long road to free the world from the threat of nuclear war. It is imperative, therefore, to adhere strictly to the commitments made and to maintain the will to negotiate. Incidentally, the lack of results from the third special session of the United Nations General Assembly on disarmament was not encouraging. In the field of disarmament the participation of the international community is necessary, through the agencies especially created for that purpose, otherwise we shall continue to be governed by the relations between the nuclear Powers - that is, we shall be subjected to criteria, views and interests that do not necessarily coincide with those of other men and countries which earnestly desire the elimination of weapons of destruction that could put an end to their very existence.

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Peace has been and will continue to be the fundamental goal pursued by Mexico in its foreign policy. Proof of this is to be found in President de la Madrid's participation in the Peace and Disarmament Initiative - referred to as the Group of Six - which contributed to the creation of an appropriate climate for negotiations between the great Powers. I emphasize, as the Group of Six has done, the need for the complete cessation of nuclear tests and prevention of the extension of the arms race to outer space, and that the limitation of conventional weapons be seriously discussed.

Events of recent months prove that the role of the United Nations in achieving peace and development is irreplaceable. Within this climate of détente, negotiated agreements must be consolidated and the disputes that still affect several regions and countries must be resolved. The Government of Mexico has steadfastly supported the peaceful settlement of international disputes with respect for the principles of self-determination and non-intervention. That is why optimism is aroused by the withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan and the fact that the exercise of the right to self-determination has been achieved, or by the attainment of a cease-fire between Iran and Iraq so that a war that divided the civilian populations of the two countries for eight years has been brought to an end. We must also welcome the four-party negotiations that led to a cease-fire between South Africa and Angola. The termination of hostilities will enable the Angolan people to advance towards independent economic and social development, free from external threats and interference.

The agreements to implement Security Council resolution 435 (1978), on Namibian independence, are of special importance to us. Mexico, as a member of the United Nations Council for Namibia, has always condemned the illegal occupation of that Territory. That is why we re-emphasize our commitment to the people of

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Namibia and to the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO), its leader organization, their right to exercise fully their sovereign rights and the end of the anachronistic remnant of colonialism.

We emphasize our rejection of the barbaric practice of apartheid, which has been consistently condemned by the United Nations. Peace in the region and respect for international law would be a utopian dream without an end to apartheid. It is imperative that we continue to demand that South Africa put an end to its aggressive policies against the front-line States and its policies of regional destabilization.

We earnestly hope that the talks on the Kampuchean conflict will result in agreements guaranteeing the Kampuchean people's right to self-determination, free from genocidal factions and with respect for the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity, which clearly necessitates the withdrawal of foreign troops.

Lasting peace in the Middle East entails recognition of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination. All the States in the region, including Israel, must be able to live within secure and recognized borders. We must once again call for the restitution of the territories occupied since 1967, accompanied by prohibition of conquest by military force and the provision of guarantees ensuring respect for the human rights of the Palestinian civilian population in the region. The convening of an international conference, with the participation of all parties and under the auspices of the United Nations, is consequently extremely important. We must foster all such contacts as might lead to the settlement of this, one of the most protracted conflicts of the post-war age.

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It is also encouraging that the conflict in Western Sahara is nearing a political resolution that will result in independence and self-determination for the Sahraoui people.

On the other hand, we are concerned that there has been a stalemate of the negotiations in Central America. To Mexico, respect for the self-determination of the Central American peoples and rejection of any outside interference and of the use of force or coercion continue to be central to the attainment of peace and development in the region.

The steps taken by Mexico to help bring about regional peace are well known. The Contadora and Support Groups advocated full respect in the region for the principles of non-intervention and self-determination for all the peoples in the isthmus, to enable these nations to attain the stability and co-operation that would make their economic, political and social development possible.

In August 1987, the Central American countries signed the Esquipulas accords. The political connection of these accords to the Contadora and Support Groups is quite clear. They also constitute a valid and practical basis for the restoration of peace in the area. These principles should be observed by the Central American countries and should be respected by all the States in the international community, particularly those which have links with, and interests in, the region.

The efforts of the Contadora and the Esquipulas accords deserve to meet with success, and so they will, to the degree that hegemonistic interpretations and a security policy that is not compatible with security or Latin American interests are abandoned. It is true that the peoples of the region desire security, peace and democracy - but peace, security and democracy that mean autonomy and freedom to determine their own destiny, free from external interference, development with no strings or preconditions attached, and co-operation between equals with full respect for sovereignty.

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Contadora and its Support Group have struggled to avoid the spreading of this conflict, which could dash the hopes of the Central American peoples and spread to other parts of the continent. It was also our desire that democracy should be a genuine product of the peoples. Similarly, we made contacts with other regions and international organizations - I might mention in this respect the European Economic Community (EEC) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) - which could help to eliminate poverty and underdevelopment in the region, which are really the underlying cause of the conflicts.

In Central America, peace will prevail over the gloomy prospect of a more protracted war. The rule of law must prevail in this region over military and ideological considerations, so that reason and the long-term interest of all the peoples of the continent may prevail over immediate tactical and military considerations.

I am convinced that the most important question of modern life is the need to correct the unjust and unbalanced economic relations in the world. This is one of the great tasks currently facing the community of States and international organizations.

This decade, which is of such great political moment, has also been characterized by restraint on development and by the difficulties we have encountered in openly and constructively reviewing the economic situation of the non-industrialized countries. Misunderstanding, short-sightedness and selfish considerations have been the rule of the day.

It has been said that the 1980s were a lost opportunity for development. Our efforts notwithstanding, we have been unable to achieve a better and more effective role for our countries in the international economy. The lack of response to the debt problem is well known, as are the excessive rise in interest rates, trade

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restrictions, the fall in commodity prices, and the severe restrictions on financing for the development of our countries.

The philosophy pursued by the main industrialized countries notwithstanding, there was a tightening of trade protectionism, and we saw the emergence of what is being called the "new protectionism". These practices severely restrict our access to the markets of the industrialized countries and thus our prospects of meeting our internal and external obligations.

Unilateral restraints on international trade are all the more deplorable if we consider that in practice they are contrary to the commitments made by the signatories of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) on the occasion of the "Uruguay Round", and if we consider, furthermore, that they are prejudicial to the development potential of non-industrialized countries, and therefore have an adverse effect upon world economic growth.

The scale of debt-servicing among developing nations and the shortage of international financing represent a net transfer of resources to the outside world. This takes up a significant part of our export earnings. It severely restricts imports and makes the internal adjustment process less and less compatible with economic growth and an equitable distribution of social well-being. Restructuring of the debt has had some slight effect on the terms and conditions of payment, but it has not meant a real solution to the problem.

The developing world, and Latin America in particular, is calling for long-term solutions, through just and reasonable negotiations with the industrialized countries, to resolve the problem of external debt, development financing and the reactivation of the international economy.

We have therefore argued that the debt servicing must in all cases be adapted to the real capacity of the debtor countries to pay, with recognition of the principle of shared responsibility and the need for equity in the distribution

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of costs. It is also necessary to have balanced negotiations to increase the volume and rate of exports from developing countries. Within GATT, there must be strict fulfilment of the commitments to suspend and dismantle trade restrictions that are in violation of the obligations undertaken by the signatories to the General Agreement.

The major issues relate to the need for change in economic relations among States, so that the wealth created by the intelligence and efforts of mankind may no longer be concentrated within a small number of countries and a narrow strip of our planet. This is doubtless the major challenge before the modern community of States and before the United Nations.

The struggle for respect for fundamental rights and freedoms is one of the major attainments of the United Nations. Forty years after the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, life's dynamics have forced us to deepen, modulate and broaden its application and protection. Let us preserve the institutions created to safeguard these basic rights, including respect for groups of society and for matters that were barely understood a few years ago.

On the other hand, Mexico will continue to wage a head-on war against the terrible threat of drug trafficking. We support all multilateral steps taken in this area, because drug trafficking is an international phenomenon that can only be effectively confronted through a pooling of our resources.

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But what we need is effective, constructive international co-operation that takes into account in a balanced way this criminal phenomenon so harmful to society, in all its aspects: production, trafficking and consumption. It should be an expression of world solidarity, not a cause for discord or manipulation. Mexico will continue its steadfast battle against this criminal epidemic, this threat to public health. But it calls upon all those plagued by this international crime to shoulder their responsibilities. The Governments of the major centres of consumption cannot use easy but ineffective solutions to avoid the fundamental burden of what is their problem.

Let me reiterate Mexico's deep belief in the irreplaceable role of the United Nations system. It is hard to think of a political settlement anywhere in the world without the presence and active co-operation of the Organization. Even where the main negotiations are carried out by others, the United Nations is of decisive importance because on behalf of the international community it formalizes, implements and monitors the fulfilment of agreements; in nearly all cases its organs have a general mandate to define a settlement.

No major co-operative project could be carried out without its support and its technical resources. Nor could there be peaceful coexistence among States, based on the rule of law and mutual respect, without the guarantees and political backing of the United Nations.

At San Francisco, peace and security among nations were entrusted to the Organization. This splendid project for our civilization, which followed a period of barbarism, continues to be fully valid, but only on one condition: that all States conform in their behaviour to the rules they themselves have imposed and to which they have committed themselves.

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For developing countries, the multilateral forums have been particularly valuable as a place to air our problems and fight to defend our interests. In a community of more than 160 sovereign countries we must, of course, have international democracy.

This does not mean a "tyranny of the majority", but rather a joining of problems, expressed in a united manner and considered by the community of States. Disarmament, the eradication of colonialism, respect for the sovereignty of peoples and for human rights, the elimination of apartheid, the settlement of regional conflicts and the goals of international co-operation have never, anywhere, been a senseless expression of tyranny, but a pre-condition for freedom, security and dignity for the majority of the world's population. Some of these purposes, indeed, are now espoused by those who were once opposed to them.

There have been undeniable achievements which must be consolidated. There are also pending matters, such as world economic imbalances and the conflict in Central America. The solution of all these matters depends to a great extent on unified action by developing countries.

Regional and international machinery for co-ordination and consultation must therefore be strengthened and made more effective. The Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of 77 are committed to preparing for the future so that succeeding generations may have more and better food, housing, education and clothing. Regional bodies too have much to do here. There must be solidarity and organization, joint efforts and shared goals.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, we have strengthened political co-ordination and are making advances in the economic integration of our countries. The united mobilization of the considerable material and human resources of Latin America and the Caribbean will without question lend our

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countries greater capacity in external negotiations and new opportunities for internal co-operation and development.

The work of the group of eight Latin American Presidents is a clear manifestation of our determination to seek solutions to our problems and to redefine our links with the rest of the world, as is faithfully reflected in the Acapulco compromise, the basic charter of a system of political co-ordination in Latin America which opens the way for further regional integration. The crisis has at least had the positive effect of further bringing together the peoples of Latin America. This has been possible thanks to democratic changes in our societies in recent years. Thus, we are approaching a stage where we shall strengthen our unity, make progress on the path of economic complementarity, and consolidate our democratic institutions. We shall give fresh impetus to our economies and increase the well-being of our peoples.

We are coming to the end of the 1980s with feelings of optimism about the role of diplomacy and negotiation as political tools with a special place in relations among States. The atmosphere of confrontation and intolerance that began the decade has given way to détente. Disarmament, a crucial matter that went through a period of deep lethargy, is now engendering renewed hope, and there is progress in the settlement of regional conflicts. Nevertheless, we are concerned that we may see the return in a new form of the time when the majority of States were fated merely to accept and confirm agreement - or competition - between the Powers. We can have genuine peace and true security only with the active participation of a politically organized community of States acting within the United Nations and under its constitutional authority.

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The great question in the coming years will inevitably focus on the economic development of the poorest nations. Advances in the solution of international conflicts are not matched by the poor performance with respect to the economic problems of non-industrialized nations. There can be no progress in international stability, peace and security unless effective steps are taken in the context of mechanisms where responsibility is shared by developed and developing countries, which would result in sustained economic growth for the latter. These mechanisms must turn their political attention to three points: new financial flows, debt and foreign trade.

Mexico reiterates its conviction that today a civilized international life can be attained only on the basis of respect for law, the sovereign dignity of all nations and the genuine economic and social well-being of their peoples. Only then will peace, development and democracy be possible.

Mr. LENIHAN (Ireland): I should like first to offer Mr. Dante Caputo my sincere congratulations on his election to the presidency of the forty-third session of the United Nations General Assembly. I should also like to pay a tribute to his predecessor, Mr. Peter Florin, who so ably and effectively conducted the affairs of the forty-second session and also those of the special session devoted to disarmament.

My friend and colleague the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Greece, Mr. Karolos Papoulias, has already addressed the Assembly in the name of the Twelve member States of the European Community and Ireland of course associates itself fully with his remarks.

As we meet for the forty-third session of the General Assembly and as we survey the world scene, it is pleasing to be able to note that prospects look somewhat brighter than they did at this time last year - indeed, better than they have done for many years now. A series of regional crises which have been the subject of debate in this Assembly for all too many years appear to have been moved from the point of inertia. In the case of others, admittedly, the first step still has to be taken. So our optimism needs to be tempered. Nevertheless we can be encouraged by what has already been achieved.

It is even more pleasing for this delegation to note the essential role played by the United Nations in the progress that has so far been made. We have always regarded this Organization as the central forum for the resolution of international conflict. We have not been blind to its weaknesses, which have received much emphasis in recent years. But looking behind weaknesses, we have been convinced that the Organization has retained the ability to achieve the noble aims set out in the Charter.

The emphasis placed in more recent years on the flaws of the Organization was not entirely negative. It is not surprising if, after more than 40 years of

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existence, critical appraisal makes it apparent that some measures of reform are necessary. We therefore welcomed and supported the efforts of the Secretary-General to increase the efficiency of the United Nations and to improve its day-to-day functioning. We salute the progress that has been made towards this end and we can assure the Secretary-General of our support for his continuing endeavour. We believe that a great deal is at stake here.

What is at stake is the continued existence of the Organization in the terms set out in the Charter. This established the Organization on the basis of the sovereign equality of all its Members. It went on to impose certain obligations on Members. This principle and these obligations have not of course always sat comfortably with all Members. In the course of the last 43 years first one and then another Member State has found itself irked to some extent. It is notable, however, that they have all come to acknowledge that the Organization plays an indispensable role.

A genuine commitment finding its expression in effective operation of the United Nations in accordance with the Charter clearly has a particular attraction for a country such as my own, whose security depends, not on force of arms but on the establishment of an international order based on the observance of international law. We would like to think, however, that our interest in the United Nations is not selfish. In an era of weapons of mass destruction, whether nuclear, chemical or more conventional, and of ever greater interdependence throughout the world there can be no doubt that the framework provided by the United Nations is in the interest of all States.

But the existence of a framework will not of itself achieve that rule of law based on justice and tempered with generosity which is the only basis for permanent peace. There is a need for a clear commitment on the part of Member States,

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including actual or potential belligerents, to use to the full the mechanisms available under the Charter. Members of the Security Council have, of course, special responsibilities in this regard and we welcome the evidence of their increased willingness to discharge these responsibilities. We must all see what we can do to divert the skills and capabilities of mankind away from war, or the threat of war, and towards economic and social improvement. Such sacrifices as this may entail are small when compared with the horrific cost in human lives and suffering which any war inevitably inflicts.

When looking at the record of the past year it is intriguing to wonder why this progress was made over that period rather than, say, during the preceding 10 years. It would be inappropriate in my view to seek any single reason. However, it must be acknowledged that the relationship between the super-Powers is of major importance; this relationship is the prime determinant of the international climate and this climate affects international relations in general. All Members of the United Nations welcome the improvement in relations between the United States and the Soviet Union. This improvement has had a twofold effect. It has resulted in a commitment on the part of the super-Powers themselves not only to improve their bilateral relations, but to search for ways to reduce the possibilities of confrontation between them in regional conflicts. The improvement in the international climate which has thus been brought about has induced the participants in regional conflicts themselves to search for ways peacefully to resolve these conflicts.

While acknowledging the importance of the super-Power relationship, it is notable that in every case United Nations involvement has been an essential element in the progress made towards resolution of regional conflicts. I should like particularly to congratulate the Secretary-General on the success he has had

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so far in this respect. He must be able to rely on the full support and on the loyal co-operation of all Members of the Organization, including of course the super-Powers, in his efforts to secure international peace and stability.

If a political commitment is a necessary condition for effective action by the United Nations to maintain peace and security and to promote peaceful resolution of conflict, it is, alas, not sufficient in itself. Of no less importance is the assurance of the necessary financial means. Those who will the end must also will the means. If they fail to do so the potential benefits of political consensus in the United Nations will not be realized and the credibility of the Organization will be seriously compromised. It is imperative that United Nations finances be put on a firm and sound footing. All that is required is that all Member States discharge the legal commitment, freely undertaken, to pay their mandatory contribution to the general budget and to the various peace-keeping accounts. It is heartening to note the recent indications that Member States do indeed acknowledge the necessity of this commitment and have taken practical steps to implement it.

The peace-keeping function of the Organization has been highlighted only today by the well-deserved award to the United Nations peace-keeping forces of the Nobel Peace Prize. I congratulate the peace-keeping forces of the Organization on this award. It arises at a very appropriate time. An important factor in the Organization's involvement over the past year in the settlement of regional conflicts has been the role of United Nations peace-keeping and observer forces. They have been established most recently to monitor the implementation of the Geneva Agreements on Afghanistan and the cease-fire in the war between Iran and Iraq.

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In a number of other areas where we all hope early progress towards a settlement can be made, United Nations peace-keeping or observer forces will be an essential element of the settlement.

I should like here to focus in particular on the financial difficulties of peace-keeping operations, including those of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). The burden of financing these forces must not fall disproportionately on a small number of troop-contributing countries. In each case the decision to establish such forces commits the Organization as a whole. It is crucial that there be a secure foundation for financing peace-keeping operations, in order that troop contributors can be reliably assured that the agreed financing provisions will be observed and that they will not face an unfair financial burden because of undertaking this task.

Let me say here that my concern is not related solely to money. Indeed, the sums of money involved pale into insignificance when compared to the supreme sacrifice many individual members of peace-keeping and observer forces have made while serving under the United Nations flag. The financial costs must surely be accepted as of small significance when one considers the prevention of death, destruction and human suffering that the operations of such forces usually secure, however, fragile the basis. But even in terms of financial costs United Nations peace-keeping forces are a very economical alternative to the maintenance of unilateral or multilateral forces, which impose massive costs and which, because usually they are seen to be partisan, are less likely to facilitate progress towards a permanent solution.

My concern is mainly with the political implications of the failure of all Member States to discharge their financial obligations under the Charter. I am not talking about the temporary difficulties of an economic or financial nature that

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any State may encounter from time to time. I am referring to decisions made by States to withhold their assessed mandatory contributions for political reasons. Such decisions may be interpreted by parties to a conflict as implying a lack of support for a particular peace-keeping operation. Indeed, it is difficult to conceive of a deliberate decision to withhold due financial contributions as other than an expression of withdrawal of support for an operation. When one considers that, ultimately, political solutions must be found, that is an unacceptable risk. If some Member States pick and choose those observer or peace-keeping missions concerning which they will make or withhold their mandatory financial contributions, individual operations may be undermined. Worse, the whole concept of United Nations peace-keeping, on which so many hopes are now hanging, would be emptied of any credibility.

We celebrate this year the fortieth anniversary of the proclamation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. One could say that the very existence of the United Nations arose from a recognition borne of the bitter experience of war that real and lasting peace and security between nations must be based on universal acknowledgement of the inherent dignity and worth of the individual human being. This is as valid today as when the Declaration was first proclaimed. At its last session the General Assembly unanimously resolved to use the occasion of this anniversary to promote and protect human rights throughout the world, to renew the Organization's commitment to this objective and to encourage Member States to ensure the promotion and protection of the rights enshrined in the Declaration. If we are to build on the tremendous progress that has been made over the last 40 years in the development of international instruments for the protection of human rights, we need a sustained and credible United Nations campaign to promote the universal observance and enjoyment of these rights. At a time when grave

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abuses continue to occur, and are widely known to occur, there is no room here for complacency.

