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PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE EIGHTEENTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,  
on Wednesday, 5 October 1988, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. CAFUTO (Argentina)  
later: Mr. MKAPA (United Republic of Tanzania)  
(Vice-President)  
later: Mr. MORTENSEN (Denmark)  
(Vice-President)

- General debate [9] (continued)

Address by Mr. Ramsewak Shankar, President of the Republic of Suriname

Statements made by:

Mr. Al-Khalifa (Bahrain)  
Mr. Mladenov (Bulgaria)  
Mr. Al-Shara (Syrian Arab Republic)  
Mr. Bemananjara (Madagascar)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

ADDRESS BY MR. RAMSEWAK SHANKAR, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SURINAME

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): The Assembly will first hear an address by the President of the Republic of Suriname.

Mr. Ramsewak Shankar, President of the Republic of Suriname, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations the President of the Republic of Suriname, His Excellency Mr. Ramsewak Shankar, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President SHANKAR: Mandated by a free and determined people through the most adequate mechanism to designate by whom they wish to be governed, namely, free and fair general elections, I stand here today to bring a message of hope, determination, endurance and achievement.

These past years have for us been marked by hope and frustration, illusions and dismay, the sense of participating in the dreams of young nations, yet also by a keen sense of isolation. Forced by reality, the political leaders, together with the labour unions, the entrepreneurs, as well as the military leaders, have consistently sought a permanent solution to our fundamental problems. Pressure was applied from outside by withholding funds to which we were entitled by treaty provisions made in good faith after frank and open negotiations. At the same time, however, we were not without friends and sympathizers who backed us and wished us well. We are grateful for their understanding, their encouragement and their support.

In the end the people of Suriname have prevailed, for, although they are small in number, their hope, determination, endurance and commitment are infinite.

(President Shankar)

Allow me, Sir, to join all those who have spoken before me in offering you, on behalf of my Government and on my own behalf, sincere congratulations on your election as President of the forty-third session of our General Assembly. We are particularly satisfied to see you in the Chair, as your election is a well-deserved tribute to you and to our sister nation, Argentina, with which we maintain excellent relations. My Government is well aware of your outstanding diplomatic skills and vast experience, and is therefore confident that under your able guidance the Assembly will deal successfully with the matters that come before it.

I also avail myself of this opportunity to congratulate your predecessor, Mr. Peter Florin of the German Democratic Republic, on the dedicated and efficient way in which he presided over the forty-second session of the General Assembly.

As this body was informed at its previous session, our people overwhelmingly approved a new draft Constitution for the Republic of Suriname in a national referendum held on 30 September last year, and in so doing paved the way for the holding of general elections. The draft Constitution was subsequently made law by a unanimous decision of our National Assembly.

Apart from the subjects generally incorporated in a Constitution, our new supreme law is characterized by the inclusion of specific provisions enabling direct influence by the people on the policy-making and executive processes through regional and subregional representative organs of the State. This newly enacted basic legal instrument of our nation furthermore enshrines the guarantee of human rights, while it also embodies the principles of a multi-party system and recognition of the important place and role of free, private enterprise, and guarantees the independence and integrity of the judiciary.

On the basis of that Constitution, general, fair, secret and free elections were held on 25 November 1987, at the national, regional and subregional levels.

(President Shankar)

As a result, in the wake of those elections, the first elected Executive President and Vice-President in the history of Suriname were inaugurated on 25 January this year, and a new Council of Ministers was installed on 26 January.

At this point I should like to seize the opportunity once again to express the appreciation and indebtedness of my Government and people to various Governments and international organizations for the moral support given to us in our efforts to restore democracy and for sending observer delegations to witness the referendum and general elections of last year, as well as special missions to attend the inaugural ceremonies to which I have just referred.

Although the referendum and the elections have indeed laid the basis for the recovery of a democratic, constitutional State, we realize that we still have a long way to go in order to attain a stable and fully-fledged democracy. For Suriname to develop into a mature democracy, the newly-established democratic structures will have to be nurtured by means of national unity and political, social and economic stability. In this context, it should be mentioned that my Government has inherited a number of serious social and economic problems which could become a threat to our national unity and political stability if not urgently addressed.

Thus my Government has to deal with the problem of approximately 10,000 displaced citizens from the eastern part of Suriname, who fled the country for neighbouring French Guiana, seeking refuge from an internal armed conflict. My Government is making every effort through dialogue to end this insurgence, which has often resulted in violent acts of terrorism. It is faced, however, with the problem that the insurgents are aided and abetted by external forces whose chief aim is the continuation of violence through the provision of arms, the recruitment and financing of mercenaries and so on.

(President Shankar)

It is obvious that it will be most difficult to bring about an end to the violence as long as such external support is continued. My Government has therefore appealed to the Governments of France and the Kingdom of the Netherlands to assist us in preventing arms deliveries and the recruitment of foreign mercenaries.

As a member of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Drafting of an International Convention against the Recruitment, Use, Financing and Training of Mercenaries, we also call upon all peace-loving nations to support the Ad Hoc Committee in its endeavours to fulfil its mandate as soon as possible. Only international, concerted action against this evil practice can contribute to the eradication of the use of mercenaries. We are of the opinion that the international community in general and the developed countries in particular have a moral obligation not to delay the conclusion of such a convention.

Meanwhile, the conflict has had a devastating effect on the already serious financial and economic crisis in our country. It has exacerbated the economic woes imposed on our country through such factors as the world recession, the withholding of financial development treaty resources and the absence of internal structural adaptation measures at the budgetary and monetary levels.

(President Shankar)

It is hence self-evident that our economic and social development has been seriously affected; this has become manifest in the decline of national production, the decrease in investments, the staggering rise of unemployment and inflation rates, the deterioration of the balance of payments and, consequently, the near exhaustion of our foreign-exchange reserves. My Government is of the opinion that these challenges and difficulties should be faced unequivocally by a collective will to find just and proper solutions. To that end, the framework for a multi-year recovery programme has been developed.

We are aware, however, that in the interdependent world in which we live, no nation can develop in total isolation from others, and we are aware that no Government can fully realize its development policy objectives without external co-operation. My Government is therefore conducting negotiations with some friendly nations and international organizations, in a spirit of equality, co-operation and mutual respect for one another's sovereignty, in order to obtain their valuable views, support and assistance for the solution of our social problems and the recovery, restructuring and sustained growth of our economy.

We strongly believe in and adhere to a policy of dialogue and consensus aimed at the peaceful solution of problems, both nationally and internationally, and we therefore apply that policy in our relations and negotiations with the relevant Governments, organizations, institutions and individuals. Our policy is aimed at guaranteeing a stable and prosperous society based on a just and equitable sharing of human, natural and technological resources. We remain convinced that, with the support and co-operation of friendly nations, organizations and institutions, we shall succeed in overcoming all obstacles on the road to a fully flourishing democratic, peaceful, stable and prosperous Suriname.

(President Shankar)

Aware of the extent to which our living climate as a nation is influenced by the state of affairs in international relations, we, as a member of the international community, recognize our responsibility to contribute our share to the achievement of the primary goal of the United Nations. The achievement of a world with greater security for all nations, a world in which all can freely develop their potentials, lies at the heart of our Organization.

Formulated more than four decades ago, the principles enshrined in the Charter of the Organization have nevertheless remained valid for us as a guideline to the government of the State. My Government will, therefore, in our relations with other nations strictly abide by those principles as well as by those embodied in the charter of the Organization of American States, while, as a member of the Non-Aligned Movement, we shall continue to place a high value on its lofty goals and principles. My Government recognizes the importance of the contribution that can be made to the cause of peace by the promotion of greater understanding and appreciation among nations, in particular among States belonging to the same region. Regional integration and co-operation are considered by my Government to be more important for promoting that objective, as they are instrumental in promoting our economic and social development. Increased participation in the regional organizations of Latin American and the Caribbean will be our deliberate policy to that end. Consequently, we shall spare no effort further to develop and intensify our inter-American relations.

Events that have recently developed on the international scene have rekindled the hope of my Government and of many others throughout the world that the purpose of the United Nations is indeed still viable.

The positive turning-point in two major regional conflicts which clouded the international atmosphere for more than seven years has been welcomed by the international community.

(President Shankar)

The cease-fire in the Gulf war is a source of great satisfaction to my Government, as it has relieved the international community of a dangerous conflict that could easily have widened into one with far-reaching implications for world peace. The continuation of that war for more than seven years, notwithstanding the numerous appeals of the United Nations to bring it to an end, has indeed been a senseless waste of the human and material resources of both nations.

At this point we think it appropriate to pay a special tribute to the Secretary-General of our Organization and to those who co-operated with him for their painstaking efforts and perseverance in bringing the two States to the negotiating table. It is now incumbent on both of them to utilize to the maximum the possibilities provided by our Organization to settle their dispute peacefully.

It is gratifying for my Government to commend also the Secretary-General and his trusted assistants for their relentless efforts to free the territory of Afghanistan from the presence of foreign armed forces, thus removing from the international scene a major obstacle to the augmentation of international security. The restoration of, and respect shown by all countries for, the non-aligned status of Afghanistan will allow its people freely to settle their internal dispute in a manner they freely determine for themselves.