Pride in the achievement of the United Nations in the area of human rights is justified. Paradoxically, perhaps, one important achievement is that awareness of the degree of abuse of these rights world-wide has dramatically increased. Today the world community recognizes the inherent dignity and worth of the individual and accepts that the protection and promotion of his human rights are international obligations. While the United Nations cannot itself enforce the standards it has been instrumental in developing, it must not underestimate the moral authority it can bring to bear for the correction of abuses in this area. An important instrument for bringing pressure to bear on behalf of the victims of oppression is informed public opinion imbued with the values enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Organization therefore has a very positive role to play in stimulating public awareness of the need for vigilance and in mobilizing the support of international public opinion for the correction of abuses wherever they occur.

Ireland recognizes and honours the tremendous contributions which, inspired by the ideals set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, individuals and national and international organizations have made by mobilizing effective public pressure in the defence of fundamental freedoms for victims of oppression. In many instances this has been accomplished at great personal risk to the individuals concerned. We attach great major importance to the human rights endeavour because we are convinced of the truth of the opening words of the Universal Declaration. Recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, peace and justice in the world.

(Mr. Lenihan, Ireland)

I have already referred to the improvement in East-West relations which has taken place in the recent past.

My Government believes that it is essential to maintain the impetus of the Washington and Moscow summits between President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev and to halt and reverse the trend towards an accelerating arms race. The agreed-upon commitment to reduce nuclear forces by 50 per cent has yet to be realized, but at least there is a commitment there.

At such an encouraging time in United States-Soviet bilateral arms control and disarmament negotiations it is all the more important that a fresh commitment to the multilateral process emerge and that concrete achievements be recorded, thus reaffirming the interest of all countries in the goal of general and complete disarmament.

The first step, and one that we believe can and should be taken without further delay, is the conclusion of a comprehensive nuclear test-ban treaty. At the technical level, this could minimize, although not eliminate, the ability to design new weapons. More important, perhaps, it would be a clear signal of intention to reduce reliance on such dangerous and, in the final analysis, irrational means of defence. My delegation is convinced that the technical problems that appear to be in the way of reaching a test-ban agreement can be surmounted, given the political will.

It is, or should be, clear that possession of nuclear weapons inevitably leads to a similar response from others, thus greatly increasing the threat to a country's security and even to its prospect of survival. Nevertheless, here is still a number of countries which have not abandoned the nuclear weapons option and remain outside the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

(Mr. Lenihan, Ireland)

It is my Government's belief that no one can secure advantage through a proliferation of nuclear weapons. We hope that in the years ahead the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons will be strengthened, that the number of signatories will be further expanded and that it will be an enduring element in an era of greater efforts to promote and achieve nuclear-arms control and disarmament.

The international community has been profoundly shocked by recent reports of the use of chemical weapons. We should all be very gravely concerned that what we have for 63 years regarded as progress in this area - the Protocol banning any use of chemical weapons, dating from 1925 - has been reversed. We have to ensure that this reverse will not be regarded as a headline and go further. The participants in the Conference on Disarmament must dedicate themselves to the task of negotiating a convention banning the production of chemical weapons, with a view to its early conclusion, so that this spectre can finally be banished from the Earth.

It is the hope of my Government that the improvement in East-West relations and recent developments in the Soviet Union will also be reflected at the Vienna meeting currently taking place of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe. The mutual trust and confidence so necessary to ensuring lasting peace and security must encompass all dimensions of the relations between the countries of East and West. They cannot be confined to the military area. Hence, we look forward to agreement at Vienna in the very near future on a concluding document which will provide both for new negotiations on conventional forces and for a further advance in the human dimension of the Helsinki Final Act.

The need for a speedy and orderly settlement in the Middle East is clear to all who wish well to the people of Israel and to the population of the occupied territories. The present situation, in the words of the statement of the European Council on this matter, "cannot be sustained". It will be brought to an end only

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by means of a comprehensive, just and lasting political settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The twin pillars of principle on which Irish policy on this difficult issue rests are: the right of all States in the region, including Israel, to exist within secure frontiers, and the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, with all that that implies. We acknowledge that this right includes the right to an independent State, if the Palestinian people should so decide. The Irish delegation appeals for the setting aside of all obstacles which bar the way to negotiations based on these principles.

Any solution will call for basic mutual acceptance and reciprocal recognition of the indomitable human spirit that ensures that a people will not yield, and cannot be put in a position of yielding, to brute force. We believe that the peoples of the region, in accordance with their own best traditions, would wish their leaders to practise the principles of tolerance and good-neighbourliness enshrined in the Charter. It is our hope that the evolution of events inside and outside the region will be such as to permit the peaceful aspirations of the peoples of the region finally to be realized. The way forward requires leadership endowed with courage, wisdom and vision. These are the qualities of statesmanship particularly required in this area.

The difficulties in the Lebanon cannot be dissociated from the wider conflict in the Middle East. There has regrettably been a heightening of tension there in recent days. We hope that the search for reconciliation and stability in the Lebanon will be pursued and that forces outside the country will exercise restraint and will respect the territorial integrity, sovereignty and political independence of the Lebanon, which is essential if peace is to be restored to the country.

I should like to pay a tribute to UNIFIL, which continues to operate in difficult circumstances in southern Lebanon. UNIFIL has never been permitted to

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fulfil its mandate, despite its repeated renewal by the Security Council over the past 10 years. The Force must be afforded the full co-operation of all the parties to the conflict. My Government reiterates its call for an end to the harassment of UNIFIL and urges all parties to co-operate fully with the Force.

We have welcomed the cease-fire between Iran and Iraq and should like to compliment the Secretary-General warmly on his strenuous efforts towards this end. Without in any way underestimating the difficulties which remain to be overcome, we have been heartened that the leadership in both countries has had the courage and wisdom to take the first steps along the honourable road to peace. We wish the Secretary-General and the parties concerned well in their continuing efforts. We hope that the blessings of peace will be enjoyed by all communities in both countries.

The Geneva Agreements on Afghanistan represent an important step towards a solution of the Afghan crisis. They impose obligations on all the parties. Ireland calls upon all concerned to implement fully the peace process set out in these Agreements.

We welcome recent contacts between parliamentarians from the North and the South of the Korean peninsula and the efforts which have been made to bring about a resumption of the suspended direct dialogue aimed at reaching a solution by peaceful means. Indeed, on another note, we extend our best wishes for the success of the Olympic Games there as an example of practical international co-operation currently being observed by millions around the globe.

When we look at South Africa we can see no progress since last year. On the contrary, the apartheid system has been reinforced by further repression, harsher censorship and a ban on all those organizations which do not follow the Government

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line to the full. The effective silencing of the black political organizations and trade union movement and the ban on such organizations as the Soweto Civic Association and the National Education Crisis Committee are just unacceptable. They are further heavy blows on the suffering black population. Once again I must appeal to the South African Government to cease its defiance of international opinion and to take the necessary steps to dismantle apartheid, starting with the release of all political prisoners, including Nelson Mandela, and the removal of the ban on the 18 organizations now debarred from carrying on their work of peaceful opposition to apartheid.

On Namibia, early action is imperative to enable implementation of Security Council resolution 435 (1978) to go ahead smoothly. While South Africa's recently stated willingness to cease its obstruction of the implementation process is a welcome, if long overdue, development, it is the duty of the international community to ensure that other obstacles do not hamper the country's transition to independence.

Lasting peace and stability in Central America will come only through the persistent efforts of the Central American countries themselves, with the whole-hearted support of other members of the international community. We appeal to them to continue along the path which they themselves have marked out, in particular in the Guatemala agreement of August 1987, and to pursue national dialogue and the search for peaceful settlements.

(Mr. Lenihan, Ireland)

In my address to the Assembly last year I referred to the threat to the well-being of millions of people posed by the insecure world economic environment. The interrelated problems of developing-country debt, low commodity prices, barriers in international trade, declining financial flows to developing areas are unfortunately still with us. Those and other problems, environmental as well as economic, still threaten the livelihood and even the lives of millions of our fellow human beings.

In recent weeks, for example, massive flooding has caused severe suffering and loss of life in Bangladesh and in Sudan. A major international effort to combat drought in Ethiopia continues. In some African countries development is also, regrettably, hindered by civil unrest, sometimes amounting to civil war. Elsewhere the unrest is wilfully provoked from outside. That is the case of Mozambique, the victim of destabilization efforts by its neighbour South Africa. As for Angola, there are now some encouraging signs that this destabilization process and the destruction of the lives of ordinary people may be coming to an end.

Africa's need for external help if it is to develop its potential and raise incomes above subsistence levels has long been recognized by the international community. Both individual donor countries and multilateral institutions have for more than two decades now been giving official development assistance on a large scale, although the results have been disappointing.

Let us hope that the outcome of the recent review meeting on Africa and the recent decisions, which I welcome, to increase the capital of the World Bank and to replenish for the eighth time the funds of the International Development Association will be significant steps in dealing with Africa's development problems.

The balance sheet I am bringing the Assembly today on the situation in Northern Ireland is, I am afraid, a rather mixed one. I am sure that I speak for

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the overwhelming majority of people in Ireland, North and South, when I say that we are all saddened beyond measure at the violence which has afflicted Northern Ireland for almost 20 years and which has brought nothing but death, destruction and suffering to the people of the area, both nationalist and unionist. Suffering and pain are, as we all know, non-discriminatory in their impact.

It is hardly necessary for me to state again that the Irish Government shares the commitment of all democratic Governments to the fight against terrorism; indeed, our determination in that regard has been tellingly illustrated over the past year. But the achievement of peace and political progress is inevitably a larger and more complex task than merely combating campaigns of violence. The whole history and experience of the United Nations underline the absolute necessity of responding to the causes of divisions as well as trying to treat their symptoms.

In the specific context of Northern Ireland, it is imperative that the rights, identities and ethos of the two traditions be not alone recognized but comprehensively accommodated and advanced. While the effective pursuit of that objective will impinge on all areas of government, it will have immediate implications for the system of administering justice - with the need to demonstrate absolute impartiality becoming ever more urgent; for relations between the security forces and the community; and for addressing the very real problems of economic and social discrimination and disadvantage.

The Anglo-Irish Agreement of November 1985 seeks to address many of those problems. The British and Irish Governments remain firmly committed to the Agreement and are implementing it actively - indeed, this year the Intergovernmental Conference, established under the Agreement, has been meeting more frequently than at any period since the Agreement was signed. Much valuable progress has been achieved. I would be misleading the Assembly, however, if I did

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not state clearly that a large body of sensitive issues remains to be tackled effectively. The review of the working of the Intergovernmental Conference, which is scheduled for later this year, will give both Governments an important opportunity to review progress to date and, in particular, to see how in future we can best use the terms of reference and machinery of the Agreement to achieve real political progress.

A further lesson to be drawn from the history of this great Organization is the importance of dialogue in enhancing the understanding of problems and the parameters within which solutions must be found. All of us on the island of Ireland, no matter how our visions of the future may differ, have a common responsibility to work towards solutions in a spirit of mutual understanding and respect. Let us, as political leaders, begin to talk together in an open and generous way; we owe no less to our people, who so desperately yearn for a lasting peace.

I know I can count on the support of this Organization in our efforts to move imaginatively and effectively towards a resolution of the problems of Northern Ireland. The achievement of peace through political progress is the objective we have set ourselves - and this is an objective which is thoroughly consistent with the Charter of the United Nations.

When one reviews international relations and the prospects for progress in the period ahead, one must of necessity do so with a degree of caution. But this natural reluctance to raise unreal expectations of immediate solutions to problems which require the patient application of reason and compromise should not lead us to ignore one of the most encouraging developments of the past year - the renewed recognition on the part of Member States of the value of the United Nations as the central forum for the resolution of international conflict. It is the forum indeed

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in which the commitment of all members of the international community to regulate their affairs in accordance with international law should find its proper and appropriate expression. We rejoice at the recognition, even if it is a bit belated, of the unique and central role of our Organization in that respect.

Mr. LONCAR (Yugoslavia): First of all I should like to congratulate you, Sir, a good friend of ours and an outstanding diplomat and politician of Argentina, on your election as President of the forty-third session of the General Assembly.

My appreciation goes also to Mr. Peter Florin, the Deputy Foreign Minister of the German Democratic Republic, for his successful guidance of the forty-second session.

The deep changes on the world scene in the past year provide in themselves a different, much better atmosphere for the work of this session of the General Assembly. Yet they impose on it an additional obligation as well: to assess the real scope of these changes and outline the further mission - the peace mission - of the Organization.

(Mr. Loncar, Yugoslavia)

The Nobel Peace Prize that has just been awarded to the United Nations peace-keeping operations represents a significant recognition of the achievements of the Organization.

The Secretary-General's report was couched in guarded optimism. That is understandable and realistic in the present-day world.

I wish to express to Mr. Perez de Cuellar my gratitude for and recognition of the successes that the world Organization has achieved in the past year.

The fact is that the forty-third session is beginning its work in auspicious circumstances. The process of negotiations between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States of America continues. It has a positive impact on almost all aspects of international relations. Improvement in their relations could bring about progress in the quest for solutions to almost all the crises in the world, since there is evident interdependence between the accommodation of the super-Powers and overall developments in international relations.

For the first time it may appear that the dangerous spiral of the arms race has ceased.

These processes are a consequence not only of direct relations between the super-Powers, but also of the awareness of the international community that dialogue is inevitable.

What is the role and contribution of the policy of non-alignment and of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries in fostering such awareness? Since its inception the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries has striven to overcome bloc divisions and all other divisions in the world. For almost 30 years it has called upon the great Powers to stop confrontation, proceed to negotiations and establish co-operation.

I think that we can say that the ongoing positive processes affirm the principles of the policy of non-alignment.

(Mr. Loncar, Yugoslavia)

The Conference of Foreign Ministers of the Non-Aligned Countries, held at the beginning of this month in Nicosia, demonstrated the Movement's determination to continue to exert an active influence on the development of international relations.

What of importance in the perception of the present-day world, in Yugoslavia's view, came out of Nicosia?

First, in welcoming the rapprochement between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the non-aligned countries continue at the same time to draw attention to the serious problems standing in the way of this process, and will, for these reasons, and in a desire further to promote and deepen the climate of détente, do their best to ensure that the present atmosphere may be maintained. The efforts that are being made, and the results achieved, should be translated into a lasting and comprehensive process benefiting all countries and peoples.

Secondly, super-Power bilateralism is a reality of our time. However, it does not, of itself, ensure the settlement of world problems. Co-operation between the super-Powers is an absolute prerequisite; yet genuine and lasting solutions can be achieved only with the participation of all interested parties.

The non-aligned countries are prepared to contribute actively and constructively to the efforts aimed at resolving regional and global problems. That was stated very eloquently the day before yesterday by our Chairman, the President of the Republic of Zimbabwe, Mr. Robert Mugabe.*

*The President returned to the Chair.

(Mr. Loncar, Yugoslavia)

The successful initiatives taken recently by the United Nations have confirmed its irreplaceable role. The past year has testified to the fact that progress in dealing with world crises is achievable through direct, or at least indirect, United Nations involvement. It is of course a two-way process. The easing of tension makes the great Powers more willing to rely on United Nations mechanisms. This leaves room for the world Organization to take freer and more creative action and for its Member States to put forward initiatives.

We should like to believe that the time is behind us when it was necessary to fight attempts to marginalize the United Nations, and that the task ahead is to focus our efforts on its even greater and more decisive participation in the solution of world problems.

Although they constitute the majority in the United Nations, the non-aligned countries have neither an interest in advocating majority rule, nor the need to do so. They realize that this is not a viable way to resolve problems.

The process of the adjustment of the United Nations to present needs and the rationalization of its activities should be accelerated. At this point, solving the current financial problems of the United Nations and financing its future important undertakings for peace is the matter of the greatest urgency.

The world Organization is facing a number of challenges: to continue and speed up the resolution of existing hotbeds of crisis and, perhaps even more important, to initiate steps in that direction in the areas where they are still lacking.

It is also necessary to follow up and strengthen the process of disarmament as well as to start to deal with international economic problems.

After eight years of bloodshed the peoples of Iran and Iraq can look to the future with more confidence. Negotiations have replaced war.

(Mr. Loncar, Yugoslavia)

We hope that a just solution to the conflict will be reached through the consistent and integral implementation of Security Council resolution 598 (1987). That is in the interest of those two countries, as well as of peace and security in the region and beyond.

After so many years of illegal occupation by South Africa, Namibia is today closer to becoming an independent and sovereign State, as envisaged by the United Nations plan.

We welcome the process of negotiations between Angola, Cuba and South Africa. Ending the conflict in southern Africa and Namibia's accession to independence will greatly contribute to security and co-operation in that region. We believe that the end of the abhorrent system of apartheid - against which resolute international action, including comprehensive sanctions, continues to be required - will then not be far off.

Compliance with the Geneva Accords on Afghanistan, and their integral implementation, are of the utmost importance if peace, independence, non-aligned status and free development are to be assured to that country and its people.

(Mr. Loncar, Yugoslavia)

The constructive engagement of the various elements in the region raises the hope that the people of Kampuchea, one of the founding members of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, will at long last enjoy their right to peace, independence and sovereignty of decision on their own destiny.

We also believe that continuance of the mission of good offices of the Secretary-General and the resumption of the talks between the two Cypriot communities will bring about progress in resolving the problem of Cyprus.

Similarly, we hope that, through the involvement of our Organization and the countries of the region, the problem of Western Sahara will be solved in the near future in accordance with the resolutions of the United Nations and of the Organization of African Unity (OAU).

However, the improved atmosphere in the world has as yet had no effect on some of the existing crises.

Implementation of the peace plan of the five Central American countries has encountered serious difficulties and obstacles. We must continue to support the efforts to bring about a just solution of the situation in Central America, as well as Nicaragua's right to safeguard its sovereignty and integrity.

It is high time for the international community to make it possible for the Palestinian people to enjoy their right to self-determination and statehood. Together with a large number of other countries, Yugoslavia supports the early convening of an international conference, under United Nations auspices and with the participation of all parties directly concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. This is the realistic way to bring about a comprehensive solution to the Middle East crisis and to ensure that all countries of the region may live in peace and security on their own territory.

(Mr. Loncar, Yugoslavia)

The broadest section of the international community demands that a new momentum be added to the process of disarmament that has begun. This was particularly highlighted at the third special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to disarmament, at which, with stronger political will and greater efforts, we could have achieved more. We hope, however, that the numerous proposals put forward at that session, including those presented by Yugoslavia, will be taken into account at the current session. Peace and security cannot be anybody's monopoly, much less an exclusive right. The destiny of mankind is the concern and responsibility of all of us alike.

If our aim is the complete elimination of nuclear arms, the conclusion of a comprehensive nuclear-test ban is one of the most urgent tasks. Nuclear disarmament is, of course, of priority importance. Yet other weapons should not be overlooked. We consider that work on a chemical-weapons convention should be completed with the utmost urgency.

The continuous sophistication, stockpiling and use of conventional weapons explain tellingly why we demand the launching also of conventional arms negotiations at the bilateral, regional and multilateral levels.*

I believe that the time is ripe for broad-based and well considered action by all countries to promote improved international economic relations and co-operation. The international community must not miss the historic opportunity offered by the trend of relaxation and negotiation. Top priority should be accorded to the interrelated problems of debt, trade, finance, technology and development.

* Mr. Van Lierop (Vanuatu), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Loncar, Yugoslavia)

It is important to note that the debt problem of the developing countries is increasingly perceived as a most serious global problem. There is agreement in principle that solutions should be sought through an agreed, development-oriented strategy. Effective reduction of the level of indebtedness of the developing countries would remove one of the major obstacles not only to their development but also to expansion of the world economy as a whole. We assess positively the decisions of the Toronto summit concerning the debt of the least developed countries. We hope that those decisions will prompt further action encompassing broader aspects of debt problems.

The vicious circle in which the developing countries are locked with regard to international trade has to be broken. The demand that debts should be duly repaid cannot be met if restrictions are imposed on exports, which provide the sole source of funds for debt servicing. We remain committed to the open multilateral trading system, but we are increasingly convinced of the urgent need to eliminate the dangerous anomalies that have accumulated with respect to it. A prerequisite for the successful continuance and completion of the ongoing Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations is the cessation and rollback of protectionism and consideration of new areas, such as services and trade-related investment measures and other measures in the context of development requirements.

The increasing attention being devoted to environmental problems is entirely legitimate. There can be no progress without industrial and technological development, but it can be ensured only if the necessary timely protective measures are taken. The very survival of the human race on a planet worthy of human beings is in question.

(Mr. Loncar, Yugoslavia)

The continuing active involvement of the international community in the promotion and protection of human rights is a prerequisite for any real democratization of international relations and for safeguarding world peace. These noble goals are no less threatened by the phenomenon of terrorism.

Whatever is undertaken in the world Organization should serve man in building peacefully, and in freedom, the present and a better future. To that end the Nicosia declaration states that the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries should pursue a policy of respect for, and promotion the attainment of, the rights of individuals and peoples.

In addition to the work of this Organization, multilateralism is being promoted through a number of in our opinion very useful forms of regional co-operation. Through such co-operation the participating countries authentically and directly express their preoccupations and aspirations.*

* Mr. Cordovez (Ecuador), Vice-President, took the Chair.

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The very first meeting of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Balkan countries was held in Belgrade last February. It strengthened our belief that the Balkan countries will make a significant contribution to the processes of improving international relations.

At the Vienna follow-up meeting of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, Yugoslavia, along with other non-aligned and neutral countries of Europe, has been endeavouring to bring about a successful outcome of that meeting.

The historical and political experience of this generation shows that neither the noble and enduring principles upon which this Organization is built nor the legitimate aspirations of the international community can be realized without the wide-ranging democratization of international relations.

Unlike the times when freedom, independence and peace were high ideals but an almost unattainable goal, genuine conditions are gradually being created now for the establishment of a new international order that previous generations, particularly those who lived through the horrors of the two world wars, could only have dreamed of.

The increasing interdependence is an objective basis for the reintegration of the world, which is transforming itself from bipolar into multipolar so that it may one day become genuinely pluralistic. A single and secure world is conceivable only with the full participation of all. For that reason we are rededicating ourselves with even greater enthusiasm to the fulfilment of the tasks facing the United Nations, tasks which are paving the way for a better and more just world order, in which all the participants will be able fully to pursue their national as well as the common interests.

The dangerous injection of ideology into international relations and the imposition of "eternal truths" seem to be gradually fading away. This facilitates the endeavours to lay, step by step, the foundations of a more secure and stable

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future. Such a world could not be based on the balance and domination of power and on the exclusion of the majority of countries from the process of economic and technological development. In our opinion, it should be based on the full affirmation and implementation of some principles and processes which are being strengthened at the present time. They are: independence within increasing interdependence; multipolarity instead of bipolarity of the world; pluralism of socio-political systems, their co-existence and co-operation based on a footing of equality; human rights as universal values; peaceful settlement of all conflicts and disputes; universal participation in economic-technological development in the interest of mankind.

All this means in actual fact the democratization of international relations, that is, the participation of all countries in dealing with and in resolving international issues.

The necessary and, in our view, inevitable process of the world's future integration can be based on those foundations. This implies the gradual elimination of all the barriers that still divide the world today. Only in a world integrated in that way can a solid two-track relationship exist between the development of the world as a whole and the development of its component parts and individuals - countries and people.

With full respect for the principles of freedom, independence and equality, we should aspire towards a world in which not a single part will be left out of the prosperous development. We still need the belief out of which our Organization was born, so that, through the joint efforts of all, our visions may become a reality. Viewed from today's perspective, this may appear to be an ideal the realization of which seems uncertain and, in any case, to belong to the distant future. Nevertheless, we believe that we must strive for that future.

ADDRESS BY MR. BRIAN MULRONEY, PRIME MINISTER OF CANADA

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of Canada.

Mr. Brian Mulroney, Prime Minister of Canada, was escorted to the rostrum.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): I have great pleasure in welcoming the Prime Minister of Canada, His Excellency the Right Honourable Brian Mulroney, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. MULRONEY (Canada): Let me first congratulate Mr. Caputo on his election as President of the General Assembly. His wisdom and experience will, I believe, make this a particularly productive session.

It is an honour to be here today speaking to the General Assembly of the United Nations, the crucible of human hope for peace in a troubled world. I believe we are on the brink of a new age, one in which the differences that have divided us are becoming less important than the dangers we must face together. It is a new age in which concrete acts that make our world more secure must and can be matched by tangible commitments to reduce poverty in the developing world and protect our common environment.

For two generations the world has lived in the shadow of nuclear war, but today we meet at a time of significant achievement in arms control.

The Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles is a historic first step in arms reduction for which, I believe, we owe a great debt of gratitude to the courage and leadership of President Reagan of the United States of America and of General Secretary Gorbachev of the Soviet Union. They have laid a foundation, and we can now build upon it.

(spoke in French)

We can cut strategic weapons. We can limit the spread of nuclear weapons. We can limit nuclear testing, and every step in this direction takes us closer to a

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comprehensive test ban. We must redouble our efforts to reach a treaty banning chemical weapons.

In this respect, I welcome President Reagan's proposal for an early meeting of the signatories of the Geneva Protocol on the prohibition of chemical weapons. We must also control conventional weapons. Let us not forget that it is in conventional wars that people are still dying today. I encourage this Assembly to provoke and provide even more achievements in the field of disarmament.

(Mr. Mulroney, Canada)

(continued in English)

We have also seen progress on regional security issues this past year, progress of which Member nations could only have dreamed in the past.

In Afghanistan, the attempt to impose solutions by invasion and occupation has failed, and the Soviet Union is withdrawing its forces. The United Nations remains heavily involved in the search for solutions. In the Gulf, no country has been able to impose its will by force. Representatives of the United Nations, including 500 Canadians, now patrol in peace where hundreds of thousands recently died in combat.

Canada's role in these events is consistent with our long tradition - more than four decades - of peace-keeping, a role we have always willingly assumed. Canada has participated in every United Nations peace-keeping force since its foundation, and we are proud of this contribution, costly and difficult though it has often been, because we believe it has assisted in bringing stability to explosive regions of the world.

Today a significant portion of our armed forces is either involved in peace-keeping around the world or training for further duty in the service of peace. The award today of the Nobel Peace Prize for peace-keeping is a splendid tribute both to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and to those courageous men and women from all countries who patrol the world's danger spots in the pursuit of a durable peace. May I, on behalf of everyone, offer the Secretary-General our very sincere congratulations.

But not everywhere do we see the progress we would wish. The vicious cycle of repression and violence is unbroken in South Africa. We all know the cause: the massive and institutionalized violation of human rights called apartheid.

Internationally, pressure is increasing and is having an impact. The entire world finds apartheid repugnant: the whole world must now join forces to bring it to an

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end. Canada has taken strong measures on its own to rid our civilization of this unique evil known as apartheid.

We are under no illusions about the effectiveness of our efforts alone, and so we have actively pursued objectives in co-operation with other Governments, especially in the Commonwealth and la Francophonie. From the outset we have applied all the sanctions agreed to within the Commonwealth; we will continue to do so; and we will seek to broaden their application, increase their effectiveness and encourage others to join in adopting and applying them.

Consistent with our policy of moving systematically and deliberately to increase pressure on South Africa, our Government announced earlier this week specific new measures to tighten the ban on government contracts with South African companies and a further ban on high technology, together with initiatives designed to add practical support to peaceful efforts to work against apartheid. Because of threats to major development projects in the front-line States we intend to provide assistance, in concert with others, to preserve these development initiatives.

The movement in favour of human dignity is now irreversible. There can be no doubt that fundamental change will come to South Africa. The only questions are when and how and at what cost in human life. We must make sure the answers come soon, and peacefully - and that a framework is preserved that will give rise to a non-racial democratic South Africa. Only then will the children of Mandela know the gifts that freedom brings.

(spoke in French)

The problems of the Middle East have preoccupied this Assembly since the creation of the United Nations. Peaceful solutions have proved elusive, and in their absence violence and extremism have increased. But that is an argument for redoubled effort, not for despair.

(Mr. Mulroney, Canada)

There is today growing support for a properly structured international conference based on Israel's right to exist and recognition of the rights of Palestinians. Canada believes that such a conference can provide a path towards dialogue and away from a situation that appears to promise little but further suffering.

Some regional disputes continue to challenge our courage and imagination; but, in just a short period of time, progress towards a more peaceful world has been dramatic and deeply encouraging. Who would have predicted a year ago that today Soviet forces would be withdrawing from Afghanistan; that Vietnamese forces would begin withdrawing from Cambodia; that United Nations peace-keepers would be patrolling the Iran-Iraq border; that negotiations on Angola and on Western Sahara would be starting to bear fruit; that the Secretary-General would be discussing the independence of Namibia with the South African Government?

Those who have doubted both the value of multilateralism and the United Nations surely must be reassessing their views today.

(continued in English)

The Secretary-General's recent report on the work of this Organization is a document which should inspire the deliberations of this Assembly.

In this dawning hope for peace, the path we ought to take is clear. It is towards conciliation and not confrontation between East and West. It is towards co-operation and generosity, not recrimination and rigidity, in North-South relations. It is towards negotiation, not warfare, in regional disputes. It is towards implementation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted 40 years ago.

We must give hope to those who today find their rights to free expression silenced by gunfire. We must provide sustenance to the flame of liberty in all

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regions where fundamental rights are being abused. We must reinforce the role of the Security Council in the pursuit of peacemaking and peace-keeping around the world. It can be done, but only with the help of everyone in this Assembly.

For two generations the arms race, regional disputes and the threat of nuclear annihilation have been a central preoccupation of the United Nations, and so they will remain. But I believe that we are at a point in history when we must devote significantly more political energy to problems other than security, problems perhaps just as important but until now accorded a somewhat lower priority.

I want to speak specifically about the twin challenges of severe poverty and our endangered environment. I believe we shall not have true security until these problems have been successfully resolved.

These issues were high on the agendas of the summit meetings chaired last year by Canada - from the Commonwealth and la Francophonie to the Economic Summit Meeting in Toronto. At these meetings I found a growing conviction among national leaders that these problems can and must be tackled, and must be dealt with before the end of this century. These problems command the same priority here in the United Nations.

Poverty undermines security. It compromises equality. It denies hope. Today it is estimated that at least one billion people live in absolute poverty. They are hungry. They are often sick. They are uneducated. They die young.

Alleviating poverty must be given a new priority on national and international agendas. We must work to achieve social justice for the poorest of our world and economic growth which does not destroy our magnificent environment.

At Toronto the leaders of the major industrialized countries renewed their commitment to work towards continued growth for the benefit of both the industrialized and, particularly, the developing countries.

(Mr. Mulroney, Canada)

We are also working towards a trading system which is more open and more beneficial to all nations. I believe it will be strengthened bilaterally, as in the Canada-United States Free Trade Agreement, the largest commercial agreement in the history of two-way trade.

(Mr. Mulroney, Canada)

It can also be strengthened regionally, as in the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and in Europe as 1992 approaches.

(spoke in French)

It must be strengthened, too, through the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and multilateral talks such as the Uruguay Round of trade negotiations. Progress in those talks is essential at the GATT mid-term review to be held in Montreal this December.

Increased development assistance, especially to the poorest countries, is another imperative. Canada has just completed a review of its official development assistance policy. We have reset our bearings to improve the quality and increase the quantity of the help we give, to recognize the special role of women in development and to concentrate on the poorest people in the poorest countries. That is why Canada has completely written off the official development assistance debts of a large number of countries. It is surely reasonable that loans given for development purposes should not be allowed to become hindrances to that same development. None of this is altruism. All countries, North and South, rich and poor, have an equal stake in a world in which wealth must be more equitably shared. That is why our assistance programme is now composed entirely of grants. We have affirmed that Canadian assistance will continue to increase to reach the target of 0.6 per cent of gross national product by 1995 and the desired 0.7 per cent target by the year 2000 - now less than 12 years away.

(continued in English)

I can best illustrate the importance that we attach to the United Nations by pointing out that Canada is the fourth largest contributor to the United Nations system. Most of its contributions are directed towards development assistance. But Canadians generally feel that more could and should be done.

(Mr. Mulroney, Canada)

Africa is a very special case. Canada has taken seriously its responsibilities under the United Nations Programme for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990. In 1986-1987, Canada disbursed a total of almost \$1 billion in Africa, through all channels, multilateral, bilateral and non-governmental. Nearly half of our bilateral assistance will be directed to Africa over the next five years. But poverty in Africa and elsewhere cannot be ended solely through trade and help from developed countries, although these are vital parts of any effective international programme. It will require as well sound national economic and development strategies, and the Governments of the developing countries have a very direct responsibility to their own people to achieve substantial progress.

(spoke in French)

I have said that we must devote the energies freed by greater security to two equally pressing problems. One is poverty; the other is environmental protection. The world is facing an environmental crisis of unparalleled magnitude. Nature is sending us an urgent message that we ignore at our peril. The signs of this crisis are all around us: shortages of timber, exhausted soil, desertification, depleted fish stocks, seals dying in the North Sea, beluga whales washing ashore in the St. Lawrence River in Canada itself. Some even maintain that we have reached the point where the survival of mankind is at risk.

The Chairman of the World Commission on Environment and Development, Prime Minister Brundtland, has said that the threat to our environmental security is "second only to nuclear war". Now that we have lessened the likelihood of global nuclear war, we face invasion by rising seas, polluted air and encroaching deserts.

There is a growing awareness that the environment, the economy and human health are inextricably linked.

(Mr. Mulroney, Canada)

(continued in English)

At the same time as we in the North suffer the effects of our industrial society's lack of regard for the environment, the South suffers from the environmental degradation engendered by poverty, by population growth and by pressure for immediate economic development.

Destruction of the rain forest in Brazil, deforestation in sub-Saharan Africa and the pollution of drinking water in the sprawling cities of the developing world are the consequences, the simple, direct and inevitable consequences, of people in poverty seeking the simple means to survive. Without improved development opportunities they cannot be expected to do other than search for fuel, shelter and livelihood as best they can. We must help them, with their co-operation and friendship, to protect these precious resources. We require a new era of economic growth, but we need growth that sustains and expands the resource capital of all the countries of this planet, not growth that poisons the air we breathe and the water we drink.

An aboriginal elder in Canada, speaking to a Canadian Government commission, said it best:

"We did not inherit the Earth - we only hold it in trust for our children."

In a world in which rivers and winds cannot be contained by laws or borders it is clear that domestic initiatives by themselves are inadequate. Canadians know all about this. Our economy, as well as our environment, is being damaged daily by acid rain. We have taken important internal measures to address the problem. We have urgently pressed our neighbour to follow suit and to conclude a treaty with us that would reduce the environmental damage from this blight by stated amounts within specific time-frames. But acid rain is not limited to one nation or one continent: it is an international problem and it demands, I believe, a viable

(Mr. Mulroney, Canada)

international solution. The greenhouse effect, the deterioration of the ozone layer and the disposal of toxic wastes are causes for legitimate concern both here and around the world.

(spoke in French)

I am encouraged by the strong emphasis given to the environment by others in this year's debate. Problems of environmental protection require strengthened international co-operation, and the United Nations has a key role to play.

As with security issues, important action has been initiated. The signature a year ago in Montreal of the Protocol on the protection of the ozone layer is a landmark example of what nations working together can accomplish. I urge all States which have not yet done so to sign and ratify the Protocol without delay. The increasingly urgent question of global warming and climate change received serious attention at the International Conference on the Changing Atmosphere in Toronto last June. Our goal should be an international framework convention for the protection of the atmosphere by 1992.

We applaud the work of the United Nations Environment Programme in developing a global convention on the trans-frontier movements of hazardous wastes. We hope that it will be ready for signature by Member States next year. This powerful momentum must be maintained and even strengthened. Other steps are needed.

(continued in English)

Canada is supporting a feasibility study on a world conservation bank to work in concert with the World Bank. Canada is asking the World Bank at its annual meeting in West Berlin to strengthen the integration of environmental concerns into the design and implementation of its own projects.

(Mr. Mulroney, Canada)

Canada fully supports the holding of an environmental summit at the Heads of Government level. Canada urges all corporations and international industrial and trade associations to develop, strengthen and vigorously apply environmental codes of conduct.

Obviously, wealthier nations have to offer more assistance and greater support to help developing countries achieve growth which does not destroy their environment. And for that reason, the Canadian International Development Agency makes environmental protection one of its criteria for development projects.

I want to announce today that Canada will establish a centre which will promote internationally the concept of environmentally sustainable development. This centre will be located in Winnipeg, Manitoba, and will work closely with the United Nations Environment Programme and other like-minded international institutions and organizations.

Canada strongly supports the call for a United Nations conference on sustainable development in 1992.

The global challenges we face are great, but we are proving that they can be met and that they can be resolved.

Mankind is not destined to destroy itself. War is not inevitable. Poverty can be alleviated. The environment can be preserved. Injustices can be redressed.

The United Nations is not and never will be - ever - a perfect institution. But in the last few years the United Nations has proved that it can make needed reforms and emerge as a stronger and more effective body. We must continue to improve this irreplaceable Organization. Our citizens will judge the United Nations not by the rhetoric of which we are capable, but by the actions that we have achieved in the past and of which are capable again in the future, by our practical successes in working together.

(Mr. Mulroney, Canada)

An immunization programme that saves children's lives in a developing nation is, in itself, an enduring monument to the profound value of this institution. And surely, there are enough such monuments around to persuade any objective observer of the profound and ongoing value of an institution that treats its Members on a basis of equality and mutual respect. Because now, as the international political climate improves, the United Nations can play the role intended in the Charter.

Lester Pearson, a great Canadian statesman who was present at the creation of this Organization, once observed that the United Nations is the "living symbol of our interdependence, and embodies that emerging sense of international community, going beyond nation and region, which alone can save us in this nuclear age".

The United Nations, in my judgement and in the judgement of my Government, reflects the vision of our predecessors and the hope for our children.

The agenda before the United Nations is compelling, and the choices are clear: to manage the irresistible forces of change that swirl about us; to acknowledge the intimate interdependence of our world and of the issues before us; to ensure a more peaceful, more prosperous, more humane world, a world in which the strong nations are just, in which the rich nations are generous, a world in which all nations - all nations without exception - have the legitimate hope for greater economic and social justice, understanding as we all must that there is but one Earth for us to preserve for all of our children.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of Canada for the important statement he has just made.

Mr. Brian Mulroney, Prime Minister of Canada, was escorted from the rostrum.

Mr. MALMIERCA PEOLI (Cuba) (interpretation from Spanish): On behalf of the people and the Government of the Republic of Cuba, and on my own behalf, I should like at the outset to express our warmest congratulations to you, Mr. President, on your election to the presidency of the forty-third session of the General Assembly.

I am all the more pleased by your election, first, because you represent a sister Latin American nation that has repeatedly demonstrated its devotion to sovereignty and independence, a nation to which we are united by historical bonds of understanding and fraternity and secondly, because of our close, long-standing friendship, which will be further strengthened by this session of our world Organization.

We are certain that on this occasion you will once again demonstrate your high qualities as a statesman, and for its part the Cuban delegation commits itself to making every effort for the success of this forty-third session and the attainment of world peace and the development of all peoples of the world.