Those developments augur well for the future of our Organization, and we are therefore confident that the United Nations will play an ever-increasing active and beneficial role in the peaceful solution of some grave regional conflicts that, unfortunately, still exist. In that context we should like to express our great satisfaction at the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to the United Nations peace-keeping forces, a well-deserved tribute. We should like to add our congratulations in that respect.

(President Shankar)

We are following with great interest another event on the international scene - namely, the armed conflict in southern Africa, which has direct consequences for the long-standing question of Namibia. The United Nations has a considerable stake in the outcome of the ongoing negotiations, as it may be a determining factor in enabling our Organization to discharge its responsibility towards the Namibian people. We cannot allow the South African régime to use these talks as yet another of its widely known tactics to delay the independence of Namibia.

In South Africa itself the policy of apartheid remains one of defiance of international opinion and ever-increasing repression of those who are fighting for their basic human rights. My Government unconditionally supports the struggle of the people of South Africa to eradicate the system of apartheid. Mandatory economic sanctions against South Africa remain the only option to enable the international community to exert credible pressure on the South African Government to abandon its criminal policies.

My Government cannot but voice its dismay at the development in another area of a seemingly endless conflict which has occupied the attention of the international community for many years. The disregard which has been displayed by Israel for the resolutions of the United Nations over these years remains the main cause of the continued tension in that region. Understandably frustrated by the lack of any progress to end the illegal presence of Israeli forces in the occupied Arab territories, the population cannot but show its contempt for such injustice through campaigns of civil disobedience and protest.

(President Shankar)

The repressive reaction of the Israeli authorities to the legitimate expression of outrage by the Palestinian people deserves the condemnation of our Organization. It should be emphasized once more that peace in the Middle East can be achieved only through a settlement which is based on the principle of justice for all nations of the region.

The improved relations between the two States which play a key role in maintaining international peace and security offer new hope for our world that the threat against life on our planet will be removed. We welcome the tendency of increased mutual trust between those nations, which has led to a noteworthy breakthrough in our effort to halt the arms race and clear the way for further progress to end the greatest danger to the survival of mankind. Notwithstanding this significant step in the right direction, the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament has proved that deep-rooted differences are still to be bridged and that it will take more than one effort to overcome the threat of a nuclear holocaust.

Suriname believes that changing the arms policy into a policy aimed at social development would release significant human and financial resources that could be utilized to promote worldwide development, prosperity and peace.

My Government wishes to pay a tribute to the Secretary-General for the way in which he has responded to the appeal by the General Assembly in its resolution 42/204 of 11 December 1987 to formulate a special plan of co-operation for Central America. The plan identifies short-term and medium-term priority areas of co-operation and also sets out mechanisms for implementation and follow-up.

According to the Esquipulas agreement, peace and democracy in Central America cannot be achieved without a commitment to improve the social and economic well-being of the population of the countries involved. Since the roots of tension

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in Central America lie in social and economic problems, it is evident that the special plan of co-operation for Central America can be considered a welcome response to the question of alleviating the tension in that region.

The Government of Suriname considers drug abuse and illicit drug trafficking as a serious threat to mankind and will thus do everything possible, at both the national and the international level, to step up the fight against this evil scourge.

The world economic situation is still critical and a prolonged crisis is permeating all areas of economic and international relations. In this connection I should like to draw the attention of this body to the growing debt burden that has become the most visible manifestation of that crisis. The external debt constitutes a challenge to our joint co-ordinated actions and our solidarity is being put to the test.

We feel that the strategy that has been followed so far is insufficient and of a short-term nature. Although the declaration of a moratorium by one or more countries is a possibility, the debt equity swap is a means, not a lasting solution. More than ever before the time is ripe for the developed and the developing countries to arrive at an equitable, lasting and mutually agreed solution on the basis of a developmental approach.

It is our considered opinion that an attitude of low profile and neglect in finding a mutual solution to the debt crisis is not only short-sighted but also dangerous, since this matter is already gravely disturbing the social and political stability of democratically elected Governments. Hence my Government is in favour of a dialogue between creditors and debtors, based on the principles of co-responsibility and the right to development. The attitude recently demonstrated by the developed countries during the Toronto summit in relation to the

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rescheduling of the debts of the least developed third world countries is only a small step in the right direction. It is obvious that much more will have to be done.

Let me turn to a more positive note. My Government welcomes the recent concrete proposals containing a new approach in the policy of reunifying the Korean peninsula. It is the earnest hope of my Government that the suspended dialogue will be resumed on the basis of the new proposals. My Government furthermore hopes that in the not too distant future we will be able to welcome a unified Korea as a full Member of our Organization.

Finally, my Government is highly pleased to note that the United Nations is regaining its well deserved place in the international community as a unique forum for dialogue, understanding and co-operation. Let us hope that this positive development will continue, so that peace and prosperity for all may be achieved in this world of ours. Suriname will contribute to help realize this lofty goal.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): On behalf of the General Assembly I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Suriname for the important statement he has just made.

Mr. Ramsewak Shankar, President of the Republic of Suriname, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.\*

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\*Mr. Mkapa (United Republic of Tanzania), Vice-President, took the Chair.

## AGENDA ITEM 9 (continued)

## GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. AL-KHALIFA (Bahrain) (interpretation from Arabic): Allow me at the outset, on behalf of the delegation of the State of Bahrain, to extend to Mr. Dante Caputo of Argentina our warmest congratulations on his election to the presidency of the forty-third session of the General Assembly and our best wishes for success in fulfilling his task. Confident of his able leadership, we assure him of our readiness to co-operate with him in the successful accomplishment of the work of the session.

I should also like to avail myself of this opportunity to extend our thanks and appreciation to his predecessor, Mr. Peter Florin, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the German Democratic Republic, for his dedicated efforts, wisdom and skill in guiding the proceedings of the last session.

Permit me also to express our deepest gratitude to Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, the Secretary-General, for his persistent endeavours firmly to entrench the objectives and principles of our Organization and enhance its role in achieving peace and co-operation among nations, for the well-being of all peoples of the world. The awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to the United Nations peace-keeping forces is perhaps a most eloquent testimony and convincing proof of the importance of the role played by the United Nations and its Secretary-General in the maintenance of peace and security in the world.

The year 1988 is reminiscent of a time when the United Nations, through its effective contributions to the resolution of conflicts between States, the maintenance of international peace and security and interaction with the policies of the various Powers that influenced international relations, was able to play a vital role in world events as a principal party in the new world order that emerged as a result of the realities of the period following the Second World War. It

(Mr. Al-Khalifa, Bahrain)

seems the international community once again feels the pressing need for the United Nations as a mechanism for finding just solutions to international issues within the framework of the principles enshrined in its Charter and believes it has revitalized the role of collective diplomacy in dealing with outstanding regional conflicts and solving the worsening economic and social problems of the world.

Thus the United Nations has proved that international co-operation has become an urgent necessity at this time in the history of our contemporary world. The fact that most parties to regional conflicts are today resorting to negotiations through the United Nations is in itself the best indication of the trust States place in the Organization and the role it can play to achieve harmony and understanding among the peoples of the world. It is from this perspective that we call for concerted efforts to promote the effectiveness of the world Organization and strengthen its capabilities in facing the challenges that threaten peace and security and hinder programmes of economic and social development.

Resort to the Security Council and the General Assembly as effective organs capable of finding acceptable formulas to solve international disputes, and create favourable conditions for ending them, is a matter that demands our support and backing. Another cause for optimism in this connection is the budding positive relations between the five permanent members of the Security Council, the effects of which have been noticeably reflected in the collective decision-making process with regard to certain issues affecting world peace. It is to be hoped that this spirit will continue to prevail and that the foundations of understanding and accord among those members of the Security Council will become firmer and encompass all chronic issues. We further trust that this development will mark the

(Mr. Al-Khalifa, Bahrain)

dawning of a new era in which the spirit of the Charter will guide the rebuilding of bridges of trust and co-operation between all Members of the Organization.

The events that have occurred on the international scene since the last session carry the seeds of a new era in international politics, and a growing trend towards finding peaceful solutions to many of the important international and regional issues and problems in various parts of the world, such as the Iran-Iraq war, the questions of Afghanistan, Cyprus, Namibia, Kampuchea and Western Sahara, and the problems of Central America. However, despite such détente, other problems and issues still remain outstanding on our agenda, foremost among them the question of Palestine and the situations in the Middle East and southern Africa, which all call for efforts by the international community to create the right climate for the attainment of just and lasting solutions to those important and decisive issues.

(Mr. Al-Khalifa, Bahrain)

The recent Moscow summit meeting of the two super-Powers was a historic event, an event of great importance that added a new dimension to international relations and has had a positive effect on several complex regional issues and crises. Furthermore, the great Powers are now more convinced than ever before of the necessity of finding common ground for peaceful coexistence and co-operation among nations. The frequent meetings between the leaders of the two super-Powers, their agreement to solve the question of Afghanistan and their ratification of the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles - INF Treaty - are a clear indication of the vital change of course so conducive to reconciling conflicting interests, overcoming ideological differences and reducing the possibilities of the confrontation that was the salient feature of relations between the bigger Powers during the previous period. For our part, we welcome with great satisfaction this important change in relations between the two super-Powers. We hope that their rapprochement will be used in the interest of settling fundamental international issues, so as to move from a stage of tension and suspicion to one of tranquillity and openness.