Last year, in this very forum, we said that, the great prevailing difficulties notwithstanding, we were living in a time of encouraging expectations, because the triumphalist ascendancy of the Reagan Administration had been checked and was on the wane. The activity of major international organizations had been strengthened, and a climate favourable to negotiations prevailed in Europe, Central America, southern Africa, Afghanistan and South-East Asia.

The facts of history and the efforts of the forces that cherish peace and progress have driven the obscurantist tendencies in international relations into total bankruptcy. Such tendencies seemed to be driving us to the brink of insanity and holocaust at the beginning of this decade. Such ideas, which had argued that a nuclear war was winnable and which advocated the theory of military superiority as a means of ensuring equilibrium and peace, are already losing ground.

(Mr. Malmierca Peoli, Cuba)

There is a growing rejection of measures - such as the so-called strategic defence initiative - that could lead to an arms race and enhance the possibilities of the total destruction of our planet.

(Mr. Malmierca Peoli, Cuba)

A new and effective form of international relations is evolving, one based on dialogue, understanding and the negotiated settlement of conflicts that for years have hung over the world and been bringing our nations ever nearer to the brink of a cataclysm of incalculable proportions.

The adoption of significant disarmament agreements between the two main nuclear Powers is not only a contribution to the attainment of world peace and international security for present and future generations; it enables us to envisage the release, within a reasonable time, of significant resources for the development of all nations and to help overcome the effects of the world economic crisis now threatening.

The efforts of the Soviet Union and other peace-loving progressive forces are beginning to bear fruit. Thus, we warmly welcome the Moscow meeting between General Secretary Gorbachev and President Reagan; we welcome the agreements reached there and the way in which they are being implemented. We believe this represents a major step towards disarmament, but it must be developed and supplemented. At Reykjavik, Comrade Mikhail Gorbachev proposed working on a draft agreement to reduce strategic weapons by no less than 50 per cent and to eliminate them completely before the end of this century; that proposal is still pending.

Although it is clear that we are moving towards a process of change, much remains to be done and positions that should be abandoned are still being taken. An example of this was the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, which took place this year. Renewed efforts by non-aligned, socialist and neutral nations to achieve agreements compatible with the new times that seem to be emerging in the field of disarmament ran into the irrational stance of those who stubbornly refuse to countenance the Assembly taking anything beyond the general decisions. Such an irresponsible attitude must be condemned.

(Mr. Malmierca Peoli, Cuba)

However, if the changes we are trying to bring about in international relations in our quest for full justice and equity do not go beyond disarmament measures, if they are not aimed at promoting the urgent solution of the problems afflicting the economies of the third world and the establishment of a new international economic order, then those changes - despite the glimmers of hope we discern - will be incomplete. To understand my country's position, it suffices to remember the words spoken recently at Quito, Ecuador, by President Fidel Castro:

"But the world's problems are not only problems of nuclear weapons and the threats of nuclear war that have unfortunately existed; there still remain other terrible problems for millions of people in the world, such as underdevelopment, poverty, hunger, and lack of education and health".

While the prospect of nuclear war and the resulting destruction and death is dreadful, the lives lived by billions of people on Earth are no less dreadful. The preservation of human life has been our incentive to strive for nuclear disarmament and for general and complete disarmament, and the preservation of human life must also be a driving force in the quest not only for disarmament measures but also for effective solutions to the problems caused by underdevelopment and poverty. For while nuclear war could potentially claim millions of innocent victims, it is no less certain that underdevelopment and poverty claim thousands of innocent victims every day. Suffice it to recall that every three days the number of children who die in the third world is greater than that of all those who died in the genocidal nuclear bombing of Hiroshima at the end of the Second World War.

Under the present circumstances, according to data from the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), one in four children is suffering from malnutrition; four in five children in rural areas do not have access to running water or adequate sanitary facilities; two in five children between the ages of six and 11 do not go

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to school; and four in five children have no access to modern medical care. These facts must cry out to our conscience.

On Monday, 26 September, President Reagan said farewell to us. But before he addressed us we had already said farewell to his policy of confrontation and war; more than saying farewell, we had defeated it. The international community said no to attempts to drive the world towards nuclear holocaust and stated its determination to move towards peace, disarmament, independence and development.

President Reagan devoted several paragraphs of his statement to Cuba, in which he confirmed his well-known ignorance of the facts of today's world, of their historical background and even of the most basic geographical facts. For that reason we shall not reply to his statement so much as correct it, setting out the facts as they truly are and calling for respect for the truth.

President Reagan tried to distort the results of the meeting of the Commission on Human Rights held last March at Geneva to fit his own desires, though at that meeting he was defeated thanks to member countries' respect for the purposes of the Commission.

Cuba is proud of its record in the field of human rights, and after defeating those Yankee manoeuvres we invited a delegation from the Commission on Human Rights to visit our country and observe the human rights situation there.

The situation today is very different from that of 30 years ago, when we were under United States neo-colonial domination and when the Yankee ambassador served as a pro-Consul who handed down orders to the sitting Presidents. Now, illiteracy has disappeared; life expectancy has risen from 55 to 74 years; infant mortality has declined from 60 to 13 deaths per thousand live births; the epidemic diseases that once claimed the largest number of victims have been eradicated; poliomyelitis, tuberculosis, and other such diseases have been wiped out. Where we

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had 20,000 university students we now have more than 300,000. Where we had 30 per cent unemployment, all Cubans of working age can exercise their right to work.

There remain counter-revolutionaries imprisoned in Cuba. That is only natural, because the 30 years since the triumph of our revolution have been years of our people's victorious struggle against the constant aggression of successive United States Governments, especially that of the Reagan Administration. Fortunately, those in the employ of Cuba's enemies - agents of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and other services - have failed in their attempts and have been sent to prison. In prison they receive humane treatment and their human rights are respected. There has never been an instance of torture or mistreatment; not a single prisoner has disappeared.

President Reagan also ignored the facts when he spoke of the situation in southern Africa. He persisted in his failed policy of support for the hateful apartheid régime; he tried to equate the South African invader troops with the Cuban internationalist combatants who went to Angola 13 years ago at the behest of the Angolan people to drive back the racist invader troops. But President Reagan does not even seem to read the newspapers. How else are we to understand his insistence that the agreement on the full withdrawal of foreign troops from Angola should apply first of all to Cuban troops? South African troops have already withdrawn from Angola, after suffering defeat at Cuito Cuanavale.

(Mr. Malmierca Peoli, Cuba)

The withdrawal of South African troops from Namibia is an obligation deriving from resolution 435 (1978) and is being called for by the international community. The Cuban internationalist combatants will withdraw, as has been stated, pursuant to a decision taken by Angola and Cuba.

Constructive engagement has been useful in prolonging the existence of the hateful apartheid régime, extending by 10 years South Africa's illegal occupation of Namibia. However, it was unable to prevent the failure of the invasion launched by the South African racists against the People's Republic of Angola. In southern Africa in 1988 we have witnessed significant developments which give rise to hope that we shall see achieved some of the objectives pursued by the countries in the region will be achieved - namely, the independence of Namibia on the basis of Security Council resolution 435 (1978), adopted by the Council exactly 10 years ago, and the provision of safeguards for the borders of the People's Republic of Angola.

Within the framework of the quadripartite talks, which involve the joint delegation of the People's Republic of Angola and the Republic of Cuba, the delegation of the Republic of South Africa and the delegation of the United States, acting as mediator, several meetings have been held in which the problems in the region have been dealt with in extensive discussions and principles have been established for the political settlement of the problems affecting the region.

In this context, in Brazzaville, following the seventh round of quadripartite talks a communiqué was issued informing the Secretary-General of the United Nations that, beginning on 1 November, effect would be given to Security Council resolution 435 (1978), on the independence of Namibia. It is a fortunate coincidence that this is occurring exactly 10 years after the adoption of resolution 435 (1978). We trust that very shortly Namibia will become independent and take its seat as the 160th Member State of the United Nations.

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In this context we reaffirm once again the existence of indestructible links between Cuba and the People's Republic of Angola, its Government and its people. They have been strengthened by the blood shed by Cubans and Angolans in the struggle for the freedom and sovereignty of that sister nation. Cuba is not seeking a military victory. Cuba has no intention or desire to humiliate anyone. It is inspired simply by the desire to make its modest contribution to the preservation of Angola's independence, to the progress of the negotiations on Namibia and to the attainment of peace and security in that part of Africa. Consequently, Cuba is prepared to continue these consultations and looks forward to a successful conclusion, although it is aware of the obstacles and difficulties that still have to be overcome and the time and effort that this will entail.

We reaffirm our unwavering solidarity with the Namibian patriots, led by the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO), and the South African patriots, represented by the African National Congress (ANC). We support their resolute struggle against oppression. The security of the other front-line States should similarly be guaranteed, thus checking the aggressive behaviour of the South African régime.

Particular attention should be paid to the position of Mr. Nelson Mandela, whose release from a prison in South Africa has become a matter of universal concern. From this rostrum we congratulate him on his seventieth birthday and reaffirm the steadfast support of the Government and people of Cuba for him and his cause, which, with the whole of mankind, we share.

The negotiating process which began recently with a view to ending the Iran-Iraq war is also showing encouraging signs, notwithstanding the difficulties involved. That war, which should never have broken out, must come to an end, not merely because of the benefits to both peoples that would result from peace and

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national reconstruction, both peoples, but also because this would be in the interests of non-aligned unity and world peace. Furthermore, stopping the war between the two nations would put an end to the imperialist presence in the Gulf, which must also be uprooted. Those naval forces are not acting as guarantors of peace; rather they are a source of tension and a threat to the independence of the States in the region.

In Central America there were hopes that peace would be reached under the Esquipulas agreements and the Sapoa talks. Such prospects, however, have run into the stubbornness and arrogance of the imperialists. The renewed efforts of the Government of Nicaragua, the Contadora Group and its Support Group in the search for a just and honourable peace in the region deserve recognition.

More than a year has passed since these peace initiatives were launched by the five Central American Presidents. They have not yet borne fruit, however, owing to the manoeuvres of those forces interested in impeding their implementation and pursuing a policy of aggression, destabilization and blockade against the Government of Nicaragua. The situation in Central America calls for prudence, wisdom and firm support from the international community in order to prevent a further escalation of the dirty war directed against Nicaragua, to achieve a negotiated political solution to that regional conflict and to ensure the economic reconstruction of the region. We should also support the peace efforts being made by the Contadora Group and its Support Group. We must reject every attempt to exclude them from the negotiating process. Furthermore, a process of negotiating should be ensured for El Salvador and Guatemala, with the indispensable participation of those who were compelled to resort to armed struggle to achieve what they were denied by law and democracy.

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Cuba reaffirms its full solidarity with the Government and people of Nicaragua and reaffirms Nicaragua's sovereign right to decide its own destiny free from any form of interference.

We welcome with healthy Latin American and Caribbean pride the honourable example set by the Panamanian people, which has rejected and defeated all the imperialist acts of aggression, blockades and threats directed against it, thereby demonstrating the enormous strength of a people united in defence of its sovereignty and independence.

We cannot fail to welcome also the significant agreements reached in Geneva with regard to Afghanistan, which are a source of satisfaction to us. The new situation which that Asian nation currently faces calls for renewed and continuing endeavours by all the parties and by the international community as a whole to bring about the speedy implementation of agreements, to ensure respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Afghanistan and to enable all obstacles to the attainment of peace in that region to be overcome. Cuba fully supports the Republic of Afghanistan in the difficult and complex process of national reconciliation.

We welcome the negotiating efforts being made by the States of Indo-China in order to achieve the long-desired peace in South-East Asia, the constructive and flexible dialogue among the countries of the region and the initiative taken by the Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement in his efforts to contribute to a negotiated solution. In this context, we reiterate our full support for the policy of national reconciliation formulated by the People's Republic of Kampuchea. These developments represent a source of hope in a climate fraught with dramatic potential.

The ministerial Conference of non-aligned countries met in Nicosia, the beautiful, warm capital of Cyprus, just a few days ago. The successful discussions

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at that Conference, the fraternal, constructive atmosphere during the talks and the presence of almost all member States of the Movement, with delegations mostly led by their Foreign Ministers, was unequivocal proof of the progress made by our Movement and evidence of its growing unity and capacity for action.

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In Cyprus we reiterated our call for struggle for peace and development. We welcomed the progress made in the negotiations on disarmament and at the same time warned that acts of aggression were still persisted and that solidarity and encouragement should be given to the peoples of the world in their struggles.

We agreed to meet next year in Belgrade - where the first non-aligned summit was held in 1961 - for the ninth summit conference of Heads of State or Government in order to strengthen further the decisive role we should play in the defence of peace and the furtherance of development.

Last year we reaffirmed that the United Nations should contribute with all its influence to the attainment of peace and the political resolution of conflicts and disputes among nations. Today we are witnessing a resurgence of the United Nations contribution, and very particularly that of its Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Pérez de Cuéllar. He has been responsible for much in the way of resolving many of these regional conflicts. We have noted with satisfaction that the achievements of the United Nations this year have helped put an end to the theories proclaiming the death of multilateralism and the ineffectiveness of the United Nations. The United Nations has done this by meeting its obligations under the Charter.

The situation in Latin America and the Caribbean is both promising and potentially dangerous. It is promising because of the sustained progress made in the political and social realms in our continent, because of the growing awareness of shared problems and because of the growing unity in a spirit of pluralism that has not been impeded by the natural differences of ideology, wealth or territorial extension among the countries in our region. The future of this continent will be bright if Latin America and the Caribbean succeed in exercising unity and cohesion, if we are able to take advantage of the legacy left us by our predecessors, that is, Bolivar, San Martin, O'Higgins, Sucre, Juarez and Marti; if we succeed in identifying our common problems and in finding shared solutions; in short, if we

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are able to undertake a real endeavour at integration, in diversity, taking advantage of all those features that bring us closer together rather than resorting to those that divide us.

The informal dialogue of foreign ministers of Latin American and Caribbean countries held recently in Caracas represented encouraging evidence of a growing and necessary unity and of the urgent need for integration and co-operation. It showed that our united voice is strong and to be heard wherever integrationist tendencies are on the rise.

Cuba will do everything in its power to contribute to this process of Latin American and Caribbean unity, co-operation and integration.

Democracy has progressed in Latin America and the Caribbean. Dictatorial régimes are more isolated than ever, rejected by both their own peoples and the Latin American and Caribbean community. We are confident that we shall be able to manage our future collectively for the benefit of our peoples.

However, we also said that Latin America is faced with a potentially dangerous situation, as hazardous as that facing the other countries of the third world. The international economic crisis has produced intolerable repercussions. It has stirred up an unbridled and spiralling decline in the living standards of our peoples with the progressive erosion of our economies, the worsening of injustice and unequal relations with the industrialized countries of the West. Furthermore, in recent years the arms race and its almost geometric growth have made the prospects of development even more uncertain and an ever greater amount of resources has been used that could otherwise have been employed to alleviate the effects of the crisis.

The difficult path we have had to trace in the 14 years since the adoption of the Declaration and the Programme of Action on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order by the General Assembly at its sixth special session

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has become increasingly uncertain. This has shown the serious nature of the problems we face and the need for urgent solutions.

The phenomena which have traditionally affected international economic relations, in particular those involving the developed capitalist countries, on the one hand, and the third world, on the other, continue to worsen and to make the plight of billions of human beings unprecedentedly hopeless. Protectionism, the difficulties encountered by third world countries in the export of commodities and in getting access to markets, together with the unequal terms of trade, the dumping and the external debt constitute scourges which have plunged a large number of countries into an economic crisis, a "crisis for existence", the solution of which requires a major restructuring of the world economy and of its operating procedures.

This is one of the great paradoxes of our time. While we are witnessing encouraging signs of progress in international political relations, progress in terms of disarmament and a tendency to resolve many local conflicts, at the same time the economic plight of the underdeveloped countries is becoming increasingly worse. While the major capitalist countries Powers agree to hold negotiations on matters pertaining to war and peace, they still refuse to hold comprehensive negotiations to resolve the most pressing economic problems of the contemporary world.

Do they not realize that, no matter how much they pursue security, security will be incomplete as long as an economic gap continues to exist between one group of nations and another, and indeed continues to widen?

A new international economic order continues to be our goal. In recent years we have repeatedly heard views questioning its validity in present circumstances. We do not agree with such views. How could one seriously and responsibly argue that an instrument that has never been implemented has ceased to be valid? Is it that the conditions that have brought it about have already disappeared?

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Of all the phenomena to which we have referred, the spiralling external debt of our countries has had the most serious impact and may potentially be the most dangerous for the political, economic and social stability of vast sectors of the world.

We have recognized over and over again that the external debt of third world countries is a political issue and should be approached as such and that all the parties involved - debtors, creditors, banks and financial institutions - should pool their efforts.

We need to find a speedy solution to this problem. We have recognized a number of factors which link such a solution to the search for answers to other problems affecting third world economies. However, a debt that exceeds \$1 trillion is not something to be simply recognized or dealt with in terms of theoretical assumptions. Our countries have been concerned for far too long with poverty, hunger, illiteracy, inadequate health services and the desire for equality and justice.

The recent fourteenth Latin American Council of the Latin American Economic System decided to convene a regional conference on external debt. Everyone agrees on the fact that it is unpayable and uncollectable. We need to develop a comprehensive strategy for tackling the debt problem; we need to take a new approach. Several years ago President Fidel Castro proposed a formula with which this General Assembly is very familiar. We strongly believe in the accuracy and force of his argument and, indeed, it has been borne out by events of recent years.

We are entering a new decade. We should work for a new millennium of peace and coexistence in the 1990s, with a new and positive form of international relations as opposed to the attitudes and policies that prevailed in the 1980s. Aggression must give way to good-neighbourliness among nations. The use of force should be replaced by consultations and dialogue. Policies of coercion should

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yield to negotiations for the protection of mutual interests. Unequal terms of trade should give way to a just and equitable international commerce. The obsolete mechanism based on Bretton Woods should yield to a new international monetary system which would eliminate overt or covert exploitation.

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The process which is now beginning for the United Nations Fourth Development Decade could offer a suitable framework for these objectives. Those who illegally possess the world's wealth currently "have the floor". They are the ones that have to demonstrate wisdom and genuine concern for the fate of the world; otherwise, it will fall into a state of collapse fraught with unforeseeable consequences.

In this connection, we welcome the endeavours of the South Commission and, particularly, the results of its meeting in Mexico. We believe that such institutions may be very useful in raising world consciousness about the need for development and providing new ideas for solving the most pressing problems of the third world. We are particularly pleased to see that this Commission is presided over by Mr. Julius Nyerere, an outstanding contemporary political figure and one of the eminent leaders of African independence.

We note with satisfaction that the Conference on the Indian Ocean will be convened in 1995. We should build our collective determination so that by the time the Conference starts that region will have been freed from military pressures and will have become a zone of peace. We believe that the new course we are beginning to see developing in international relations may represent a decisive contribution to the attainment of a climate conducive to the demilitarization of the region.

We reaffirm our support for the sister republics of Korea and express our solidarity with their aspirations for reunification and for the total withdrawal of United States occupation forces from the southern peninsula. We trust that we shall shortly have the delegation of a united Korea in the United Nations.

We also express our support for the legitimate desires of Cyprus, a non-aligned country to which we are linked by ties of close friendship. We call for preservation of its independence, sovereignty, national unity, territorial

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integrity and non-aligned status. We also welcome the talks between representatives of the Greek Cypriot and the Turkish Cypriot communities. We support the convening of an international conference on Cyprus under the auspices of the United Nations.

In the present international circumstances, we should increase our efforts to put an end to the wandering life of the Palestinian people, who are subjected to unparalleled outrages on their native land. The response of the Palestinian people to Zionist abuse has been a national popular uprising which since its beginning last December has marked the start of a new phase in the long struggle waged by the Palestinian people against foreign colonization and domination.

We reaffirm our support for the holding of an international peace conference on the Middle East with equal participation by all parties to the conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. We reaffirm our conviction that there can be no solution to the conflict in the Middle East without a solution to the Palestinian question and without recognition of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the establishment of their own State.

We support the just cause of the people of Lebanon in their just struggle for national unity, respect for their territorial integrity and for preservation of their non-aligned status. We support the call for the withdrawal of Moroccan troops and administration from the territory of Western Sahara and for the establishment of an independent and sovereign Sahraoui state.

We continue to support Bolivia's just claim for direct and practical access to the sea, a right supported by the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean.

(Mr. Malmierca Peoli, Cuba)

We support Argentina's claim of sovereignty over the Malvinas Islands. We reiterate our solidarity with Madagascar and its claims over the Malagasy islands of Glorieuses, Juan de Nova, Europa and Bassas da India. We also support the aspirations of Comoros to regain sovereignty over Mayotte.*

Other vestiges of colonialism also remain in Guam, Bermuda, the Cayman Islands, East Timor, Gibraltar, New Caledonia, Anguilla, Pitcairn, Montserrat, the British Virgin Islands, the United States Virgin Islands, the Turks and Caicos Islands and elsewhere. We cannot disregard the attempts to prevent the independence and sovereignty of so-called Micronesia.

Cuba is still suffering from illegal occupation of its territory by the United States naval base in Guantanamo, which remains there against the wishes of our people and Government, in violation of the most basic norms of international law. However, the day will come when we shall exercise sovereignty throughout our territory.

Since the end of the last century, Puerto Rico has remained under the yoke of the most powerful colonial system of our century. It is the steadfast duty of the Cuban revolution, which liberated its own people from shackles, to contribute to the independence of Puerto Rico, as Jose Marti stated when he founded the Cuban Revolutionary Party almost 100 years ago, and prevent Puerto Rican soil from being used for the launching of continued aggression against other States of the region.

The General Assembly is duty-bound to continue to endeavour to promote the exercise of the inalienable right of peoples to self-determination; to independence; to sovereignty over their natural resources; to free economic and

* Mr. Dlamini (Swaziland), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Malmierca Peoli, Cuba)

social development; to defence of their traditions, languages and cultural identities; and to demand the removal of military bases from their sea and their soil.

The world is now facing the dilemma of peace or war. We have no right to disregard the appeals of our peoples. We must be prepared to live in peace. We must create the machinery that will enhance and strengthen confidence and security among nations, as well as peaceful coexistence and productivity.

We must lay the foundations for the relationships of the future so that the generations of the next millenium will feel proud of the heritage left to them by their predecessors. That is our goal.

Mr. NGUZA KARL i BOND (Zaire) (interpretation from French): The forty-third session of the United Nations General Assembly has elected Mr. Dante Caputo to preside over its work as President. Accordingly, on behalf of my delegation, I should like to extend to him, in these happy circumstances, our most sincere and warmest congratulations.

Zaire, which co-operated very closely with Mr. Peter Florin, President of the forty-second session of the General Assembly and also of the third special session devoted to disarmament, would like, as outgoing Chairman of the First Committee, to express our great esteem for him and our appreciation for the outstanding success achieved throughout his term of office, which has just recently ended.

(Mr. Nguz a Karl i Bond, Zaire)

To the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar - a tireless pilgrim in the service of international peace and security - my delegation extends all its gratitude for having found time, despite his many international obligations, to make an official visit to Zaire from 16 to 18 February 1988, in order to become personally acquainted with the facts about my country and its people. The people of Zaire as a whole were able to appreciate the significance of this official visit, which followed logically on those made earlier by the late Dag Hammarskjöld and the late U Thant during the crucial period of our history.

Thus today Zaire is able, more than any other country, to appreciate the cost of the peace, so dearly won thanks to the determination of the United Nations to strengthen our independence and ensure our unity.

The many successes that have been achieved so brilliantly by our Secretary-General in the peaceful settlement of some international conflicts of the present time demonstrate the effectiveness and the relevance of his action and also enable us fully to appreciate his great talents as a superb diplomatic and a skilled negotiator. The Nobel Peace Prize awarded today to the United Nations peace-keeping forces is indeed moving and eloquent proof of the contribution our international Organization is making to the cause of international peace and security.

May I say how happy the delegation of my country, Zaire, is to find itself once again here at this international gathering, the greatest forum of all times, which we all regard as the conscience of the world. We, the representatives of peoples, Governments, States and various communities, are given another opportunity to think aloud, together, about the situation of the human race.

A feature of the present international situation is the resolve of the majority of States to settle their disputes by peaceful means, as provided for in Article 33 of the United Nations Charter.

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Thus, the Organization is continuing to play its primary role in the maintenance of international peace and security. It now has increased importance as the universally recognized body seeking, through negotiation, inquiry, mediation, conciliation or any other peaceful means, solutions to the conflicts pitting Member States one against the other. The relaxation of tension in, inter alia, Afghanistan, Democratic Kampuchea, the Persian Gulf and Western Sahara, thanks to action taken by the United Nations - symbolized by its Secretary-General - and with the valuable support of the two super-Powers, whose interests seem to be converging, is a tangible example of that.

These far-reaching changes that are progressively taking place hold the promise that relations of trust will develop between East and West, and we hope that this will help to strengthen North-South relations as well.

Recently the international community has been witnessing a more or less positive development in regard to conflicts in the world. Indeed, the efforts made by the Security Council that led to the adoption of resolution 598 (1987) enabled the Secretary-General to continue his consultations and negotiations with the Foreign Ministers of Iraq and Iran, following the Iranian Government's acceptance of that resolution, and those consultations finally led to the cease-fire in the war that had lasted since 1979 between Iraq and Iran - two brother countries and, moreover, members of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. The dimensions that the so-called oil war in the Persian Gulf were assuming had become a matter of increasing concern to the international community, with so many human lives being lost on both sides, so many ships being sunk and so many aircraft being shot down. My country, Zaire, sincerely hopes that the commitments entered into by the two parties will be scrupulously respected so that peace and security may be restored to that sensitive region of the world.

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The international community is glad to see that the Afghan people is now about to exercise fully its sovereignty and control over all its national territory, pursuant to the Geneva agreements of 14 April 1988, which entered into force on 15 May 1988 and which are based on the total withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan. That is fully in keeping with the aspirations of that people, whose country is also a member of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

My delegation believes that this example being set by the Soviet troops should be followed by the Vietnamese troops in Democratic Kampuchea so that the people of that country may be able to regain its dignity, freedom and unity.

The talks which were held at Bogor from 25 to 28 July 1988 between the Foreign Ministers of the members of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and Viet Nam and the representatives of the four political factions in Kampuchea led to the establishment of a working group of high officials of all those countries, with the mandate of studying in depth all aspects of a political solution to the Kampuchean problem.

It can be hoped that the wind favourable to dialogue that is blowing through Asia will reach the two Koreas. In that connection, my delegation feels that the admission of those countries to membership of the United Nations could only strengthen the role they are already playing on the international scene.

While the spirit of harmonization and concertation prevails in the Far East, the same cannot, alas, be said of the Middle East, where there is still fierce antagonism and hostility which constantly fans hatred. Despite the efforts made by some States directly involved in the conflict, and despite the efforts of the United Nations, no progress seems to have been made on the road to a comprehensive, peaceful settlement of that issue.

(Mr. Nguz a Karl i Bond, Zaire)

So far as my country, Zaire, is concerned, the State of Israel exists and is a Member of the United Nations, just as the Palestinian people is a living reality that should also have a State and become a Member of our universal Organization.

That is why my country appeals urgently to all the parties involved not to listen to the sirens of discord but, rather, to adopt a more conciliatory attitude that would be more favourable to dialogue. For it is by recognizing everyone's inalienable right to existence within a nation that all the Member States of our Organization can demonstrate their devotion to the purposes and principles of the Charter.

The United Nations has adopted many resolutions calling on the white minority régime to put an end to the political system of apartheid in South Africa, which has been almost unanimously regarded as a crime against humanity.

The Republic of Zaire, linked by geography, history and culture to southern Africa, is following with particular interest the developments in that part of the continent.

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The quadripartite negotiations currently under way between those mainly concerned should be encouraged by the international community, because the process augurs well for the independence of Namibia and because the resulting withdrawal of foreign troops from Angola and Namibia would set that region on the right road, so that an atmosphere of peace and trust could develop between the protagonists.

My delegation also takes a positive view of developments in Western Sahara and Chad, where the consultations that have now begun between the parties offer the prospect of a lasting, peaceful solution.

It is also encouraging that in Central America substantial progress has been made in the peace process since the signing of the Esquipulas II and Sapoa agreements.

Turning to the economic situation, I should like to begin by presenting some food for thought from a recent publication called "Pour l'Afrique", which says among other things:

"The subsoil of Africa has a very high mineral content. We already know that it contains 97 per cent of the world's reserves of platinum, 64 per cent of manganese, 25 per cent of uranium. Copper in Zambia and Zaire, lead in Namibia, cobalt in Zaire and Zambia, nickel in Botswana and Zimbabwe, phosphates in Morocco, Senegal and Togo, gold, silver and diamonds throughout southern Africa ... Iron is perhaps the most promising; while world reserves are being exhausted, there are enormous deposits in Gabon, Senegal, Guinea and Mauritania. For a world industry that is hungry for raw materials, Africa is the continent of the future."

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Completing the picture, the author adds:

"Commodity prices today in real terms represent only 20 per cent of what they were in 1960. In 1985 international trade in manufactured goods increased by 6 per cent while trade in agricultural and mineral products dropped by 2.5 per cent. Increased competition, protectionism, monetary disorder, the high cost of energy ... Africa has been hit by them all."

In a nutshell, that is the gloomy, negative and sharply contrasted picture of the international economic situation, particularly as regards relations between the industrialized countries of the northern hemisphere and the developing countries of the southern part of our planet.

In this connection, it should be emphasized that the depth of the crisis disrupting the world economy requires concerted action rather than timid sectoral, superficial and inconsistent patching up.

Against that background, relaunching a true and sincere dialogue between North and South with a view to establishing a new international economic order, in the interests of all peoples, would be very timely, for such a dialogue could bring about the dawning of a new economic order based on justice and collective responsibility towards mankind. It could provide solutions to the major economic problems of today, one of which, clearly, is the external debt of the developing countries. That burden, now amounting to several billion dollars, jeopardizes all prospects of developing our countries and undermines all possibility of growth.

Our countries' export earnings are diverted to the payment of external debts, instead of being used to finance development; our countries have become net exporters of capital and reservoirs of financial resources for countries that are already developed. Therefore, an agreed approach based on the principle of shared

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responsibility between debtors and creditors is necessary, for the imperatives of economic development and growth must be given precedence and be among the top priorities.

We should highlight the dichotomy between the speedy enrichment of some and the equally speedy pauperization of others, although they are linked by relations of interdependence. My delegation believes that it is worth expressing the hope that the world will finally become aware of the situation and provide the necessary remedy before it is too late.

My country, Zaire, attaches great importance to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, whose fortieth anniversary the United Nations will celebrate on 10 December this year. We are also happy to note that today, 29 September 1988, is the tenth anniversary of the adoption of Security Council resolution 435 (1978), containing the plan for Namibia's independence, and is also the date chosen by the two super-Powers at their recent Moscow summit to draw up a schedule for the withdrawal of Cuban forces from Angola.

In accordance with resolution 41/129, which encourages all Member States to take appropriate steps for the establishment of national institutions for the protection and promotion of human rights, a Department of the Rights and Freedoms of Citizens was set up in Zaire in 1986. Its mandate includes in particular gathering and considering the complaints and grievances of any citizen whose rights and freedoms have been unjustly violated by the public authorities, by any decision of the courts or in any other way, when all other legally authorized remedies have been exhausted or found ineffective, and when the injustice has been declared to be flagrant.

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Apart from Africa's physical and moral suffering, some parts of the continent also suffer from drought, desertification and the invasion of locusts, while the resulting famine strikes millions of human beings.

The difficult issue of toxic and radioactive waste is a matter of major concern to third-world countries, and particularly to Africa, at the present time. It was therefore with good reason that on 4 October 1973 Marshal Mobuto Sese Seko, President of the Republic of Zaire, said from this very rostrum:

"In Zaire we are flattered when we are considered as the champions of the protection of nature. But what is the use of this national effort if our efforts are cancelled out by people thousands of kilometres away from us?"

(A/PV.2140, p. 76)

The true import of those words can indeed be felt today.

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From 31 May to 26 June 1988 the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament was held here in New York. At that time the international community hoped that the new atmosphere of understanding that had developed between the two major nuclear Powers would extend to other Member States following the signing in Washington on 8 December 1987 and the ratification in Moscow on 1 June 1988, of the Treaty on the Elimination of Medium-Range and Shorter-Range Nuclear Missiles. The General Assembly at that time hoped that that joint action by the nuclear Powers would have a positive impact on other nuclear Powers. However disappointing the resolutions of the third special session devoted to disarmament may be, this cannot in any way weaken the resolve of the international community to follow the new path that has been traced out by the super-Powers with a view to general and complete disarmament under effective international control.

A British philosopher said:

"Those who do not act together cannot act fruitfully. Those who do not act in trust cannot act together. Those who are not bound by shared views, shared feelings and shared interests cannot act in trust."

Since the international community has shared interests it must act in trust so as to act fruitfully to ensure the survival of the human race.

As an African thinker said:

"It is at this price, and this price only, that we can avoid despairing of ourselves, for in this way we will have acted as men - men of peace, men of dialogue, men of magnanimity, men of a generation that has not lived for nothing and that, after exploring the Moon, having passed by the planets Mars and Saturn, touched on Venus, admired Orion, has come back to Earth, its head held high, to take charge of its own fate - the fate of mankind."

Mr. FERNANDEZ ORDÓÑEZ (Spain) (interpretation from Spanish): The election, as President of the General Assembly, of a dear friend and colleague has been for me a source of great satisfaction. I should like to congratulate you, Sir, and also to congratulate ourselves because I feel entirely confident that your professional ability and proven diplomatic skill will ensure that the discussions in this forum will have the positive results for which we all hope. I also wish to express our gratitude for the work carried out by your predecessor as President, Mr. Peter Florin.

Year after year, as we have debated the important issues on our agenda, we have observed with a feeling of frustration that many conflicts have continued to stagnate just where we left them the year before, and that nothing and nobody seemed capable of staying the sinister hand that wields the scourge of war. To this feeling of impotence was added a feeling of frustration because of a rather widespread tendency on the part of the public to dismiss the United Nations, and multilateralism in general, as an appropriate means of solving the most difficult and complex problems facing mankind.

Today, however, there are reasonable grounds for optimism. The work of the United Nations over the past year has borne fruit in the area of the peaceful solution of international conflicts. The role of our Organization has been strengthened and has gained credibility in the eyes of the public.

My Government has always believed in the need and usefulness of multilateral channels in today's world. Three years ago - on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of the Organization - Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez reaffirmed Spain's unqualified support for multilateralism, and for the United Nations in particular. A year later, this was also the chief message conveyed by His Majesty King Juan Carlos I when he addressed this Assembly. We have always thought that as long as there is the necessary political will on the part of the Member States, and

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as long as we are capable of introducing the readjustments that are needed at any given moment, this Organization's potential should be practically unlimited.

It is not only the goodwill of the Member States and the new climate of dialogue among the great Powers - which has been reflected in the recent unity of action among the permanent members of the Security Council - that have contributed to bringing about this encouraging situation; the patience, the tenacity and the skill of the Secretary-General have also been instrumental. His hard work, which is now, quite rightly, winning international acclaim, continues to enjoy the full support of my Government. We trust that we are witnessing the start of a successful period during which the United Nations will be the forum in which everyone's efforts to implement the objectives and principles enunciated in the Charter will converge.

With regard to regional problems, I shall begin with the long and terrible war that has confronted Iran and Iraq. The united action of the Security Council and its co-operation with the Secretary-General have started to bear fruit. With the adoption of resolution 598 (1987), the Security Council had already laid the foundations for a just and lasting solution. With the full and unqualified acceptance of that resolution as a whole by both sides, a process of negotiation has formally begun under the auspices of the Secretary-General and his special representative, Ambassador Eliasson, who, in spite of the many obstacles and difficulties to be overcome, is to secure not only a cease-fire but true peace for these two peoples, worn out by so much death and sacrifice.

In the Afghanistan conflict, the beginning of a solution can also be glimpsed as a result of the signing of the Geneva Accords last April. The determination and tenacity of the Secretary-General and his Special Representative, Mr. Cordovez, were also decisive in drawing them up. We must now trust that the different

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parties involved will abide scrupulously by the agreements, that the withdrawal of Soviet troops of occupation will proceed in accordance with the agreed timetable, and that the Afghan people will be able to exercise their right to self-determination and finally achieve true sovereignty and independence. The setting up of a widely representative Government, and the free and unhindered return of as many refugees as wish to go back to their homes, will constitute the real proof of national reconciliation, to which the international community must contribute all possible aid for the urgent rebuilding of Afghanistan, through the Special Co-ordinator appointed by the Secretary-General.

In southern Africa, together with the hopeful progress towards the solution of the problems of Angola and Namibia, we observe that South Africa's policy of destabilization of neighbouring countries is being maintained and that the hideous and iniquitous system of apartheid is still in force. The repressive measures of all kinds taken over the course of the past few months and the reimposition of martial law are clear signs of the unwillingness of the Government in Pretoria to engage in dialogue, while it radicalizes the situation and makes the solution of the domestic problems more difficult. Once again we repeat our appeal for the immediate liberation of Nelson Mandela and the other political prisoners, as well as the legalization of all political organizations. We are determined to reinforce, together with our partners in the European Community, both the positive actions and the application of pressure necessary to promote peaceful change in South Africa, which would pave the way to a pluralistic, democratic and non-racist society.

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However, it appears that there are also signs of hope in the region. On the one hand, in the talks now under way among the Governments of Angola, Cuba and South Africa, with the positive mediation of the United States, we perceive a desire for flexibility and a general political will to overcome the last obstacles that still hinder the attainment of peace and stability in Angola. On the other hand, the implementation of United Nations resolutions, and in particular Security Council resolution 435 (1978) - and, incidentally, today is the tenth anniversary of its adoption - appears to be drawing progressively nearer, after so many years of stagnation. The process of independence for Namibia will undoubtedly require significant effort on the part of this Organization and its Member States. Spain is prepared to co-operate fully with the Secretary-General in this process and to provide, if so requested, support for the human and military infrastructure that may be needed in order to bring it to a successful conclusion.

There are also better prospects for a solution to the problem of Kampuchea. For the first time in many years there is perhaps an opportunity for this unfortunate country, and the entire area of South-East Asia, to enjoy peace, stability and an end to violence. We are encouraged by the dialogue that has begun among the various parties to the conflict and the countries concerned. We support the constructive efforts of the countries of the Association of South-East Asian Nations and believe that contacts between China and the Soviet Union on this issue can also be useful. Any lasting solution requires the withdrawal of foreign troops from Kampuchea and the setting up of a Government of national reconciliation, representing the different political parties, thus averting once and for all the danger of a return to the immediate past, which we have all condemned.

In the Maghreb, a region to which my country is linked by innumerable ties,

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we have also noted over the past few months a significant easing of tension. Spain welcomed with great satisfaction the renewing of diplomatic relations between two of our friends, Algeria and Morocco, as well as the first steps towards progressive regional integration. In this new context, we observe that important steps have been taken towards the solution of a conflict, that of the Western Sahara, about which my country is understandably concerned. The Secretary-General, guided by the resolutions of this Assembly, and in conjunction with the President of the Organization of African Unity, has done some very constructive work here. This consisted in the sending of a technical information mission to the area; the maintaining of constant contact with the parties to the conflict - Morocco and the POLISARIO Front - and the submitting of concrete proposals to both these parties last summer with a view to holding a referendum for self-determination, duly organized and supervised by this Organization. We note with satisfaction that these proposals have received the initial agreement of the parties. Recently, the Security Council authorized the Secretary-General to appoint a Special Representative, who has ahead of him a delicate task in order to conclude the peace plan successfully. Spain is willing to provide all the technical co-operation the Secretary-General may require in this process. Furthermore, we are confident that, through the free and unhindered expression of the will of the Sahraoui people, an end will be put to a painful conflict that impedes this future of progressive integration that the peoples of the Maghreb desire.