Bahrain welcomed the start of direct negotiations between Iraq and Iran under the auspices of the Secretary-General of the United Nations. It hopes that the two will be able to work out a comprehensive settlement of their armed conflict and establish comprehensive, lasting peace in the region, in strict accordance with the provisions of Security Council resolution 598 (1987), which provides the just and honourable formula for ending that bloody war, which has been haemorrhaging for eight years now.

It should be noted, in this connection, that the Co-operation Council of Arab Gulf States adopted from the earliest days following the outbreak of that war a clear policy that was reflected in the decisions of the consecutive summit meetings

(Mr. Al-Khalifa, Bahrain)

of its member States and reaffirmed at their eighth summit meeting, in Riyadh, in December 1987. In this connection, the Council had expended considerable efforts to contain that destructive war and to restore peace to the region.

Iran's decision to accept the Security Council resolution, which our brother Iraq had already accepted upon its adoption by the Council, and Iran's agreement to the cease-fire and the commencement of discussions at Geneva constitute an important step towards peace. It is our hope that Iraq and Iran will be able to overcome their difficulties, overcome the psychological effects of the war and re-establish normal relations, within the framework of the principles of good-neighbourliness, mutual respect and non-interference in each other's internal affairs, to be able to devote all their efforts to the reconstruction made necessary by the devastation of the war, provide for the safety and peace of mind of their two peoples and restore security and stability in the Gulf region.

The negotiations between Iraq and Iran are now in a delicate phase, which calls for the utmost prudence and self-restraint, and the avoidance of any action that might hinder the peace process. We therefore call upon all nations of the world to shoulder their responsibility to help both countries overcome this difficult phase, and to exert greater efforts aimed at securing the success of these negotiations and the full implementation of the provisions of the Security Council resolution, so that a new era can begin when guns fall silent and peace prevails.

In this respect, I cannot but note the strenuous efforts of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, so deserving of all our praise and appreciation, aimed at securing the implementation of Security Council 598 (1987), whose objective is the end of one of the longest and fiercest wars of our times.

(Mr. Al-Khalifa, Bahrain)

The role of the United Nations and the Secretary-General will remain central to the process of restoring peace to this vital region of the world.

The question of Palestine, though marked by more than 40 years of the conspicuous failure of right in the face of might, represents a major historic tragedy of an exceptional kind, as the international conflict fraught with the most danger for the peace and security of the world.

International interest in this issue, ever since the adoption by the General Assembly in 1947 of resolution 181 (II) on the partition of Palestine, has been ebbing and flowing with the changing tide of international events and developments. It was not until December of last year that the question of Palestine began to experience a major change of course and to acquire a new measure of interest by the world public. This brought it once again to the forefront of the issues on the agenda of the United Nations. This was the result of the all-encompassing public uprising in the occupied territories, the intifadah, which has become the major feature of the life-style of the Palestinian people in their steadfast resistance to the Israeli occupation, which has now continued for more than 21 years.

The intifadah is a historic event replete with examples and lessons. It is the genuine human expression of man's rejection of occupation and oppression. The Zionist entity, falling victim to its own illusions, convinced itself that the Palestinian people had fully absorbed the meaning of Israeli supremacy in terms of physical power, and forgot, or chose to ignore, that sources of moral power have a massive momentum in the lives of peoples. Israel has tried to no avail, to contain the Palestinian uprising by resorting to the most brutal methods, such as burying people alive, breaking bones and limbs, shooting at unarmed women and children, burning crops and plantations, expulsions, and the assassination of Palestinian

(Mr. Al-Khalifa, Bahrain)

leaders, a recent victim of which was the well-known freedom-fighter Khalil al-Wazeer.

Despite the escalating brutality of the Israeli acts of suppression aimed at quelling the Palestinian uprising, a number of basic facts remain unchanged and unobscured and Israel can no longer disregard or deny them.

First, the Palestinian struggle has acquired a new dimension since the inhabitants of the occupied territories developed their uprising from spontaneity to calculated confrontation and conscious initiative.

Secondly, the Palestinian people, through their steadfastness and persistence in their heroic uprising, decided definitively any question of coexistence in the conditions of occupation. It has become impossible, to continue to disregard their inherent right to self-determination.

Thirdly, the policies of settlement and annexation, resulting in permanent tensions and flagrant violations of the United Nations resolutions and international law, have met with complete failure.

Fourthly, the cause of the Palestinian people is gaining more support and greater solidarity day by day from peace-loving peoples and countries throughout the world, thus increasing Israel's international isolation.

In view of these basic and established facts, and in the light of recent events following the decision by our brother Jordan to sever its legal and administrative ties with the West Bank, it is now more than ever before incumbent upon the United Nations, to shoulder its historic responsibility regarding the Palestinian people and make the necessary arrangements to put into action the mechanism for a solution by convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, vested with full powers and backed by international guarantees. In that conference the Palestine Liberation Organization will participate on an equal

(Mr. Al-Khalifa, Bahrain)

footing with the other parties to the dispute and the five permanent members of the Security Council will also take part, with a view to guaranteeing a just and comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, securing Israel's complete withdrawal from all Arab territories occupied in 1967, particularly Jerusalem, and enabling the Palestinian people to exercise their legitimate and inalienable rights, including their right to return and their right to self-determination and to establish their own independent State on their national soil.

Not content with carrying out its expansionist designs against the territory of Palestine, Israel has continued its assaults on and acts of aggression against other Arab States. Thus, it declared its annexation of the Syrian Golan in 1981, it attacked the Iraqi nuclear installation that same year, and it bombarded the headquarters of the Palestine Liberation Organization in Tunis in 1985.

(Mr. Al-Khalifa, Bahrain)

Furthermore, the misfortune that had beset fraternal Lebanon and left it with a legacy of disasters from which it continues to suffer would not have worsened had it not been for Israel's continuing aggression. Israel's recurrent attacks and violations of the territorial integrity and political independence of Arab States constitute flagrant breaches of the Charter and United Nations resolutions. That serious situation underlines the need for a just peace and for stability in the Middle East region, both of which can be achieved only if the international community, represented by the United Nations, moves to exert pressure on Israel to force it to comply with international principles and instruments.

Bahrain welcomes the responsible position taken by sisterly Morocco reflected in its wise and far-sighted decision regarding settlement of the dispute in Western Sahara by peaceful means, in accordance with Security Council resolution 621 (1988). It is our hope that the endeavours of the Secretary-General in that respect will meet with success.

The sorry state of the Afghan people, which has lasted for more than eight years, is now approaching its end as a result of the Geneva Agreements of 14 April 1988 relating to the political settlement of the various aspects of the question of Afghanistan. In our view, that development is a practical translation of the relevant United Nations resolutions calling for restoration of Afghanistan's sovereignty and territorial integrity and marks an important step towards enabling the Afghan people to exercise their right to choose their own political and social system without foreign interference and to create conditions favourable to the return of the Afghan refugees to their homeland in dignity and safety.

We are hopeful - indeed, we are optimistic - that the Geneva Agreements will create a positive precedent for solving other regional conflicts such as those in Kampuchea, Cyprus and elsewhere.

(Mr. Al-Khalifa, Bahrain)

With regard to the Korean question, we trust that the consensus reached on inscribing it on the agenda of this session of the General Assembly will be another serious step towards the resumption of negotiations between the two sides, with a view to achieving the reunification of the Korean peninsula and realizing the desire of the Korean people for restoration of their national unity.

The situation in southern Africa is continuing to deteriorate, and this in turn affects peace and security in that important part of the African continent. That deterioration is reflected in its ugliest forms in the violence, terrorism and oppression of every kind being perpetrated by the Pretoria racist régime against the black majority in contempt of the principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations.

The worsening conditions in South Africa confirm our deep conviction that attempting to reform the apartheid régime is futile: it must be dismantled - indeed, eradicated - and replaced by a democratic system based on justice, equality and respect for human rights, as called for by the United Nations in its numerous resolutions. In our view, that can be achieved only through concerted international efforts to isolate that régime and impose comprehensive mandatory sanctions against it in accordance with the provisions of the United Nations Charter.

A harbinger of Namibian independence appears on the horizon this year thanks to the talks that have taken place between Angola, Cuba, South Africa and the United States of America. It is cause for optimism that the United Nations plan for the independence of Namibia, which represents the common aspiration of the international community on this tenth anniversary of the adoption of Security Council resolution 435 (1978), will be implemented.

The crisis that continues to beset the international economic order is still having an adverse effect on the economies of the developing countries.

(Mr. Al-Khalifa, Bahrain)

Regrettably, the favourable climate in international relations that has prevailed this year has not been matched by any perceptible progress in economic co-operation at the international level. It is self-evident that the lack of economic stability in most developing countries was due to the imbalances in the world economy that resulted from increased protectionist measures, the lack of equilibrium in the balance of world trade, the foreign-debt crisis, the fluctuations in the rates of exchange, unfair trade practices, the instability of the prices of commodities and raw materials, the plummeting oil prices, and deteriorating terms of trade.

The debt crisis of the developing countries is the major item on the agenda of many international conferences. The question how to resolve that crisis has become the subject of continued study and research in various international organs, agencies and forums. While we welcome the satisfactory results achieved at the Toronto summit meeting of the major industrial States with regard to settling the debts of the least-developed countries, we feel that the time has come for advancing from the phase of partial solutions to the adoption of an integrated global strategy for solving the crisis. In this context we emphasize the importance of financial-assistance flows from multilateral development institutions and developed countries to the developing countries on concessional terms and under reasonable conditions. This would enable them to implement their development plans and to achieve economic recovery and prosperity for their peoples.

In today's world of interrelated interests the United Nations has become an indispensable need, since it is the only international machinery capable of solving complex problems and settling international disputes. Despite the crises it has encountered since its inception and the shortcomings that have marred its experience during the past 43 years, the United Nations remains a unique and pioneering experience in international relations; it remains a permanent body for collective diplomacy through which the peace and security of the world can be

(Mr. Al-Khalifa, Bahrain)

maintained and solutions can be found for the political, economic and social international problems and issues that States, at various levels, capabilities and capacities, are no longer able to solve unilaterally.

Therefore we must work shoulder to shoulder, Governments and peoples together, in order to strengthen and uphold this important international institution as an imperative necessitated by the living conditions of the modern international community in order to enable the United Nations to be more capable of meeting the requirements of the future and of building a better world for coming generations, especially as we stand at the threshold of the twenty-first century, with its promise of immense scientific progress and advanced technologies in all fields.

Issues of disarmament and arms control occupy a prominent position on the list of the international community's concerns. One can only hope that concrete achievements at the international level will be an incentive for all to join in the efforts being exerted in that field.

Consistent with the principle of the maintenance of international peace and security enshrined in the Charter, and with our conviction that it is imperative to create a less-heavily armed and more secure world, I take pleasure in announcing from this rostrum today that the Government of the State of Bahrain has decided to accede to the 1968 Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the 1925 Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare and to the 1972 Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and their Destruction. Ever since it achieved its independence Bahrain has called upon all nations of the world to pursue balanced policies in their relations with one another, to resort to dialogue for settling disputes through the diplomacy of understanding and the renunciation of the use of force in order to promote the principles of peace based on justice.

(Mr. Al-Khalifa, Bahrain)

Peace is the strategic front-line of Bahrain's foreign policy. It is also the true key to realizing national aspirations and objectives in conditions of stability and development. The peace in which Bahrain believes is equitable peace fostering relations of friendship and understanding among the world's States and peoples, based on good-neighbourliness, non-interference in the internal affairs of others, equal sovereignty and rights, and respect for the rules of international law. This has been enunciated clearly by His Highness Sheikh Isa Bin Salman Al-Khalifa, Amir of the State of Bahrain:

"The State of Bahrain bases its relations with other States in the world on equality and mutual respect. Proceeding from our firm belief that peace and security are the foundations on which mankind builds its progress, we shall always endeavour to strengthen them and respond sincerely to anyone who supports international legality and aims to strengthen the underpinnings of truth, justice and peace in the world."

In conformity with that firm, clear line for Bahrain's foreign policy, the State of Bahrain expresses once again its readiness to co-operate with the other countries of the world to achieve the lofty goals of the United Nations, and it stresses its commitment to the diplomacy of peace in line with the principles enshrined in the Charter of our Organization.

Mr. MLADENOV (Bulgaria) (interpretation from Russian): I should like to congratulate Ambassador Dante Caputo of Argentina on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly. I am convinced that under his guidance, the Assembly will achieve results that will further enhance the authority of the United Nations.

I wish also to acknowledge the outstanding presidency of his predecessor, Comrade Peter Florin.

(Mr. Mladenov, Bulgaria)

Each session of the General Assembly begins with a review of the international situation. At the forty-third session too we have heard every speaker pose the same questions in different ways, namely: What is happening in the world? Are we capable of staving off the nuclear threat and putting an end to conflict? Are we securely embarked on the course of strengthening peace and security?

Although it would be hard to provide a simple answer to those questions, the facts show that there has indeed been progress. The world is changing for the better. We can see the emergence of a qualitatively new situation that does not conform to the usual stereotypes of the balance of power, two camps, the class struggle or other concepts based on strength. What has changed? For the first time in history, we have begun to see that mankind is a single whole united by its common efforts to survive and continue to develop towards progress and civilization.

Some examples of the changes taking place in the world are the move in Soviet-United States relations from confrontation to dialogue, the greater positive contribution made in world affairs by the Non-Aligned Movement, and the active impact of public opinion on international policy.

These trends are no mere accident. They result from the general course of world events. The deepening of mankind's self-awareness has coincided with the processes of restructuring and renewal taking place in socialist countries. The technological and scientific revolution, the increasing importance of moral and democratic factors in public life, and an overall improvement in the political education of peoples have helped bring about a reassessment of the problems of human coexistence.

The philosophy of a new political thinking has thus arisen. At its core lies the primacy of universal human values over bloc and ideological considerations. That philosophy has inspired a new diplomacy in search of sensible and mutually

(Mr. Mladenov, Bulgaria)

acceptable solutions to international problems. A broad consensus is developing on the need for a comprehensive approach to security issues, taking into account both the military-political and the economic, humanitarian, ecological and other factors.

In his address to the eightieth conference of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, which ended three weeks ago in Sofia, the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party and President of the State Council of the People's Republic of Bulgaria, Comrade Todor Zhivkov, stated that

"The new realities require new political action on the part of the people. The threat of ecological catastrophe, economic underdevelopment, widespread disease, the terrible infant-mortality rate and growing illiteracy are global problems that can be resolved only through the common efforts of mankind, with a thorough restructuring of international relations on the basis of a balance of interests."

The international community's desire to break the vicious circle of military rivalry and confrontation and to guarantee security by political means through consolidating the primacy of international law is increasingly reflected in a new understanding of the international role of the United Nations.

Bulgaria has always attached great importance to strengthening the role and effectiveness of the United Nations. Along with other countries, Bulgaria believes the Organization should become a genuine, effective instrument for maintaining international peace and security, developing international co-operation and settling conflicts and crises. We support proposals made here that the working methods and approach of the General Assembly and the Security Council be updated to make better use of the Organization's peace-keeping potential. Bulgaria will continue to contribute to the noble, all-embracing work of the United Nations.

(Mr. Mladenov, Bulgaria)

I take particular note today of the Organization's contribution to the settlement of a number of international disputes, and in particular of the important role played by the esteemed Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar.

It is a fact that positive developments can be seen throughout the entire spectrum of world problems, regional disputes and sources of tension. Slowly and somewhat hesitantly for the present, a situation is emerging which favours the collective search for solutions. It would be wrong to draw general conclusions for the entire world, but there appears to be a clear desire to find national and regional agreement with the assistance of the international community.

(Mr. Mladenov, Bulgaria)

The Geneva Agreements on Afghanistan were a milestone in the struggle to improve the international climate. Unswerving compliance with them is the only guarantee of restoring peace in that country and the region. We support the efforts of the Government of the Republic of Afghanistan to overcome that crisis by democratic means.

We were very pleased to hear of the cessation of hostilities between Iran and Iraq. As a State that took part in the drafting and adoption of Security Council resolution 598 (1987), we support the peace process and the mediation work done by the United Nations.

In the Middle East, the essence of the problem there has not yet been resolved. The struggle of the Palestinian people for its freedom and self-determination continues. A positive factor is the almost complete agreement on the need to convene an international conference on the matter. We believe that it should be held on the basis of existing United Nations resolutions with the participation of all interested parties, including the five permanent members of the Security Council and the Palestine Liberation Organization, the sole, authentic representative of the Palestine Arabs.

Multilateral dialogue is taking place on questions relating to southern Africa. We hope that the decisions of the Organization will finally be implemented and that Angola and other States of the region will attain peace, so long awaited; that Namibia will attain its independence; and that the apartheid system will be abolished.

Bulgaria sees great potential in the policy of national reconciliation proclaimed by Kampuchea. We are glad to see that prospects are being opened up through the efforts of Viet Nam and other peace-loving States.

(Mr. Mladenov, Bulgaria)

We welcome the policy of the People's Democratic Republic of Korea to bring about the peaceful democratic unification of the country, to demilitarize the peninsula and to turn it into a nuclear-free zone.

We support the consistent efforts of Nicaragua and other Latin American countries to provide a peaceful solution to the problems of the region through dialogue and strict compliance with the principles of the Charter.

We have been following very closely the development of the Cyprus problem. Certain progress is evident in the island, and we hope that, through political means and with United Nations assistance, the source of tension will finally be defused.