We also wish to express our satisfaction at the progress made on the question of Cyprus. The recent talks between the leaders of the two communities, under the auspices of the Secretary-General, are a good omen that perhaps a way has been found to solve another long-standing conflict. My country supports this direct dialogue and is confident that it will lead to a final settlement which will guarantee the unity, sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of the

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Republic of Cyprus in accordance with the resolutions of the United Nations, while at the same time making possible peaceful coexistence between the two communities on the island.

Unfortunately, in the case of other regional conflicts we cannot say that there has been significant progress in the past few months.

Last year at this time I pointed out from this rostrum the advisability of not delaying the convening of an international peace conference, under the auspices of the United Nations, to seek a just, global and lasting solution to the conflict in the Middle East. A few months later, the Palestinian population of the occupied territories rose in protest, and this has attracted international attention both in connection with the deteriorating economic and social situation and the injustices being suffered by the Palestinian people and in connection with the repressive measures taken by Israel with a view to stifling the national aspirations of that people.

The deterioration of the situation in the occupied territories makes clear the dangers involved in a stagnation of the peace process. My country trusts that, under the auspices of the United Nations, gradual and constructive initiatives will be introduced which will permit an agreement in principle among all the parties involved in the holding of a conference at which a final agreement could be reached. This agreement must guarantee respect for the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, including the right of self-determination, as well as the existence of all the countries in the region, including Israel, within secure and internationally recognized borders. Meanwhile, the recent decision by Jordan to break off legal and administrative ties between the two banks of the river Jordan has left a void that requires, on the one hand, greater involvement and aid by the international community and, on the other, greater moderation, prudence and realism by all the parties directly involved in this conflict.

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Within the context of the Middle East, we see with great concern the recent aggravation of the political crisis that has been going on for so many years in Lebanon. Spain supports the wishes of the Lebanese people to put an end to the bloody confrontations that have taken so many lives in that country since 1975 and trusts that, through dialogue among all the communities, a strengthening of its constitutional institutions may be brought about which will make possible peaceful coexistence in a sovereign, independent and united Lebanon.

My Government continues to support resolutely the process of the strengthening of democracy in Latin America, although, unfortunately, clear threats and resistance to the progress of freedom still persist. Democracy presupposes pluralism, respect for human rights, and also the right of peoples to determine, freely and without outside interference, their political, economic and social systems. We therefore welcomed the Acapulco compromise for peace, development and democracy, which was signed by the Presidents of eight Latin American countries in November last year, and we hope that Chile will soon return resolutely to its democratic traditions.

With regard to the serious crisis in Central America, Spain greeted with hope the signing of the Esquipulas II agreements as a highly significant step towards the peace, reconciliation, and economic and social recovery of the countries of the region. It is true that since then other significant steps have been taken and that the will of the peoples concerned to find genuinely regional solutions to the problems of the area have remained unaltered; however, in general terms, there is a disturbing stalemate which must be overcome as rapidly as possible. In this regard, the convening of the long-delayed summit of Central American Presidents, which has gained better prospects recently, can contribute to give a new impulse to

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the peace process. The national dialogue must continue, respect for human rights must be strengthened and there must be strict observance by all the parties concerned of the commitments in the Esquipulas agreements. There are no alternatives to this peace process, to this peace framework. At the same time, an essential element for the consolidation of the momentum towards peace is the implementation and development of the special plan for aid to Central America, which my country will continue to support fully. As we have incessantly repeated, the grave problems of this region have their roots in underdevelopment and the persistence of unjust social and economic structures.

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This Assembly, which has acted as a true catalyst in the process of decolonization, has nevertheless been unable to eliminate certain pending issues from its agenda. With regard to East Timor, we trust that the contacts between Portugal and Indonesia will be continued and that progress will be made towards a just and internationally acceptable solution. As for the Malvinas Islands, direct negotiations should be held between Argentina and the United Kingdom that will enable Argentinian territorial integrity to be restored while safeguarding the legitimate interests of the population.

I cannot fail to mention another pending colonial issue that directly affects my country. The Spanish Government and people continue to remain firm in their determination to find a definitive solution to the problem of Gibraltar that will restore the Rock to our country while safeguarding the interests of the population. In this connection, we have continued the dialogue with the United Kingdom and we shall continue to do so in the future along the lines of the agreements contained in the 1984 Brussels Declaration and in accordance with the decision taken by both Governments in Geneva in 1985 to deal with and resolve all aspects of the problem, including the matter of sovereignty, through negotiation. During this past year significant progress has taken place in the talks on some technical problems, such as air facilities, and it is our firm intention to continue along this path of negotiation, with the goal of being able to conclude the process of decolonization through the restoration of our territorial integrity, thus implementing the resolutions that were adopted by this Assembly at the time.

Recent positive developments in some regional conflicts and the continued efforts of this Organization and its Secretary-General to bring about a solution for others have brought the United Nations peace-keeping activities to the forefront. As has been mentioned, the award of the Nobel Peace Prize for 1988 is something we all welcome and in which we can take satisfaction.

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The resolute action by the Security Council in this field is a particularly encouraging factor. The growing commitment to the concept and the practice of peace-keeping operations among Member States and, above all, the political will to co-operate in their implementation on the part of those who have shown most reserve in the past provide a solid basis for developing them more thoroughly at a favourable time such as the present.

We feel that the time has come to draw up general regulations on the financial arrangements and the supply of facilities, services and personnel by Member States. My delegation considers that it would be most advisable to revitalize and strengthen the activities of the Special Committee on Peace-keeping Operations, whose recent meetings a few months ago, after five years without being convened, strengthen our optimism about its possible future role in this important sphere of the work of the Organization.

The new trend towards peace on the international scene prompted me to deal first with regional conflicts. But obviously the task of this Organization does not end with the solution of regional conflicts. There are many other areas in which the United Nations, with less spectacular but nevertheless tenacious and continuous efforts, has been demonstrating for years its capacity for dealing with the major problems facing the international community. I have in mind three areas in which the importance of multilateralism can hardly be denied and in which the Organization's efforts have been especially significant: disarmament, co-operation for development, and the protection and promotion of human rights.

Some three months ago, at the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, I gave a detailed outline of my Government's views on the many items of the agenda related to this important issue. At the start of this forty-third session, I should like to make some remarks of a more general nature.

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Over the course of this year several developments have pointed to the possibility of developing a new pattern of East-West relationships, which had focused on confrontation, with scarcely any margin for dialogue and co-operation.

The Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles - INF Treaty - the slow but sure progress in the strategic arms limitation talks, the advances towards the limitation and ultimate banning of nuclear testing: these are all stages in a new bilateral dialogue between the United States and the Soviet Union aimed for the first time at reversing the arms race on Earth and preventing its extension to outer space. However, their significance is not limited to the field of arms control and disarmament, nor to the strict framework of bilateral relations between the super-Powers.

The satisfactory implementation of the intrusive verification procedures provided for under the INF Treaty is a confidence-building element which will affect other areas. Thus, in the field of arms control and disarmament, a new impulse could be given and new initiatives could also be introduced in international forums.

The fact that it was not possible to agree on a final document at the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament is something that we regret, but that has not undermined our confidence in multilateralism. In our opinion, the document - which never saw the light of day although it had obtained broad consensus on most points - contained many elements which deserve more thorough treatment in the immediate future and which could provide an excellent working basis for the debates during the present session.

The issue of conventional stability is especially important within the European regional framework. In this connection, within the context of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE), it is necessary to

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proceed without delay to a reduction of the existing imbalances in the conventional field, which will make possible enhanced security with lower levels of forces. At the same time, Spain is in favour of the adoption of new confidence-building measures that will complement and reinforce those adopted at the Stockholm Conference.

Progress in the field of security must be accompanied by substantial advances in other areas of the CSCE process, particularly with regard to human rights and fundamental freedoms. We are following with growing interest the process of greater openness in Eastern Europe, which we hope will have a positive effect at the Vienna meeting. Spain is confident that a substantial and balanced final document will be agreed upon promptly at that meeting, so that negotiations in the area of security can begin as soon as possible.

However, there is a matter of serious concern that I should like to stress. The renewed use of chemical weapons, together with the proliferation of ballistic missiles, gives new urgency to the need to achieve decisive progress in concluding an agreement for the complete and effective elimination of the whole category of chemical weapons.

Economic development is another major issue facing the international community. It is perhaps the major question facing it. The recent economic recovery in the industrialized countries has served to enlarge the gap between them and the developing countries and to make the poverty of the latter more visible. Commodity prices have been another disruptive factor in the past few years. Protectionism is directly related to economic power. Six years of external debt have condemned the majority of those countries to a pathetic and hopeless effort, especially in Latin America, where they are beginning to speak of a lost decade.

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We are seriously concerned about the grievous situation in Latin America, where the burden of debt servicing and the unpredictability of financial flows for development have turned the countries of the region into net exporters of capital, which is an unprecedented phenomenon in international economic relations.

While addressing the subject of the debt of these middle-income countries, I should like to recall the words of the Spanish Prime Minister a few days ago, when he addressed the Governors of the Central Banks of Latin America and the Philippines:

"Facts show that the present strategy to solve the debt crisis is unable to provide for a timely solution of the outstanding problems."

Let us face the truth. We need to reconsider the strategy, now that public opinion and the banking situation are favourable.

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The problem must be dealt with multilaterally within the framework of the international financial institutions, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, a consensus being reached with regard to interest capitalization and the reduction of the debt burden. The resulting financial margins could be used in support of the necessary adjustment policies that must continue to be implemented.

With regard to the least-developed countries, we shall carefully study the proposals of the Toronto summit meeting. We are also ready to participate actively in the United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, to be held in Paris in 1990, at which financial issues will undoubtedly be of special relevance.

I have previously mentioned the link between the external debt of developing countries and the evolution of commodity prices. Despite the recovery of some commodity markets, the majority of commodity prices are still below 1980 levels. Here, the foreseeable entry into force of the Common Fund for Commodities could give rise to hope.

In the face of the protectionist pressures that have surfaced in international trade, the progress made in the present Round of multilateral trade negotiations, launched by the Punta del Este declaration in 1986, is also an encouraging sign. Despite present difficulties, we cannot afford to let this Round end in failure. We hope that, with the necessary political will, the review of progress achieved, scheduled to take place at the ministerial meeting next December in Montreal will be a valuable and positive contribution to the ultimate success of the Uruguay Round.

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Finally, the efforts and determination of the United Nations to alleviate the most urgent problems have been outstanding. In this connection the funds and specific programmes are especially relevant, among them the United Nations Development Programme, which continues to work effectively in assisting developing countries. Spain is determined to continue to increase its voluntary contributions to the funds for and programmes of operational activities for development.

As we all know, the African continent is now facing one of the most difficult and agonizing development problems in the world. This General Assembly session marks an important turning point in the assessment of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990. The nucleus of the Programme of Action contains the twofold commitment made by both the African countries and the international community. On the one hand Africa must lay the foundations for stable development and sustained growth through structural adjustments and improvements in its economic policies, and on the other the international community must substantially increase its assistance and adopt initiatives in support of the African efforts. Although it is true that in the short term neither commitment has had any visible results, it is also true that with a medium-term programme such as this there must be enough time for it to become properly established.

Spain will continue to assist African countries, both multilaterally through its participation in the conventions and programmes of the European Economic Community, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, and the United Nations agencies, and bilaterally through co-operation agreements with individual African countries.

When speaking of development it would be inexcusable not to mention the dangers inherent in ecological imbalances. It is urgently necessary for all of us, but most especially the industrialized countries, to do everything

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possible to preserve the environment, with a view to ensuring a more habitable world for future generations. The Brundtland report and the measures subsequently taken have been fundamental in this connection.

One of the fields in which the work of the United Nations has been most innovative and successful is the promotion and protection of human rights. Thanks to this Organization's efforts, the international community now has a large number of legal instruments in which basic human rights are defined and the necessary mechanisms established for their control and defence. The initial corner-stone of this imposing edifice is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the fortieth anniversary of which we shall be celebrating in December. Its few brief articles comprise a resounding reaffirmation of faith in the value and dignity of every human being, and of the principle laid down in the Charter that universal respect for human rights is the concern of all peoples and Governments. The best proof of the great moral and legal value of the Declaration is the way it has influenced many constitutions and national legislations, as well as the international legal system that it has been drawing up over the past few decades, from the International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights and on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights to the recent Convention against torture, which my country ratified in October last year.

The Spanish Government is convinced that we must continue to advance resolutely along this path. The situation in many countries shows, regrettably, that we are still a long way from being able to feel satisfied. We believe that from now on our efforts, without forgetting the drawing up of new legal instruments aimed at perfecting the current international system and filling its possible gaps, should be directed above all towards the application and development of

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existing ones and the effective monitoring of their observance. A good way of making progress is through the world information campaign on human rights, which the Secretary-General has proposed should be launched on the anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration.

Three years ago the Assembly took an important step when it condemned unanimously and unequivocally all acts, methods and practices of terrorism wheresoever and by whomsoever committed. The bodies and agencies of this Organization must now continue to advance along the path opened up at that time and design a strategy for combating terrorism in their respective fields of action. The initiatives aimed at reinforcing international protection for civil aviation and promoting security at sea have our whole-hearted support. The terrorist threat has acquired universal proportions and the efforts to eradicate it must also be universal.

The Organization's work in the social field also deserves to be mentioned. The process of drawing up an international convention against illicit traffic in narcotic drugs will no doubt be concluded in December. Its entry into force will enable the international community to deal effectively with a problem of universal dimensions whose repercussions, given the ramifications which link the illicit traffic in narcotics to activities such as arms traffic and terrorism, and whose solution depends on close and resolute international co-operation. The speed and determination with which work is proceeding towards the conclusion of the convention shows the international community's awareness of this issue.

At the beginning of my statement I said that this was a particularly promising time for the United Nations. However, there is a shadow threatening the work of the Organization - that of the financial crisis which for three years now has been hovering over its daily work as a result of the unjustifiable failure

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of some Member States to fulfil their obligations under the Charter. During that time, significant efforts have been made to make better use of existing resources. Progress has been made also with regard to substantive issues, such as the decision-making process in budgetary matters and the beginning of a review of the necessary, although complex, restructuring of the economic and social sectors. I should like to call on all the countries represented here to do their utmost to meet their financial obligations to our Organization and to co-operate in introducing, at this particularly felicitous time, the adjustments needed to speed up and rationalize its operation and make it more flexible.

Year after year, as autumn comes to New York, we meet in this Assembly in a long-established ritual in which speeches are delivered, meetings are held and agreements are negotiated. This time we all have the impression that this exercise, which goes on quietly throughout the year, can be, and is, successful. We know very well from experience that what is happening is not the result of ineluctable fate, but that, rather, we are facing issues created by men, now or in the past, and that those issues must be solved by men, now or in the future. In any event, we are more responsible than ever before because we are better informed and have more resources than ever before.

Ancient Stoic wisdom consisted in knowing what depends on us and what does not depend on us. Now nearly everything depends on us, both the problems and their solutions. We are finding the solutions, and we shall continue to find them, not with less dialogue but with more dialogue, not with less justice but with more justice and not with less freedom but with more freedom; and, starting with this Assembly, which has now become so encouraging, we shall do so not with less hope but with more hope.

Mr. ABDULLAH (Oman) (interpretation from Arabic): It is a pleasure for me, at the beginning of my statement, to congratulate Mr. Dante Caputo on his election as President of the General Assembly at its forty-third session. My country's delegation is confident that the deliberations of the Assembly at this session will be crowned with success and, owing to his consummate skill, know-how and sagacity, will achieve the desired results. I also take this opportunity to commend his predecessor, Mr. Peter Florin, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the German Democratic Republic, who presided over the work of the previous session with distinction and skill. We have no doubt that Mr. Caputo will prove a worthy successor.

A short time ago, the world lost one of its outstanding leaders, General Mohammad Zia-ul-Haq, the late President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. Although the loss of President Zia ul-Haq is a very great misfortune, we are confident that the new Pakistani leadership will play an important political role, in keeping with the high standing of the people of Pakistan at the regional and international levels.

At the present session, the Sultanate of Oman would like once again to reaffirm its faith and confidence in the noble principles of the Charter of the United Nations, and to assert its conviction that the organs and institutions of the Organization have a constructive role to play in devising solutions to the problems and crises afflicting mankind. That conviction stems from its belief that dialogue and understanding among nations achieved within the fold of the United Nations is the best way of overcoming such problems and crises.

The Nobel Peace Prize given to the peace-keeping forces of the United Nations this year is an expression of the world's recognition of the role of the United Nations in the context of peace and security. The award is a historic recognition of the role of the United Nations, and a sign of the international desire to

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emphasize the impetus towards world peace. We are truly overjoyed by this event, and congratulate everybody in the United Nations, but especially the officials who are working throughout the world to preserve peace and security.

Among the purposes of the Charter are the establishment and maintenance of a climate of confidence and mutual understanding within the international community, the creation of normal, just and equitable relations among Governments, nations and peoples on the basis of dialogue and non-recourse to war as a means of resolving conflicts, and compliance with the principles of mutual respect and non-interference in the internal affairs of others. The United Nations has the capacity and the means to achieve the purposes and give effect to the principles set out in the Charter.

As members know, at the beginning of each of the last seven sessions of the General Assembly, in presenting ourselves here to participate in the work of the Assembly and to speak from this rostrum of the problems that beset international peace and security, we have begun our remarks by referring to the Iraq-Iran war as the regional problem that poses the greatest danger thereto. At the present session, from this rostrum, we extend our warmest congratulations to Iraq and Iran on the agreement they have reached for the implementation of Security Council resolution 598 (1987) and to congratulate the international community on the success of its efforts to quell the flames of the longest and most dangerous regional conflict the world has witnessed since the Second World War. In this context, we can only express our overwhelming sense of relief and satisfaction at that outcome.

We see it as our duty, moreover, to extend particular congratulations to the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, on the positive and constructive role he has played, his tireless patience and his endurance under the psychological

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and moral burden of this problem until he was able to bring it to the threshold of peace. A success rarely matched in the history of the United Nations will thus be put on record to the credit of the Secretary-General. The role of the United Nations has undergone a diminution that has aroused the concern of all nations and peoples for the future of peace and security. What has been achieved in the Perez de Cuellar era, however, has restored confidence in the United Nations and in its peace-keeping role in the maintenance of security and stability. It has also added a new dimension to the credibility of the United Nations as a guardian of peace that allows all nations great and small to come together under its auspices and engage in dialogue with a view to achieving through its good offices, stability, reassurance and peace, in accordance with the Charter.

Accordingly, we call for greater self-sacrifice in maintaining the new momentum in United Nations endeavours, for action to reinforce those endeavours and for support for the role of the Secretary-General and co-operation with him in his efforts to solve other regional problems. He has our gratitude and our support for the efforts he is making to bring about a more tranquil and peaceful world.

The agreement reached on the implementation of Security Council resolution 598 (1987) in the Gulf region marks the beginning of a future brimming with hope, peace and prosperity. That would not have been possible without the courageous and judicious roles played by the leadership of both Iraq and Iran. The achievement brought about by resolution 598 (1987) will undoubtedly go down in history as one of the most illuminating examples of the momentous acts that characterize great peoples and nations. We are hopeful that the agreement between Iraq and Iran will mark the conclusion of one era and the beginning of a long and all-embracing new era of peace and co-operation.