Naturally it is impossible to achieve complete harmony between opposing forces and parties, but opponents must re-think contradictions from the standpoint of greater realism. They must agree to sensible compromises, from which all sides stand to gain. Accordingly, we believe that participants in conflicts should more carefully heed the collective wisdom of the world community. It alone has the moral right to judge the norms and rules of international coexistence. In all cases, an abiding condition of the peace process is recognition of every people's right to freedom of choice, without which it is impossible to resolve a conflict or achieve just and lasting peace.

Bulgaria is located in the Balkans, a region with a difficult and complex history. That is why we are sincerely delighted at the steps towards détente and co-operation taken by Balkan States. They are in keeping with the spirit of the time and the aspirations of the Balkan peoples.

The emergence of new thinking in the Balkans was expressed with increasing clarity at the Belgrade meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Balkan countries, which was held in a constructive and businesslike atmosphere. All of us

(Mr. Mladenov, Bulgaria)

who participated in that meeting sought to find a common language and stressed common interests, not confrontation or grievances. We commend the holding of that forum and the Balkan process it started.

The Balkans are a priority in Bulgaria's foreign policy. In 1981 we started working out, and we are now implementing, a set of measures and initiatives to strengthen good-neighbourliness and improve the overall atmosphere in the region. Despite any vicissitudes of fate, the constant goal of our policy has always been, and will continue to be, co-operation, peace and security in the Balkans.

Basing ourselves on that goal, we will continue to work together with all Balkan States on a very broad, equitable footing. Our guiding light will be the legitimate interests of States, historical realities and the peace imperatives of our time. We believe that the key link in the joint efforts to promote peace could be to turn the peninsula into a zone free from weapons of mass destruction, which would certainly help to reduce confrontation, mistrust and hostility in the broader geostrategic context as well.

I note with satisfaction that our discussion of urgent issues relating to disarmament today is reflecting the impact of new political thinking. The image of "the enemy" preparing for a nuclear strike or an attack using conventional weapons is gradually being replaced by the image of a normal person sincerely concerned about his or her security. Increasingly, there is a desire to understand one's partner, his way of thinking, his concerns. Without a doubt, not all remnants of the past have been removed, and not all stereotypes have been overcome, but ridding dialogue of futile rhetoric and propagandistic clichés, which has started to happen, is a major prerequisite for the strengthening of mutual understanding.

(Mr. Mladenov, Bulgaria)

Today, the most important task is the conclusion of an agreement between the Soviet Union and the United States on the reduction by 50 per cent of strategic offensive weapons. This should become a milestone in the achieving of strategic stability as we move towards the twenty-first century, and towards the complete elimination of nuclear arsenals.

Progress is being made on the halting of nuclear tests. A complete ban on chemical weapons will become a reality in the near future. I should like to recall that although the Soviet-United States talks provide the main impetus in the disarmament process, the process should become multilateral. No one can escape responsibility in this regard.

(Mr. Mladenov, Bulgaria)

We believe that lowering the level of military confrontation between the Warsaw Treaty and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), which started with the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles, will be continued as a result of negotiations to reduce armed forces and conventional armaments in Europe. The July 1988 statement of the Political Consultative Committee of the Warsaw Treaty set the goal of these negotiations as effecting radical reductions in the military potential of the two alliances, achieving a situation on the continent whereby they would have at their disposal the forces and facilities adequate for their defence but insufficient to conduct surprise attacks or to carry out offensive operations. Such reductions should be accompanied by a corresponding reduction in military expenditures. The functions and tasks of these forces should be determined by non-aggressive, defensive military doctrines, the core of which is the principle of reasonable sufficiency.

At the same time, it is clear even to the uninitiated that progress in disarmament in certain areas has been accompanied by a specific shifting of resources to other areas. Naval armaments are still immune to disarmament efforts. The situation urgently requires the adoption of political decisions to reduce naval forces, bearing in mind mutual interests. For several years now, Bulgaria has been calling for the adoption of such a decision and working to that end. As a first step, we think it would be a good idea to discuss and adopt confidence-building measures on the seas and oceans and on maritime routes.

The problems of verification, openness and predictability in the military sphere are acquiring growing significance. A United Nations comprehensive machinery for verification - as suggested by a number of countries, including Bulgaria - would make it possible to exercise proper control not only over arms reductions but also over regional conflicts so that they could be prevented.

(Mr. Mladenov, Bulgaria)

Outer space, like Earth, should be free of weapons. Broad international co-operation in the peaceful uses of outer space rather than space-based weapons would help us in building confidence and eliminating the threat of nuclear catastrophe.

A major aspect of the disarmament problem is that it is intrinsically linked with development issues. Reducing military potential would allow the mobilization of the necessary resources to overcome underdevelopment and promote social and economic progress.

The growing awareness of global interdependence, positive trends in various parts of the world and the normalization of East-West relations have given us grounds to hope for positive changes in international economic relations. The time has come to restructure these relations on a just and democratic basis. The economic situation of the developing countries, and in particular their heavy foreign debt burden, is a serious problem for the entire international community. A just solution of that problem will require the concerted efforts of the world community, bearing in mind the interests of and prevailing conditions in the debtor countries and the basic goals of their socio-economic development. The United Nations can and should make a contribution to resolving this issue.

The establishment of official relations between the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance and the European Economic Community was a major positive event. The development of relations between these two organizations on a mutually advantageous basis will significantly promote peaceful coexistence in Europe and throughout the world. Bulgaria will make its contribution towards developing that co-operation for the security and prosperity of all peoples.

(Mr. Mladenov, Bulgaria)

The common interests of all States and peoples are clearly reflected in the problem of the protection of the environment. Economic activity carried out without due attention being paid to ecological factors is destroying nature, just as the arms race and military conflicts destroy nature. The world is being suffocated by chemicals, the soil is deteriorating, the climate is changing and the flora and fauna are disappearing. A collective effort by all countries and peoples is required. The effective guaranteeing of international ecological security should become a primary goal in the work of the United Nations, which has already done much to protect the environment. A concrete contribution in this respect has been made by the report of the Brundtland Commission. The ideas it contains are of fundamental importance in protecting nature and man's environment.

In keeping with its position of principle, Bulgaria supports the working out of broad measures to conserve nature at both regional and subregional levels. We have proposed the conclusion of a treaty for the ecological protection of the Balkan peninsula. We have also suggested the holding in Sofia of an ecological forum within the framework of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe. Active work is going on in Bulgaria on a broad set of practical measures in this area.

The current issues of peace, security and co-operation are characteristically intertwined in Europe. On the Old Continent, truly non-traditional and innovative views are struggling against the canons of out-dated thinking. Those who favour the division of Europe into blocs are unrelenting. But at the same time the noble idea of a common European home is emerging, a concept reflecting the historic, cultural, political and economic community of the countries of Europe, the United States and Canada.

(Mr. Mladenov, Bulgaria)

The dogmas of the past are being slowly overcome. The Vienna meeting of the States of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe will soon be concluded. We hope that it will provide new dynamism to the process of equal and mutually advantageous dialogue in Europe.

The problems in international affairs and their interrelationship are being discussed at a number of international forums. This is a new and hitherto untried methodology, but it is in keeping with the spirit of our times. These discussions are focusing increasingly on social and humanitarian problems.

Forty years ago the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. That was the first step towards the establishment of today's solid legal basis for international co-operation on social and humanitarian problems. At present practically no State is outside the world consensus in this area. That is quite natural, since the human person is a universal value, the centre of evolution and the focal point of attention in domestic and foreign policies. The creation of favourable conditions for a free, dignified and creative life for the individual is not State charity but the State's main obligation, so as to ensure that society and civilization in general will flourish.

(Mr. Mladenov, Bulgaria)

Bulgaria welcomes the expanding role of the United Nations in the social and humanitarian spheres. We will work for the democratization of international relations and the establishment of moral guarantees of peace and security.

An eminent public figure and humanist, Aurelio Pecci, said that the current stage of evolution requires that people stop merely looking into the future and start building that future. For the sake of objectivity it must be noted that we are just at the beginning of this great demilitarization and humanization of international affairs. We realize that a lot remains to be changed in ourselves, too, in order to move towards an irreversibly non-violent world, to build a new global international order under which every country, every people and every person can feel confident about the future. There is no possible alternative.

Mr. AL-SHARA (Syrian Arab Republic) (interpretation from Arabic): It gives me great pleasure to congratulate Mr. Dante Caputo on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its forty-third session. His country Argentina and mine, Syria, both of which are members of the Movement of the Non-Aligned Countries, have always maintained relations of friendship and co-operation. We are confident that his political skill in guiding the deliberations of the present session will ensure the success of our work.

It is also a pleasure to express my appreciation of the outstanding success achieved by his predecessor, Mr. Peter Florin, in guiding the work of the forty-second session. To him and to his friendly country, the German Democratic Republic, we offer our best wishes for unceasing progress and success.

The achievements of the Secretary-General and his assistants in reinforcing the role of the United Nations merit our deep appreciation and gratitude. We have especially high regard for the Secretary-General's personal initiatives and

(Mr. Al-Shara, Syrian Arab  
Republic)

participation in efforts to tackle a number of difficult regional problems. This year, the United Nations has begun to take significant steps towards restoring its international stature, which was greatly affected during the cold-war years. A new and serious way of thinking has revitalized the role of the international Organization in finding solutions for pressing world problems, foremost among which are regional conflicts.\*

There is no doubt that the Soviet-American dialogue has created an atmosphere of détente in relations between East and West which has been reflected in one way or another in dealing with regional conflicts, which will make it easier to find just solutions for many of them. The climate of détente has been most vividly manifested in the cease-fire in the Iraq-Iran war, the situations in Afghanistan, South West Africa and South-East Asia, and the important meetings conducted or supervised by the Secretary-General of the parties directly involved in the problems of Cyprus and Western Sahara.

However, we must reiterate in this important international forum that the Arab-Israeli conflict continues to escalate, unaffected by the atmosphere of international détente, despite all the international efforts made lately by both East and West to arrive at a just and comprehensive settlement. There is not even a sign on the horizon that would indicate that the success of such efforts hinges on the results of the forthcoming Israeli or American elections. The conditions for a solution set out in the platforms of the two main rival political parties in Israel would not bring about peace in the Middle East. As for the United States of

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\*Mr. Mortensen (Denmark), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Al-Shara, Syrian Arab  
Republic)

America, peace in the Middle East is not even on the agenda of either of the two candidates competing for the Presidency. Furthermore, if it were to be included it would be simply a matter of a race to win Israel's favour and stress the special relationship; it would have nothing to do with the way to achieve just and comprehensive world peace according to a clear and independent American perspective.

It has now become more clear than ever before that the special Israeli-American relationship, as it stands, does not serve the cause of peace; instead, it has become an additional obstacle to the attainment of a comprehensive, just settlement in the Middle East. It is indeed regrettable that these special relations, with their dimension within the fabric of the American society, should be harnessed to increase tension in the area, destabilize it and deprive its peoples of the just peace that they aspire to achieve.

We cannot now rule out the possible collapse of the convictions of those who have always pledged themselves to employ the special Israeli-American relationship to make peace, achieve Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories, and restore the national rights of the Palestinian people. Rather, it has become clear to them that such special relations provide Israel with sufficient influence on American policy to keep the Arab-Israeli conflict outside the atmosphere of international détente - an atmosphere that is not in tune with Israel's expansionist policy.

(Mr. Al-Shara, Syrian Arab  
Republic)

On the other hand, the United Nations, which adopted a resolution establishing Israel, has so far failed to make Israel take one of the political options provided for in the Charter: either to implement United Nations resolutions relevant to the Palestinian question and the Arab-Israeli conflict, or to face comprehensive mandatory sanctions under Chapter VII of the Charter.

That reference to the lack of ability of the United Nations in this field is not meant to minimize the complications surrounding the adoption of Security Council resolutions, nor does it signify lack of awareness of the big hurdles which stand in the way of implementing those resolutions once they have been adopted. What we want to highlight here is that the non-implementation of the political options provided for in the Charter has made the Israelis feel that they have an international mandate, besides the biblical one which they claim for themselves, to resort to military means to carry out their expansionist plans wherever and whenever they can.

Since the early days of the Arab-Israeli conflict myths have been confused with truths and legends with facts. The rulers of Israel have been intent on magnifying their legends at the expense of the land and the rights of the Palestinian people. They have gone so far in their racist practices against Arab citizens as to be no longer willing to acknowledge the rights of the Palestinian people to their own land and home country, deluding themselves that Israel's military and technological superiority will go on for ever, and that Israel will always be able to impose what it wants, any time, anywhere.

Israel still occupies the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, the Syrian Golan and parts of Lebanon, but this occupation is no longer an easy task for Israel, nor should Israel take it for granted. In southern Lebanon the Lebanese resistance is

(Mr. Al-Shara, Syrian Arab Republic)

still making sacrifices. Yet it is costing Israel considerable losses and it will continue its struggle until the liberation of the last inch of the Lebanese territory. In the Golan the Syrian Arab citizens are continuing their absolute rejection of Israeli identity cards and are clinging tenaciously to their Syrian identity. In the West Bank and Gaza Strip the Palestinian uprising is still bravely facing the Israeli occupying soldiers for the tenth consecutive month, despite all the barbaric practices perpetrated by those forces. The spirit of the uprising has pervaded Israel itself, where the Palestinians, who number about three quarters of a million, have started to revive their Arab identity, their attachment to their country, Palestine, and to express in one way or another their solidarity with their brothers in the other Arab occupied territories.

The picture is grim in Israel, and for the future of Israel. Israel's technological and military superiority can do very little to change that picture.

The Syrian Arab Republic continues to call for the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, under the auspices of the United Nations, and with participation of all the parties involved in the conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization and the five permanent members of the Security Council. Such a conference should be given the full and effective capacity to achieve a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East, based on the principles of the Charter and United Nations resolutions relevant to the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Palestinian question, and on complete Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories, including Jerusalem, and the safeguarding of the national rights of the Palestinian people, including their inalienable right to return, their right to self-determination and the right to establish their own independent State on their national territory.

(Mr. Al-Shara, Syrian Arab Republic)

Recent developments in Lebanon have taken that brother country once again into a dark tunnel, although hopes had been entertained for the emergence of a new era of national reconciliation, constitutional reforms and the election of a new president. Those who undermined the presidential elections during the prescribed constitutional period by blackmail, political manoeuvring, and threats and by preventing deputies from reaching the parliament building should be held responsible before the Lebanese people. Lebanon's unity, its Arab identity and its independence should never be the subject of blackmail or bargaining.

The historical ties between Lebanon and Syria, their common destiny, their mutual interests and their interdependent security are deeply rooted in the people of both countries and not just in their Governments. It is self-evident that those historical ties, and nothing else, dictated for Syria all the great sacrifices it was prepared to make and the heavy burden it shouldered in assisting all the Lebanese people. Had Syria been otherwise motivated, the map and the realities on the ground would have changed since the first days of the Syrian forces' entry into Lebanon.

We should like to emphasize, in this international body, that there is no alternative to national reconciliation in Lebanon. The attempts to partition Lebanon and all the other Israeli schemes which Syria has been able to foil during recent years should not be allowed to succeed. All the sacrifices and efforts made by Syria for many years to help Lebanon should not be unavailing just because a small minority of the Lebanese decided to ignore the true interests of Lebanon and attempted to impose their will on the absolute majority of the Lebanese people.

The national conference held in Lebanon last Thursday, in which most Lebanese political personalities, Muslims and Christians, took part, reiterated its belief

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in the unity of Lebanon and its Arab identity and its total rejection of all attempts at partition, and called for an end to the Israeli occupation. The conference also stressed the duty of all Lebanese to work together to reconstruct their country on the basis of equality and justice and to open a new page in its history, a page of national reconciliation. The conference called upon the Government of Dr. Salim Al Hoss to continue to ensure the functioning of the country's institutions, in the whole of Lebanon, and to take the necessary measures to enable the presidential election to take place as soon as possible.

(Mr. Al-Shara, Syrian Arab  
Republic)

Because of its strong historical ties with Lebanon and its deep awareness of the grave dangers posed to the unity and role of Lebanon in particular and Arab interests in general, Syria has been and will always be committed to offering all possible help to that brother country in order to overcome its current crisis, to preserve the unity of its land and people and to maintain its security and independence.

After the eight years of wide-scale killing and destruction between two neighbouring countries that for hundreds of years enjoyed historical and cultural relations, the cease-fire between Iraq and Iran certainly is a positive step. Syria condemned this unjustified war from its very outset and immediately welcomed Iran's official acceptance of Security Council resolution 598 (1987). Syria is well aware that that acceptance will have a positive effect on the tense situation in the Gulf region in particular and the Middle East in general. We wish the Secretary-General success, and we express appreciation to him for the patience he has shown in his efforts to achieve the goal, which are hampered by great difficulties that should not be underestimated if the desired results are to be attained.

International terrorism is a major source of tension in international relations. The Syrian Arab Republic participated actively in the drafting of General Assembly resolution 42/159, which is regarded as a significant and advanced step in the efforts to combat international terrorism and eradicate its evils and dangers and to distinguish between terrorism and the struggle of peoples for national liberation. The importance of that resolution is evident from its condemnation of international terrorism and, at the same time, its emphasis on the legitimacy of the struggle of peoples that are under racist or colonial domination

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or foreign occupation for liberation, self-determination and independence. We stress once again that the convening of an international conference to define terrorism and distinguish it from the struggle of peoples for national liberation will significantly contribute to combating international terrorism. Such a conference would undermine the deliberate attempts being made to confuse terrorism, which we condemn, with the struggle of peoples, which we support.

General and complete disarmament should be given the first priority on the agenda of the international community because this question is intrinsically linked with the continued existence of the human race and life on earth.

The Syrian Arab Republic welcomed the conclusion by the Soviet Union and the United States of the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles in Europe. We urge both those countries to move quickly towards the achievement of the goal of a 50 per cent reduction in strategic offensive missiles, as a giant step on the path to the total liquidation of nuclear arsenals in the world. Despite the set-back constituted by the inability of the General Assembly's third special session devoted to disarmament to achieve the hoped-for results, efforts should continue to be made to convince the nuclear-weapon States to make a solemn declaration not to use or threaten to use their nuclear weapons against non-nuclear States.