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The key elements of Omani policy include the alleviation of tensions in the region, promotion of factors conducive to security and stability and encouragement of all parties to build mutual trust, with a view to ending disputes and achieving peace based on good-neighbourliness and mutual respect for the interests of the peoples of the region. The steps already taken by Iraq and Iran give us confidence that their readiness to take positive steps towards the implementation of resolution 598 (1987) will endure. We gratefully salute the two countries for the patience and diligence they have shown, and pin our hopes on the flexibility and co-operation that they are demonstrating in the ongoing talks, which will help in the achievement of peace and security in the near future.

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Among the most important benefits of a lasting peace between those two countries are the reconstruction and development they will be able to achieve. The international community must therefore do everything in its power to support their efforts to rebuild and to restore an understanding that will have far-reaching effects in assuaging the bitterness left behind by the war between those two peoples. It must help them achieve the development and prosperity that will provide a firm foundation for a lasting peace.

As one of the two States bordering on the Strait of Hormuz, my country has a special interest in the regulation of navigation in the Strait; we continue as in the past to play our role in regulating shipping in that important international waterway in conformity with provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and the rules laid down by the International Maritime Organization. The Sultanate of Oman reaffirms its determination to continue to perform that role in a way that will enable shipping in the Strait to carry on unhindered and in peace in accordance with the relevant international regulations.

The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and International Maritime Organization regulations accord equal rights to all coastal and land-locked States in the use of maritime straits, including the Strait of Hormuz, so long as that use is harmless and poses no threat to peace and security.

Following the lessons relating to Gulf shipping that have been learnt from the Iraq-Iran war, and following the negative developments that accompanied that war, the United Nations should ensure that peace agreements in the Gulf include an appeal for respect for freedom of international navigation and for non-interference with shipping both in international and in regional waters, including in ports, harbours and maritime installations, in time of peace or in time of war, in accordance with international law and recognized norms and within a framework of

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collective action for international legitimacy. Such action would ensure that the treatment accorded to shipping in the Gulf during the war does not become an acceptable precedent in international law that could be applied in other regions.

No discussion of navigation in the Gulf would be complete without reference to the foreign presence in the area. With respect to the growing dispute concerning the foreign naval presence, we should like to stress the importance of international co-operation in a framework of peace with a view to making the Gulf region a zone free of international conflicts. We also stress how important it is that all States should refrain from using the Gulf in ways that would increase tension or be prejudicial to the interests of any State bordering on the Gulf.

We look forward to the day when we can speak here on the question of Palestine with a heart full of joy at the Palestinian people having achieved its aspirations: a day we hope is not far off. At this session, however, we are obliged to express our deep concern at Israel's continuing occupation of Arab and Palestinian territory and at its failure to respond positively to international peace offers that would enable the Palestinian people to exercise its rights and the Arab States to enjoy security and peace. Israel has rejected all international political initiatives aimed at achieving peaceful coexistence between it and its neighbours, and insists on perpetuating the state of belligerency in the region, just as it persists in its illegal occupation of Arab territories and its abasement of the Palestinian people by denying it the rights set out in the United Nations Charter and in hundreds of resolutions of the General Assembly and other United Nations bodies, first and foremost the Security Council, which is responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security.

It is time for Israel to wake up to the fact that, if it genuinely wants peace with its neighbours and coexistence with the Arab peoples, it must immediately abandon its present policy and cease its belligerent and oppressive methods. Peace

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depends primarily on coexistence with the Palestinian people; Israel must therefore become sensitive to the true nature of that people's peaceful uprising in the occupied Arab territories and respond to it by agreeing to the convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East rather than by using force and oppression against the peaceable Palestinian people.

Never in history has an occupying authority meted out such harassment as that faced by the Palestinian people in its peaceful legitimate struggle against Israeli occupation. Despite the international community's inability to play a role in keeping with the scale of the suffering of the Palestinian people and with the peaceful nature of its uprising, that people continues to hope fervently that it will be accorded justice and fairness by the international community, as represented by the United Nations, in the realization of its aspirations and of its legitimate right to the establishment of an independent State.

The measures announced on 31 July 1988 by His Majesty King Hussein bin-Talal of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan severing the legal and administrative ties between Jordan and the occupied West Bank will unquestionably advance the Arab approach to peace. Moreover, they will facilitate arrangements for convening the international peace conference on the Middle East, thereby highlighting Jordan's important positive role in achieving peace, a role indispensable to the Middle East peace process.

These positive developments have created historic new opportunities for achieving a just and permanent peace in the Middle East guaranteeing the rights of all parties concerned. If these opportunities are not seized now, similar ones may not arise in the future, and this issue could continue to threaten international peace and security. There are indications that solutions are at hand to certain

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regional issues that until recently clouded international peace and security; solutions that should provide the best of motives for placing the question of the Middle East atop the list of regional issues demanding speedy solution.

The Government of the Sultanate of Oman is satisfied at the developments regarding the issue of Afghanistan, and particularly at the signing on 14 April 1988 of the Geneva Agreements. In that connection, it endorses the agreement that was reached and commends the efforts made by the United Nations on that issue, undertaken by the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, and his representative, Mr. Diego Cordovez. We express our complete satisfaction with the steps taken with respect to the withdrawal of foreign forces from Afghanistan, and with the latitude accorded the Afghan people to choose the system it desires without outside interference. The Sultanate of Oman further calls for the speedy solution of all issues relating to the implementation of the agreements, including the question of the composition of the future Government of Afghanistan. We urge the international community and all peace-loving States to make greater efforts to assist in the reconstruction of Afghanistan in order that it may overcome the devastating impact of the war that has afflicted it.

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The Government of my country is hopeful that the international situation, which is brimming with optimism, will help in the solution of the worsening Kampuchean problem. In this connection, we should like to commend the sustained efforts being made by countries of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) to solve the problem, and we also applaud in particular the efforts made by Indonesia on behalf of ASEAN. We regard the results achieved by the informal meeting of the Kampuchean parties held at Djakarta in July this year as particularly auspicious, and we hope that, God willing, the meeting will mark an opportune beginning for the resolution of the crisis. We wish success to all the efforts made to solve the Kampuchean problem, so that the Kampuchean people will be able to live in peace and choose for itself, of its own accord, whatever system it pleases.

Since it became a member of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean, my country, together with the other members of the Committee, has made modest efforts towards implementation of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace, adopted by the General Assembly in 1971 in its resolution 2832 (XXVI). Its implementation would preserve equilibrium in the region and insulate it from the effects of great-Power rivalry.

Despite the fact that patience is all but exhausted by the deadlock that has stifled the work of the Committee in recent years, we are pleased to note that appreciable success was achieved in the Committee's preparatory work this year. We hope that this success, together with recent positive developments in the region, will provide a fitting impetus for the convening of the conference in question at Colombo in 1990, as a first step towards the implementation of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace.

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We feel a sense of gratification at the sustained endeavour by the States of Central America to implement the agreement on arrangements for the inauguration of a firmly established and permanent peace in the region, which was signed by the Heads of State of the region on 8 August 1987. This agreement promises a future of peace and prosperity, not only for the region of Central America but also for the entire Latin American and Caribbean region. We take this opportunity to express the support of the Sultanate of Oman for all efforts made to bring peace to Central America, particularly those of the Contadora Group, which has continued to make exhaustive efforts to implement the letter and spirit of the August 1987 agreement.

The building of a world in which security, goodwill and harmony prevail requires that we eliminate those inhuman manifestations which the international community continues to endure, such as racial discrimination. The vile policy of racial discrimination pursued by the Government of South Africa against the black majority brings with it only increased destruction and bloodshed. While condemning that policy, we are hopeful that the international community will spare no effort to realize the aspirations of the oppressed peoples of South Africa for freedom and stability.

In that connection, the Sultanate of Oman welcomes the progress achieved thus far in the rounds of talks taking place, under the auspices of the United States of America, between Angola and Cuba on the one hand, and South Africa on the other. We hope that the results of these efforts will advance the interests of the peoples of South Africa and restore security and peace to that important region of the world.

The world is at present witnessing a unique gathering that exemplifies peace in its noblest sense the Olympic Games hosted by Seoul, the capital of South Korea. The Sultanate of Oman hopes that the spirit of peace represented

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by the Games will promote confidence and stability in the Korean peninsula. In this connection, my country would welcome any international move to admit either of the Korean States to membership of the United Nations, and we particularly welcome the sincere interest shown by the Republic of South Korea in addressing the General Assembly, especially since it announced, through the declaration made by its President on 7 July 1988, an end to the state of diplomatic enmity characterized by its rivalry and confrontation with the North. Such a move would strengthen the principle of universality which is the corner-stone of this Organization.

It is encouraging to see today that the process of dialogue and negotiation between the two great Powers has entered on a new course and has begun to develop. The positive results of that process have begun to show an appreciable impact in the easing of international tension, and they represent a sound basis for a more peaceful world and presage prospects for a dialogue of broad enough scope to include agreement on the solution of an increasing number of international issues. The entry into force of the Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Elimination of Their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles is an important historic event. The Treaty, as well as being the first of its kind, has highlighted an important fact: that regardless of how great the destructive military power of a State might be, it cannot be assured of peace and tranquillity, and that the only way to achieve security and stability is to engage in dialogue and to respect the interests of others on the basis of justice for all nations, great and small alike.

That Treaty, although important, affects only a small number of the nuclear weapons on the face of the planet. We have nevertheless taken one step towards the world envisaged by the Charter, despite the statistics available on military

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expenditures. It is enough to recall, by way of example, that the world spends \$1.3 million each minute for military purposes while in some of the developing countries hundreds of children are dying of malnutrition and disease, to say nothing of the 570 million human beings who are suffering from hunger, the 1,500 million in need of health services, the 800 million who remain under the shadow of illiteracy, and the 300 million unemployed.

These and other relevant facts make it incumbent on us to take urgent steps to break the deadlock that beset the disarmament process at the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. The disarmament issue is not the unique concern of one State or one group of States, but a universal issue that involves all peoples because none will survive a nuclear catastrophe. Since we believe that nuclear war will eradicate the human heritage and human progress on this planet, there is no alternative to collective action to prevent its occurrence. This will of course only come about if every State assumes its responsibility with zeal and sacrifice in preparing for a concerted effort of universal scope to formulate a full and comprehensive programme for disarmament.

The structural changes experienced by the world economy during the 1980s raise questions and cause concern in view of the sharp decline that has taken place. The changes that resulted from technological and scientific progress, as well as from the overall economic policies of the large industrialized countries, have had a negative impact on growth and development in the world in general and in the developing countries in particular.

(Mr. Abdullah, Oman)

The worsening situation of the world economy is due to the interaction of a number of factors, including the fall-off in the prices of those commodities on which the economies of the developing countries depend; instability in the exchange rates of the major currencies; the protectionist measures adopted by the industrially advanced countries; the debt burdens of the developing countries; the deterioration in the terms of trade to their detriment, and the reduction in financial flows to those countries. This has led to an aggravation of the economic problems from which the countries in question suffer, perhaps the best indication of which is the decline in their average per capita income. The uncontrolled persistence of such an abnormal situation will compound the suffering of even more of the inhabitants of third world countries. If such policies on the part of the wealthy countries are allowed to continue, it will mean that the developing countries will also continue to suffer from backwardness and poverty and that their economies will not have the opportunity to achieve increased rates of growth and recovery.

Although the beginning of a new approach on the part of the industrialized countries towards alleviating the burden of third world indebtedness, extending repayment schedules and lowering interest rates was apparent at the recent Toronto summit meeting, that approach is not universal and we hope that it will not be an interim phenomenon. We call for more constructive co-operation from the industrially advanced countries in order to increase growth rates in the developing countries and alleviate their debt burdens, just as we call on those countries to show more flexibility and greater seriousness in negotiations on that matter.

The solution of many of the problems faced by the international community depends on improvement of the world economy as a whole and on ensuring equitable and fair growth for all countries. This naturally requires the countries concerned to be flexible enough to renew the North-South dialogue.

(Mr. Abdullah, Oman)

We believe that the present session will provide an excellent opportunity to bolster the optimism that arose as a result of the resumption of the dialogue between producers and consumers. We have a duty to co-operate closely in order to create the conditions necessary to bring about a world economy that will be of benefit in a fair and balanced manner to industrialized and developing countries alike.

The United Nations has played a pioneer role in solving world problems and in promoting international peace and security. The Organization has demonstrated its ability and aptitude in devising solutions to many problems that had appeared to be insoluble, just as it has succeeded in breaking the deadlock in issues that had seemed to have reached an impasse.

The United Nations will remain the hope of mankind in its search for peace and security. In conformity with its policies directed towards the establishment of friendly and peaceful relations with surrounding countries and with the rest of the world, the Sultanate of Oman will continue to support all efforts to strengthen the role of the United Nations as the major collective instrument capable of solving the intractable problems facing mankind.

Mr. GOEBBELS (Luxembourg) (interpretation from French): This General Assembly is meeting at a very auspicious time indeed. While last year we were talking about some improvement in international relations, we have to note that the movement begun, in particular by the United States and the USSR, is now opening up new prospects for peace in many conflicts and hotbeds of tension throughout the world.

Actions by the United Nations and, above all, by the Secretary-General, Mr. Perez de Cuellar, have been exemplary. The tireless work of our Secretary-General and of the distinguished colleagues surrounding him have given our Organization new prestige.

(Mr. Goebbels, Luxembourg)

Since the founding of the United Nations we have seldom found so many reasons to celebrate the events that have occurred in the course of the year.

In disarmament the agreement on medium-range nuclear missiles is, for the first time, leading us towards the destruction of an entire category of weapons and in its wake the negotiations between the two super-Powers are continuing with a view to reducing strategic weapons by 50 per cent.

There are now new prospects for a whole series of conflicts that are too often described as regional: in Afghanistan, between Iraq and Iran, in southern Africa, in Cyprus, in the Western Sahara and in Cambodia.

In other zones of conflict or tension, the time is now one of détente or of rapprochement of parties which only yesterday were pitted one against the other. This is what is happening in the Horn of Africa, in the Maghreb and in Korea.

In general terms these achievements and this progress have been the concrete manifestation of a substantial improvement in international relations. Every day we see new signs of a greater community of interests and of a growing convergence of views.

But let us beware of euphoria.

Let us make sure first of all that the agreements signed are respected and implemented in good faith. An agreement in principle, even a signature, does not always lead us to peace.

For example, in Central America the Esquipulas II agreement, although signed, has not yet put an end to tension in the region.

In the Middle East and in South Africa the situation has worsened.

Other armed and bloody conflicts - and, alas, too little is said of them - are also continuing.

There is still a long and difficult road to travel as regards disarmament.

(Mr. Goebbels, Luxembourg)

Terrorism continues to wreak havoc and threatens the lives of innocent civilians.

Unemployment, failure to respect minorities, the emergence of new inequalities, intolerance in the most varied forms, violations of human rights all daily feed tension, frustration and violence.

The world economic and social situation also remains a disturbing one.

Ecological challenges are increasingly disturbing also.

As Europeans, we follow with particular interest developments now under way within the Soviet Union and in other countries in eastern Europe. The changes that have been announced should lead to a thorough reform in those States through democratization of political bodies based on true transparency in public affairs and decentralization of the economic structures.

The new Soviet foreign policy is characterized by a less dogmatic, more realistic and more pragmatic assessment of international events.

There is no doubt that this development in the Soviet Union has contributed to a substantial improvement in relations between the Soviet Union and the United States.

A perception of limits, even for super-Powers, in the field of military power and in the field of commitments to weapons abroad has promoted this change. The constraints of internal economic development and growing interdependence in a multipolar world no longer allows one State to dictate its will to another. And so it turns out that a solution to problems can more reliably be found through peaceful means, through dialogue, negotiation and co-operation.

Who could fail to hail the rapprochement between the two super-Powers confirmed by the Washington and Moscow summit meetings?

This logic has been applied also in Europe, where a new phase of détente and co-operation has begun.

(Mr. Goebbels, Luxembourg)

Recognition of the European Community by various countries in Eastern Europe has now been achieved. Following the agreement signed at Luxembourg between our Community and the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA), negotiations are now under way with the countries of Eastern Europe with a view to the conclusion of agreements that can strengthen economic co-operation.

At the follow-up Conference in Vienna, the 35 signatories of the Helsinki Final Act are about to agree on new orientations which deal, in particular, with respect for human rights and human contacts among all European citizens. I trust that its work will finish soon and that this will be followed by the opening of negotiations on conventional stability in Europe. The goal sought is twofold: first, to establish, through asymmetrical reductions, a stable, secure and verifiable balance of conventional forces in Europe at a lower level; and, secondly, to find new measures that can also help to consolidate trust and security in the wake of the Stockholm agreement.

On the question of Afghanistan, the Government of Luxembourg supports respect for the Geneva Agreements by all the parties. We expect, inter alia, that the Soviet Union will soon conclude the complete withdrawal of its forces in accordance with the scheduled timetable. Unfortunately, however, we must note that fighting continues in that country, which prolongs the suffering of the Afghan people and delays the return of some 5 million refugees.

It is only the establishment in Kabul of a truly independent and representative Government within the framework of a genuine process of self-determination - in other words, with the participation of all Afghans, including the resistance forces - that can make true peace possible, along with the reconstruction of the country, which has been devastated by eight years of occupation. My Government is willing to participate in the efforts based on international solidarity in support of the Afghan people.

(Mr. Goebbels, Luxembourg)

The world public welcomed with relief and tremendous satisfaction the halting of the murderous war between Iran and Iraq. That conflict lasted eight years, causing the death of more than 1 million young soldiers and civilians, the mutilation of hundreds of thousands of others and the destruction of entire towns. What senseless and absurd sacrifices at the altar of the delusions of grandeur of States, religious fanaticism and unbridled nationalism! We unreservedly support the efforts of the Secretary-General in the negotiations under way to bring about a just, comprehensive and lasting settlement in accordance with resolution 598 (1987).

The systematic mining of the international waters of the Persian Gulf and the repeated acts of violence deliberately unleashed by the two belligerents against the ships of third countries sailing in the region elicited unanimous condemnation in my country. Similarly, we deplore the destruction of an Iranian air bus, with the death of 300 civilians. We trust that the situation in the Gulf is now returning to normal and that freedom of navigation can be ensured in accordance with international law.

In Cyprus, the representatives of the two communities of the island agreed a few days ago to resume negotiations in Nicosia under the auspices of the Secretary-General. I hope most sincerely that this will happen within the scheduled time-frame. An overall settlement of the conflict must lead to the withdrawal of the Turkish troops occupying part of the Republic of Cyprus and to reconciliation between the two communities, so that 14 years of division can be ended.

In the Western Sahara conflict, the conditions for the implementation of the peace plan accepted by the two parties seem to have been met in principle. The proclamation of a cease-fire and the organization of a referendum, under the

(Mr. Goebbels, Luxembourg)

auspices of this Organization, should enable the Sahraoui people to exercise their right to self-determination freely and without constraint.

I also welcome the significant progress made by South Korea towards democratization. The youth of the entire world is now meeting in that country to participate in the Olympic Games. Is it not by virtue of that same principle of universality that we should now consider admitting the Republic of Korea to membership of the United Nations?

On the question of Cambodia, we have followed with interest and hope the various diplomatic initiatives that have been undertaken in the last few months. They demonstrate for the first time since the conflict erupted a growing political will on the part of all the parties concerned to arrive at a negotiated solution.

At the informal meeting in Jakarta, which for the first time brought together the different political forces in Cambodia, Viet Nam and the countries of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), various peace proposals were put forward and discussed and a working procedure was agreed upon. As the General Assembly has clearly reaffirmed year after year, the complete withdrawal of Vietnamese troops is the central element of any settlement, which must enable the Cambodian people to decide freely on their own future. Any possibility of returning to the atrocities committed under the Pol Pot régime must be completely avoided. The United Nations and the international community could well find themselves entrusted with a decisive responsibility for the implementation of such a settlement.

Will our Organization soon be able to welcome Namibia as the 160th Member, which would be the successful crowning of the actions taken by the United Nations almost since the beginning to end an illegal occupation and complete the historic task of decolonization? The question would seem to be justified in view of the

(Mr. Goebbels, Luxembourg)

results achieved so far during the negotiations that have been going on for some years now between South Africa, Cuba and Angola, thanks to the mediation of Mr. Chester Crocker, the United States Deputy Secretary for African Affairs. Those countries have reached agreement on a set of principles for a political settlement of the conflict.

We hope that the negotiations will provide without further delay a precise time-frame for the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola. Hostilities have already ceased. South African troops have left Angola. The parties to the conflict have agreed to propose to the Secretary-General the date of 1 November next for the implementation of resolution 435 (1978), which was adopted 10 years ago by the Security Council. That resolution provides for the withdrawal of South Africa's illegal administration from Namibia, the transfer of power to the Namibian people and preparations for the accession to independence of Namibia through free elections under the supervision and monitoring of the United Nations.

The situation in South Africa is still a matter of serious concern. No progress towards the abolition of the intolerable system of apartheid has been achieved; quite the contrary. Instead of entering into a national dialogue, the South African Government has prolonged and renewed the state of emergency and the accompanying legislation. It has made the system of repression even harsher and increased censorship.

Nelson Mandela has just had his seventieth birthday in prison. A symbol for millions of oppressed people inside and outside South Africa, Mandela represents the unquenchable hope for a united, democratic South Africa free of racial discrimination. I repeat once again the appeal made by my Government, as by many others, for his release and for the release of other political prisoners and of the many children and adolescents who have been unjustly imprisoned. We feel directly concerned and involved in the fate of the condemned Sharpeville Six.

(Mr. Goebbels, Luxembourg)

The Government of South Africa has recognized the merits of a negotiated settlement in the case of Namibia. I venture to hope that it will reach the conclusion that the time has come to find a negotiated solution that will eliminate apartheid once and for all. In the meantime, my Government will remain faithful to the decisions taken by the European Community, under the presidency of Luxembourg, whether it be a question of sanctions or of positive measures of support for the victims of apartheid and for the front-line States. Luxembourg will also continue its action at the national level, particularly in the financial sphere, in support of the organizations struggling peacefully against apartheid.

I turn now to Central America. The tremendous hopes raised a year ago by the Esquipulas II agreement have been dashed. The negotiations have become dangerously bogged down. While military activities seem to have dropped off, the process of national reconciliation has not led to results in any of the countries concerned. Injustices in the social and economic structures - the fundamental cause of the upheavals in the region - have not been remedied so far. I appeal to the Governments concerned to relaunch the peace process and courageously shoulder the obligations arising from the Esquipulas II agreement. Peace in the region results from the establishment in each of these countries of true democratic pluralism, respect for human rights and the promotion of social justice. It is incumbent on us, in turn, to respect the principles of international law, and in particular the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of any of the countries.

In the Middle East, the uprising by the Palestinians in the occupied territories has demonstrated, by its spontaneous and lasting nature, the extent of the frustration and disappointment of those who, despite their precarious living conditions, refuse to accept the humiliating situation of a people deprived of its legitimate rights.

(Mr. Goebbels, Luxembourg)

My country has always defended Israel's right to exist as a State, and we shall continue to do so. We therefore regret all the more that Israel has in the past few months had recourse to measures of repression that have often been brutal. Far from solving the problem, such measures have only increased the Palestinians' distrust and their determination to refuse to accept occupation.

Through his tireless, constant contacts, the United States Secretary of State, Mr. Shultz, has tried to achieve a renewal of the dialogue and the beginning of a peace process on the basis of a consistent and comprehensive plan.

Events in the past few months have demonstrated that the status quo is unacceptable. They have emphasized the urgent need for a negotiated solution. A growing majority of Member States already accept the idea of an international conference under the auspices of the United Nations. Such a conference could serve as a framework for direct negotiations between the parties concerned. It would also be called upon to define the transitional measures and the security guarantees required. It is for us - each and every one of us - to encourage this process of negotiation and to ask the Secretary-General to continue his consultations.

Any comprehensive, just and lasting settlement must be based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), on recognition of the State of Israel within secure and recognized borders, and on recognition of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, including its right to self-determination.

The decision by the King of Jordan to break the legal and administrative ties between his country and the West Bank is an act of great significance. It should lead the Palestinians to shoulder new responsibilities, and it opens new prospects.

Forty years ago, on 10 December 1948, the General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. That was indeed an event of historic significance.

(Mr. Goebbels, Luxembourg)

Despite some progress made since then, we have to say that throughout the world violations of human rights continue at an alarming rate. Torture is still a quasi-institutionalized practice in many States. Racial discrimination and xenophobia persist and reappear with new faces - including in Europe. New forms of violence threaten individual security and safety. A large part of mankind that lives in intolerable conditions is still deprived of the most elementary rights.

Let us take advantage of the opportunities offered by the present atmosphere to give a new dimension to international action in this area, in co-operation with the non-governmental organizations. Less selective criticism of violations of human rights, a merciless struggle against torture and all forms of racism, new attention to the protection of the rights of minorities, of women and children: those would seem to me to be the areas for priority action.

I feel also that the establishment of an office of a high commissioner for human rights - something which has long been advocated - could considerably strengthen our means of action and the Organization's authority.

The third special session devoted to disarmament, held last June, ended without a consensus. I hope that the Assembly will be able to consolidate and finalize the rapprochements that were nevertheless achieved at that session on a number of important questions. I shall confine myself to recalling that, in my Government's opinion, a solution to the problem of the trading in arms should have priority. Since the Second World War, such trading has provided weapons for 150 regional conflicts and wars, killed about 20 million human beings and consumed vast sums.

The shocking use of chemical weapons was noted on several occasions during the war between Iraq and Iran, and has been noted more recently against the Kurdish minority in the northern part of Iraq. My Government strongly condemns the use of such terrifying weapons, which must be banned once and for all. In that regard,

(Mr. Goebbels, Luxembourg)

President Reagan proposed from this very rostrum the convening of an international conference to consider this important problem. My Government supports that proposal. The international community is indeed called upon urgently to define measures and effective sanctions to prevent any future use of such weapons.

The peace and security of peoples do not depend only on doing away with conflicts and threats of a military nature. The economic, social and ecological balance of the world determines equally, if not more, the stability and well-being of mankind.

The various ways in which the environment is being degraded have reached alarming proportions. There is a risk that the ecosystems will undergo irreversible changes. Acid rain is attacking and destroying our forests. Tropical forests are being destroyed at a disturbing rate. The area that is deforested each year is equal to that of a country as large as Austria. Only about one tenth of that area has been reforested. Significant climatic changes have resulted from that. Soil erosion is taking on tragic proportions. There is a risk that it will increase natural disasters, as happened recently in Bangladesh. It disrupts the water flow and reduces agricultural output.

The misuse of pesticides is a major cause of the pollution of the soil and the agricultural imbalance. The rapid consumption of fossil fuels is changing the composition of the atmosphere and affecting the climate. It may be one of the causes of the warming of the planet.

In Africa desertification is progressing swiftly. It is now recognized as a major obstacle to development.

(Mr. Goebbels, Luxembourg)

A solution is also urgently required to the problem of the disposal, processing and export of toxic industrial waste. One thing is quite clear: environmental problems cannot be handled by States individually. The problems are often global, requiring collective solutions.

The Chernobyl disaster showed that nuclear pollution goes beyond national borders, that nuclear power plants do not offer a complete answer to energy problems and that their safety is not the concern only of the producing countries.

The climate, the atmosphere and the seas are the property of all mankind.

The rapid population growth in the countries of the South is aggravating social tensions and harming the environment. In 1987 the world's population reached 5 billion, double what it was in 1950. By the end of the century it could be more than 6 billion. Therefore, family planning programmes are necessary, however unpleasant that may be to those who defend the right to life, who too often forget the wretched existence of millions of children who are abandoned and have no future.

Faced with all those problems of concern to mankind as a whole, the United Nations, the only truly universal forum, must shoulder a new responsibility in the global village in which we all live together.

In 1987 the international community signed a protocol in Montreal, a protocol that my country has since ratified, designed to protect the ozone layer. So far that way of dealing with problems has been the exception. It must become the rule.

There must be growing awareness at the national and international levels. When considering the report of the Brundtland Commission last year, our Assembly recognized that present needs must be met without jeopardizing the satisfaction of the needs of future generations, and that the planet's resources and ecosystems must be managed prudently, that areas that have already been degraded or destroyed must be restored, and that dangers must be anticipated and prevented.

(Mr. Goebbels, Luxembourg)

The state of the world's economy is still a matter of grave concern, even if there is a slight difference from the early 1980s. The whole decade has been marked globally by slower growth. Admittedly, remarkable progress has been made in Asia - particularly in China and the newly industrialized countries - but stagnation and even serious reverses have occurred in Africa and Latin America. The gap between the richest and the poorest countries has become wider.

The debt problem is still at the heart of the difficulties of the developing countries. Servicing the debt paralyzes their economies by absorbing an excessive portion of export earnings. Those earnings in turn are affected by the drastic reduction in the price of many raw materials. Finally, international capital flows to those countries have lessened since 1982. The solutions proposed by the recent Toronto summit, particularly for the least well-off countries, must now be implemented urgently.

Policies for restructuring and adjustment often entail tremendous sacrifices. In many countries food crises, the exodus from the countryside and uncontrolled urbanization are getting worse. Poverty, malnutrition and sickness are increasing instead of decreasing.

In Africa, as elsewhere, it is fundamentally important that economic growth begin again. National Governments must courageously shoulder the primary responsibility for their own development and follow policies of essential restructuring and adaptation.

As the participants in the Khartoum Conference emphasized, economic and social strategies must give equal attention to the human factors of development; they must strengthen education and make it more widely available, promote health, increase employment, encourage greater participation by citizens and seek a more just distribution of income, so as to ensure a better quality of environment and life.

(Mr. Goebbels, Luxembourg)

I would add that a stricter and more open management of public affairs would help to combat corruption and increase people's trust. Increasing growth rates must go hand in hand with an improvement in the living conditions of the majority, not a worsening of those conditions. I trust that all the international institutions will give their support to such policies with a human face.

It is also essential that the multilateral trade negotiations of the Uruguay Round, aimed at further liberalizing trade in goods and services, arrive at initial results that give a new impetus to world trade.

Special attention should be given to agriculture and the specific conditions in which it is developing in both the North and the South. We cannot overlook the fact that the price of agricultural products largely determines the export earnings of many developing countries. Greater stability in such prices would help to promote food security in each country and improve the world balance of agricultural output.

We must arm ourselves against the uncertainty which is a characteristic of the world economic climate, with a view to strengthening the confidence of those who make economic decisions and promoting the necessary productive investments. In this context, special importance attaches to the regional economic organizations that are springing up, of which the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is a good example.

The European Economic Community, of which my country was a founding member, has more than 30 years' experience of this valuable integration. Military conflict between the 12 member countries is no longer conceivable, although for centuries they were regularly caught up in terrible confrontations.

Today the Community is working to complete the creation of its great domestic market by 1992. Significant progress has already been made. That market of 320 million citizens and consumers offers new prospects of growth and employment

(Mr. Goebbels, Luxembourg)

within it. That will open up possibilities of increased exports to its trading partners.

We are only a few years from the end of the twentieth century, which has been rent by so many upheavals. As we near the end of the century we have new prospects in an atmosphere of détente, realism and co-operation. Our Organization is at the centre of this development. Often treated with indifference, sometimes even with contempt, it is now in an era full of promise. For the first time in its history the United Nations is recognized by all as a special and effective instrument for the resolution of conflicts.

My Government, which has always attached great importance to the United Nations, views this progress with great satisfaction. We extend to our Secretary-General, Mr. Perez de Cuellar, our gratitude for his work in support of peace, at the head of our Organization.

Luxembourg's devotion to peace, non-violence and respect for human rights will be evidenced tomorrow by the unveiling at the Delegates Entrance of a work of art that is powerfully symbolic.

United Nations peace-keeping forces, which have been honoured today, are to be found throughout the world: today in the Middle East, in Lebanon and Cyprus, in Afghanistan, in Iran and Iraq, and tomorrow perhaps in Namibia, Western Sahara and elsewhere.

(Mr. Goebbels, Luxembourg)

This tremendous task in the service of the peace that is in the interests of every Member State has major financial implications. Accordingly, the Government of Luxembourg will support any proposal to guarantee the financing of the peace-keeping forces. It is intolerable that the smooth functioning of our Organization should be hampered by inadequate resources at a time when, incidentally, major reforms and real savings have been achieved to enhance its effectiveness.

The recent achievements of the United Nations are due to one decisive factor: entente and the great Powers' will to co-operate. Thus we find ourselves in the conditions that existed when the Organization was founded. It was that consensus that inspired the drafting of the Charter. It must lead now to the reinforcement of the primacy of law and its universal application. Let us act together to make this development irreversible.

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

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

Mr. RONDON (United States of America): This session of the General Assembly opened in a spirit of renewed hope and co-operation. My delegation deeply regrets that the Cuban representative took a very different and much less productive tack in his intemperate and inaccurate remarks earlier this afternoon. I reject his offensive and unacceptable statements concerning the President of the United States, as well as his baseless charges against my country.

It is clear that what the representative of Cuba is seeking to do, not by any means for the first time, is to deflect attention from the failures of the Cuban

(Mr. Rondon, United States)

revolution, the disasters that the Government of Cuba has brought to the Cuban people, and Cuba's systematic and flagrant violation of the human rights of its own citizens. The evidence is indisputable. The continuing flood of Cuban refugees is stark and moving testament to the Cuban Government's blatant violation of basic civil and political rights and to the inefficiency, cruelty and lack of productivity of the Cuban economy.

Since 1959 Cuba has shown complete disregard of the principles of the United Nations and its Charter. Cuba has been a major exporter of aggression and destabilization in many regions of the world. Pious statements and unfounded accusations against others cannot hide these facts.

Cuba insists on ignoring the General Assembly's acknowledgement, in 1953, that Puerto Rico had achieved self-determination. Repeated efforts by Cuba to re-inscribe the question of Puerto Rico on the General Assembly's agenda have been turned down. More telling than my words will be the Puerto Rican elections scheduled to be held in a few weeks' time. Puerto Ricans exercise their votes freely and enjoy genuine choice of candidates. No such statement can be made of Cuba, whose people have been denied freedom of choice since 1959.

Mr. NUÑEZ MOSQUERA (Cuba) (interpretation from Spanish): When representatives of a Government at the United Nations depart from the heritage of its heroes it is because something is wrong. I believe that it was Abraham Lincoln who said that you can fool all of the people some of the time and some of the people all of the time, but you cannot fool all of the people all of the time. But that is exactly what the United States delegation has been trying to do. For some years now the United States delegation has been trying to fool the Assembly. We know, too, that for the forty-third session it has distributed a document - its traditional document of objectives - that is filled with inexactitudes and falsehoods.

(Mr. Nufiez Mosquera, Cuba)

The representative of the United States says that my Foreign Minister attacked his country and his President. Nothing could be further from the truth. The United States has insisted vigorously, and has repeated frequently, that a country should not be named; that it is against so-called name-calling. But the first to resort to name-calling in the Assembly was President Reagan, on the first day of this debate. He spoke ill of many countries, and dignity does not permit us to maintain silence or to allow infamy to gain ground here.

The tirade we have just heard from the representative of the United States did not tell us anything new. I can deal with all that he said in far less than the 10 minutes allowed to me.

With regard to economic disaster, I think that the example of Cuba, 90 miles from imperialism, its achievements in the sphere of health, education, the economy and human rights are sufficient testimony to give the Assembly a true picture of the Cuban reality. This reality of my country has been recognized by the international community. The only people to question it are spokesmen of the United States Government, who cannot forgive Cubans, who have carried through a socialist revolution and have a Government and a country that are masters of their own destiny only 90 miles from the most aggressive imperialism in the world.

Human rights are the banner of the Cuban Government. We have said this on many occasions. We are proud of the way in which human rights are respected in Cuba: the right to work, to health, to education, to security, to decent housing. In Cuba, when someone is sick and goes to hospital he is attended to free of charge. If he needs a vital organ transplant it is done free of charge. No one asks him if he is for or against the revolution, whether he has religious beliefs, whether he is white or black. It does not matter. In the United States the reality is quite different, and we all know that.

(Mr. Nuñez Mosquera, Cuba)

The best demonstration of respect for human rights in my country is the fact that millions of men and women have weapons in the factories to defend the achievements of the revolution, because of the constant threats from United States imperialism. What Government that did not respect human rights could give arms to the people? I invite the United States representative to recommend to his Government that it give arms to the illiterates and the thousands of despairing people in that country to see whether it is true that human rights are respected.

(Mr. Nuñez Mosquera, Cuba)

The representative of the United States speaks about the flood of refugees from Cuba since 1959. I believe that the truth is completely different. After the triumph of the Cuban revolution, the United States offered its hospitality to all of the murderers and torturers from the Batista Government. Afterwards it encouraged the exodus of Cubans. When people would apply for a visa to come to this country, they were turned down; nevertheless, when a person would arrive here endangering the lives of other citizens - by highjacking an aeroplane or a boat - he was received as a hero.

The same United States closed its borders to economic integration - the same United States that is trying to turn the so-called exodus of refugees into a political football, when everybody knows how it has been during the past 30 years of the Cuban revolution.

Lastly, he spoke about Puerto Rico. The situation there is a colonial one. When, 100 years ago, Jose Marti established the Cuban Revolutionary Party, he did so in order to fight for Cuban independence and to promote the independence of Puerto Rico.

The situation in Puerto Rico is one that has been discussed every year in the Committee on decolonization, as the United States representative ought to know. But Cuba is not the only one that is saying this. The Ministerial Conference of the Non-Aligned Countries was held recently in Nicosia, the capital of Cyprus. Let me read out the paragraph on Puerto Rico in the statement issued by the ministers for foreign affairs of the Non-aligned countries. It would be well if the representative of the United States listened to it attentively.

(Mr. Nuffez Mosquera, Cuba)

"The Ministers reaffirmed that Puerto Rico was an integral part of Latin America and the Caribbean, by virtue of its historical, cultural and geographical ties. They reiterated their support for the inalienable right of the Puerto Rican people to self-determination and independence in conformity with General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) and took note of the resolution adopted on 16 August 1988 by the United Nations Special Committee on decolonization. They also reiterated their concern about allegations relating to the imprisonment of Puerto Rican patriots by the United States Government, both in that country and in Puerto Rico, and they called for respect for the political and civil rights of all Puerto Rican patriots."

Much more could be said about Puerto Rico and the presence and existence of nuclear weapons on that island, in violation of the obligations assumed by the United States under the Treaty of Tlatelolco. President Reagan has already bade us farewell, and there will soon be elections in this country: perhaps we will soon have an opportunity to tell the most recalcitrant, the spokesmen of Reaganism, enemies No. 1 of multilateralism:

(spoke in English)

"Best wishes and go home".

Mr. RONDON (United States of America): It is late, I should just like to read out two sentences spoken this afternoon by the Foreign Minister of Cuba. He said - and I agree:

"Democracy has progressed in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Dictatorial régimes are more isolated than ever, rejected by both their own peoples and the Latin American and Caribbean community." (supra, p. 82)

Yes, that is a true statement. Sadly, Cuba is an exception.

Mr. NUÑEZ MOSQUERA (Cuba) (interpretation from Spanish): That is another example of the disinformation perpetrated by advocates of Reaganism. In my view, Cuba's ever growing presence and integration into Latin America and the Caribbean, in the Latin American Parliament and in the Latin American Economic System belie everything that has just been said by the United States representative. They want to wed us to the lie in order to force us to live with it, but they cannot do so.

The meeting rose at 8.35 p.m.