The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in the world is an essential prerequisite to effective implementation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. The Syrian Arab Republic has fully supported the establishment of such zones and has urged the pursuit of efforts to turn the Middle East and other areas of the world into nuclear-weapon-free zones, as well as the taking of appropriate international measures for doing that. The nuclearization of Israel

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certainly undermines all the efforts to ensure the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. That objective cannot be attained unless Israel is compelled to submit to United Nations resolutions which demand that it adhere to the Non-Proliferation Treaty and place all its nuclear facilities under the safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Still on the issue of nuclear armaments, Israel's release of a military satellite would stimulate a new arms race in the region, which would expose it and the world to further dangers.

The economic crises and social and political tensions witnessed in the world during the past few years should lead the industrialized countries to acknowledge that it is no longer possible to maintain a one-way system of prosperity and growth at a time when the peoples of the world aspire to establish international economic relations based on equal co-operation, mutual trust and common interests. The problems of the staggering, indeed astronomical, debt burden from which most developing countries of the world are suffering, the increase in already high interest rates, the decrease in the prices of commodities and the growing tendency of the industrialized countries to practice protectionism cannot be solved without the establishment of a just economic world order. The interdependence of international economic relations, despite differences in social and economic systems, requires that all countries co-operate in attempting to solve these international economic problems. There is no doubt that a serious resumption of the North-South dialogue would greatly contribute to providing a better climate and conditions for accelerating the process of development, to the benefit of all parties concerned.

(Mr. Al-Shara, Syrian Arab  
Republic)

The important question of the protection of the environment must be addressed. The dumping of industrial and toxic wastes in developing countries poses the gravest dangers to their environment. The international concern over the problems of the environment requires that the General Assembly make a joint effort to protect the environment and mankind from the dangerous consequences of these toxic wastes, and that it take the necessary measures to prevent the dumping of such wastes in developing countries.

The continued occupation of Namibia is an act of aggression against the Namibian people, who are deprived of their right to self-determination and independence and are subjected daily to barbaric and oppressive practices. We support the efforts made by the Security Council and the Secretary-General to achieve the immediate implementation of Security Council resolution 435 (1978). We lend our support also to the struggle of the Namibian people, under the leadership of the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO), for liberation and self-determination.

(Mr. Al-Shara, Syrian Arab Republic)

The racist régime in Pretoria is still relentlessly committing barbaric crimes against the black African majority and is continuing its policy of apartheid, which has been judged by the international community to be a crime against humanity. There is no doubt that the Pretoria régime could not have persisted in challenging the international will had it not been for the support it receives from some Western countries and its co-operation with Israel in many spheres, in particular the military and the nuclear. We consider it the duty of the international community to intensify its efforts to bring about the total eradication of apartheid and the establishment of a democratic society on the basis of equality and justice in South Africa. The most effective means of eradicating apartheid would be through the imposition of comprehensive and mandatory sanctions under Chapter VII of the Charter.

As for the situation in Afghanistan, we say again that we welcome the Geneva Agreements reached in April 1988 and we stress the importance of implementing the provisions of those Agreements and of refraining from interfering in the internal affairs of Afghanistan, of preserving its territorial integrity and non-aligned status, and of achieving national reconciliation among its people.

The problem of Cyprus, a neighbouring country with which Syria has always throughout history enjoyed friendly relations, still awaits a just solution. We hope that the ongoing contacts between the Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities will lead to a comprehensive settlement based on United Nations resolutions.

We once again renew our support for the efforts being made by the Democratic Republic of Korea to bring about the peaceful reunification of the Korean peninsula through negotiations and the withdrawal of foreign troops from South Korea. We also support its call to make the Korean peninsula a zone of peace, free of nuclear weapons and foreign military bases.

(Mr. Al-Shara, Syrian Arab  
Republic)

In Central America, Nicaragua continues to be subjected to external pressures and interference in its internal affairs. We welcome the efforts made by the Central American States, the Contadora Group and the Support Group for the establishment of a true and lasting peace in Central America that would ensure the independence and sovereignty of all States in the area.

The optimism arising from the announcement of a new phase of détente and co-operation in international relations after a period of tension and confrontation is a natural expression of the aspirations of people to solve the intricate problems from which they suffer and of an inclination towards a world in which peace and justice would prevail while injustice, oppression and aggression would disappear. Fulfilment of those great aspirations is not easy to achieve, but they are legitimate aspirations which could be satisfied if good intention and political will were to prevail. We hope that action will be taken to translate them into a tangible reality.

Mr. BEMANANJARA (Madagascar) (interpretation from French): The Democratic Republic of Madagascar would like to express to Mr. Dante Caputo its felicitations on his election to the presidency of this session. In him we congratulate the representative of a country that has consistently proclaimed its dedication to the principles of non-alignment. I am confident that once again he will devote to the service of our Organization the distinguished qualities which have characterized his brilliant career.

To Mr. Peter Florin, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the German Democratic Republic, we convey our thanks for the able way in which he guided our work, and we lay special emphasis on his perseverance, impartiality, detachment and sense of political responsibility.

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We would say to the Secretary-General that this year will have been for him and his chief co-workers a challenging and exciting one. The Assem'ly had given him the task of disentangling the political, financial and administrative crisis of our Organization. At the same time we expected him to pursue his missions of peace, mediation and conciliation in Western Sahara, Central America, Western Asia, Afghanistan and Cyprus, among other places. We pay a tribute to his diplomatic initiative, the results of which speak for themselves, and for the efforts he has constantly devoted to restoring to multilateralism and to our Organization the role to which they are entitled.

During this decade two words, "global" and "interdependent", have been spoken so frequently that there hardly seems to be any need to define them any longer. Development is global, as are peace and security, and the three words are interdependent. The axiomatic character and the linear development of this argument may seem troublesome, but no statement can escape that fact, and this demonstrates that despite our differences we are moving towards a universal way of speaking.

I hope I shall be forgiven for these haphazard reflections, but I have the impression that we are choosing the same topics, expressing the same ideas and arriving at the same conclusions, although the words may change in connotation depending on the ideology, the continent or the degree of economic development and the social situation of the country in question. I take, for example, the question of security, a question that worries us all and one on which we cannot afford to have substantial differences. But that is not so. The most idealistic among us still dream of a system of collective security as provided by the Charter while at the same time we realize that this structure rests on the will of the great Powers and on their ability to go beyond the constraints of national interests and their

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willingness to accept an end to the status quo that has paralysed us for two generations.

Occasionally it happens that we support initiatives regarding the establishment of a general system of peace, the strengthening of international security and the redefinition of that system by making it better adapted to the realities of a changing society. On each such occasion we are told about the sacrosanct character of the Charter or the grim prospects of an Organization that would be dominated by propaganda or a false ideology.

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Must we for much longer accept this theory that the only security is military security, with its recurring pattern of cold war, retrenchment, détente, confrontation and balance of deterrence? May we now hope that the great thaw between East and West will indirectly have some effects on the political-economic situation of the South? To a degree, the events of the last nine months seem optimistic in that regard, especially for those who hold to a geocentricism not necessarily justified by a healthy grasp of the world situation. Indeed, there are still stubborn hotbeds of insecurity in the political, economic and social spheres, as well as at the regional level. The arguments we are hearing in the present debate do not allow us fully to face those challenges, particularly since some of them have an urgent if not immediate tone. Thus we have no alternative but to fall back on some arguments we have often used in the past.

The promoting and safeguarding of security cannot be dealt with exclusively by reference to a past that has not always been glorious. If new prospects are opening before us, which should lead us to recognize far-reaching changes in our society, then let us have the generosity and courage to admit that such an endeavour requires the involvement and participation of all; that the interests of some must yield to the common interest and the interests of the international community; and that spheres of influence, interference, dependence, domination and exploitation are now obsolete. In short, let us have security for all, and in all spheres.

There can be no security without development, nor development without security. We shall be told that this is merely one more slogan. But the immediate and complex problems posed by development could, if left unresolved, undermine

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political and military security, which, we must acknowledge, for the moment benefits only the North.

There has often been discussion of a clash between North and South, because poverty and wretchedness know no borders, nor do they disappear merely because of logic or debate. And what would it be like, a world one half of which enjoyed the benefits of security while the other half continued to struggle with countless economic difficulties?

Conversely, so long as international security is not secured, the efforts and resources that could be devoted to development will be diverted to other goals; politics will prevail over economics, and the rivalry of the great Powers will continue to have repercussions on choices of modes of development.

Ideally, on both fronts - security and development - initiatives should be taken concurrently and simultaneously. But the realities are otherwise. The struggle against underdevelopment is momentarily being left aside and we are being led to believe that the North must organize itself and ensure its security before the South can benefit.

But let us suppose that the industrialized North, cutting across all lines, has resolved its problems of stability, confidence, security, restructuring, liberalization, inflation, growth, unemployment, interest and exchange rates, budgetary balances and integration. Could we then conclude that the dispossessed South would automatically benefit? We still remember with bitterness the promises of the 1970s, when we were advised to wait until inflation was brought under control before we called for any increase in development aid. As for the "trickle-down effect" and the laws of the market, the length of time necessary and the precariousness of their results are matched only by our patience.

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The policy of laissez-faire has entrenched itself in international economic relations, and it is the debt question that finally has aroused some awareness of responsibilities and disparities. We recognize that the impasse faced by national and international financial institutions has led them no longer to address the question of debt in financial and accounting terms; to seek means that were formerly thought of as legally dangerous; to accept that structural adjustment should take into account human, social and political elements. There are, of course, risks in such an exercise, but an accumulation of bad debts cannot serve the cause of international monetary and financial stability, and even less the cause of an equitable, just and sustained development.

In this respect, let those who hold the initiative concede that the burden of debt is paralysing development efforts and that this is not the key to the problem. Development has many aspects and one cannot always put all the factors on an equal footing. This is the case, for example, with commodity prices, which we are told should depend on the laws of the market, and are not protected by protectionism. We may well wonder whether it is decent that the survival of a country should be subject to the clash of different schools of thought. A degree of teamwork is called for here, even if some of the most valid rules occasionally need to be bent.

We did not abandon our spirit of teamwork and solidarity when some presented to us the notion that structural adjustment would be our contribution to improving the international economic environment. Its price remains enormous: increased unemployment, deterioration of social indicators, a decline in productivity, inadequate basic social services, under-utilization of human resources and so on.

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On the side of our partners, we find it hard to see the existence of a real will to tackle the problem of development, to give up the notion that growth can remain the reserve of the few, or to ensure that national policies and practices favour the emergence of an economic order of benefit to everyone. Teamwork not followed by concrete action or supported by specific commitments is not real.

It may be objected that so long as uncertainties deriving from the constraints of the world economy have not been removed, it will be difficult to restructure priorities, to redefine certain preferences and to alter objectives. If that is so, then we must give up on that global vision of the world that has always been held out to us, especially at difficult times. So division is the rule. "Wait and see" remains the byword, and let each draw his own conclusions.

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As for us, we shall continue to argue, from the standpoint of a true development code of ethics, that development is concerned above all with improving the human condition; that it calls for a consistent collective reaction in the form of a long-term programme with objectives, commitments and the availability of adequate resources; that in the establishing of world economic security the United Nations has a primary political role to play, in the clear formulation of principles, the definition of priorities and co-ordination of the various organizations and institutions concerned with development, whose approach and ends are not necessarily harmonized or convergent.

We shall continue to discover new problems, obstacles and disappointments on the road to security and development. Even if the advent of a golden age is not on the horizon, it would be wrong to abandon all hope, because we must examine the problems of security, development and peace from a global perspective, without any preconceived order of priorities, without pre-judging their interaction and without claiming a monopoly regarding initiatives or means of implementation. Such an approach, if adopted, would constitute a guarantee of the establishment of a true peace that would be shared by all, whether from East or West, from North or South. Nevertheless, we should recognize that progress has been made, in the quest for peace and in creating a climate favourable to its attainment, thanks to the convergence of unilateral initiatives, bilateral consultations and recourse to multilateral diplomacy. We should therefore pay our tribute to and congratulate all those who have made the prospects for this session less negative than they might have been.

These include: first, the Organization, whose peace-keeping forces have just received the Nobel Peace Prize in recognition of their contribution to achieving

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the fundamental purposes of the Charter and to bringing about the negotiations now under way. To the United States and the Soviet Union, for concluding the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles; for undertaking negotiations with a view to reducing their strategic nuclear arsenals, and for their determination to explore those spheres in which significant progress can be envisaged; Iran and Iraq, for accepting the cease-fire recommended in Security Council resolution 598 (1987) and carrying on direct talks on the establishment of a true peace, in a spirit of trust and understanding; all those that, like France, decided, when the cease-fire was announced, to withdraw their naval contingents from the Gulf, thus reducing the dangers that a foreign military presence might represent for the independence, sovereignty and security of the States of the region; the members of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the countries of Indo-China, which, despite the complexity and difficulty of their exchanges of view, especially on Kampuchea, are gradually moving towards the creation of a zone of security and co-operation in South-East Asia; the Soviet Union and Viet Nam for, respectively, the withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan, in the framework of the Geneva Agreement and the establishment of a timetable for the withdrawal from Kampuchea; the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which recently took initiative to bring about unification, conciliation and harmony and to eliminate confrontation, mistrust and tension, with a view to bringing about the reunification of the peninsula; the Republic of Cyprus and other Cypriot representatives, who decided to attempt to achieve, through resumption of intercommunal talks, a negotiated settlement of all aspects of the problem, in a spirit of independence, sovereignty and the unity of Cyprus; the Organization of African Unity for pursuing its mediation efforts to bring about a negotiated

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political solution to the dispute between Libya and Chad, which have just re-established their diplomatic relations; Ethiopia and Somalia, which, after so many years of confrontation, have succeeded in normalizing their relations in a spirit of good-neighbourliness and brotherhood; Morocco and the Saharan Arab Democratic Republic, whose acceptance of the Secretary-General's proposals on Western Sahara constitute a positive step towards the implementation, in letter and spirit, of the relevant United Nations and Organization of African Unity resolutions on initiating direct negotiations and the holding of the referendum on self-determination; the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO), the sole and legitimate representative of the Namibian people, for having, at the beginning of the quadripartite talks, unilaterally announced the cessation of its military operations; and the countries of Latin America, which, despite the existence of internal and external problems, insist that the only way of solving the region's problems, without external interference or the injection of ideological considerations, remains the faithful implementation of the Guatemala agreement, the reaffirmation of which is urgently necessary.

After this summary of the disputes that have arisen between States, what can we conclude and what lesson can we draw, if not that the sense of responsibility of the countries of any region and their support for the settlement of conflicts in their geographic area have proved more positive and effective than interference and intervention prompted by external interests.

Having presented this somewhat optimistic view of the world, I am constrained to return to the painful realities affecting southern Africa and the Middle East, where conflict of interests is the order of the day.

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On 1 November this year the Secretary-General will begin to take the steps necessary for the deployment of the United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) in Namibia. We all hope that this first deadline will be respected and will not be made unduly dependent upon the results of the quadripartite talks on South West Africa. We maintain that only the immediate, complete and definitive application of Security Council resolution 435 (1978) will make it possible for the Namibian people to regain their independence, sovereignty and dignity. Until this happens, the political, legal and moral responsibility of the Organization will be at stake.

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In South Africa we are still seeing a clash between two worlds. On the one side, we see the illegitimate and illegal régime of apartheid, with all the tyranny, oppression, discrimination, inequality and monopoly that it involves. On the other side, we see a people suffering in body and soul, but a people which, through the voice and through the initiatives of its liberation movement, the African National Congress (ANC), is crying out for the right to participation, to freedom and to democracy. We are still wondering when we will find the resolve to apply concrete and comprehensive sanctions to defeat the apartheid régime. Nothing can be built on immorality and compromise. One cannot expect anything from apartheid, reformed or not.

As for the Middle East, it is time we stopped trying to find some form of balance at any cost, which is of advantage only to one side. The Palestinian people, a victim of injustice, condemned to wandering and despair, has the right to demand more consideration and more sympathy. Reasoning politically and legally, after the adoption of resolution 181 (II) who can question the existence of a Palestinian State distinct from Jordan? Sooner or later, the independence of that State will be formally proclaimed. As an Organization, we must take an unambiguous stand. That act will not suffice to end the conflicts between Israel and the PLO, but it would have the advantage of enabling the more hesitant to consider the International Peace Conference in new terms.

This year, we are going to celebrate the fortieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and everyone will proclaim full and unqualified dedication to it, although no country is really free of allegations of violations of these rights. Is it not ironic to note that at the end of the twentieth century those who dedicate themselves to preaching and to the systematic use of human rights for political purposes, are sometimes the last to accept the consequences of

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respect for, and the promotion of, human rights in southern Africa, the Middle East, Asia and Latin America?

That the flowers of human rights are blooming in a field of injustice, misery and poverty is something that is being accepted through a grim form of formalism.

As I listen to the statements of my colleagues, or reread them, I have the impression that the quarrel between bilateralism and multilateralism, for which some other systems have been sought, is now a thing of the past. The key point for us now is to invest in the new capital of confidence that has been accorded to our Organization, to build innovatively on the experience of more than 40 years, to put to the test the true potential of the United Nations despite its momentary loss of credibility.

If the United Nations is to be the expression of our international political conscience, we cannot continue to enclose it within the narrow framework of a Charter that needs to be revised, if only with respect to the right of veto. We must accept that the concept of security should be enlarged and that the concept of responsibility should be more binding. We must prepare ourselves to codify the guarantees of peace, security and development in a context which reflects the general desire of members of the international community, with especial attention to the priorities dictated, as the Secretary-General has said, by the entry of mankind into a new period of its history, and the imperative of a development which must be balanced and as fair as possible. Only at that cost can we respond to the aspirations of humanity in the midst of a crisis for its very survival, grappling with uncertainty and anxiety.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.