



**General Assembly**

PROVISIONAL

A/43/PV.24  
11 October 1988

ENGLISH

Forty-third session

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE TWENTY-FOURTH MEETING

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

President:

Mr. RANA  
(Vice-President)

(Nepal)

- General debate [9] (continued)

Statements made by:

Mr. Maynard (Bahamas)  
Mr. Srithirath (Lao People's Democratic Republic)  
Mr. Ricardo Garcia (Dominican Republic)

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In the absence of the President, Mr. Rana (Nepal), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 9 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. MAYNARD (Bahamas): I warmly congratulate Mr. Dante Caputo on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its forty-third session. I am confident that his vast experience and reputation will ensure that our work at this session is greatly facilitated and enhanced.

The Secretary-General has been an untiring champion of peace. I wish to commend him highly for the tremendous strides made in the past year in his efforts to resolve the problems of long-standing areas of conflict.

Much has transpired since I last addressed the Assembly that gives cause for optimism. It may be that a glorious era of peace is about to bless the generations of our time.

(Mr. Maynard, Bahamas)

The super-Powers have reached accord on the elimination of a whole class of nuclear weapons. The international community is on the verge of negotiated settlements affecting Afghanistan and the Iran-Iraq war. Within the grasp of the United Nations is the potential for the resolution of other intractable problems of the decade, which include those of Kampuchea, Cyprus and Namibia. It is encouraging also to hear that southern Africa may have set its schedule for peace. A new international convention against narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances is near completion. All of this indicates vitality and purpose and makes it imperative that Member States renew their commitment to the United Nations and to multilateralism.

Further, the soldiers who are deployed around the world in the United Nations peace-keeping force, ensuring armistice and reinforcing the peace structure, are to be warmly congratulated on the recognition they have received by winning the Nobel Peace Prize. The Secretary-General is to be thanked and commended for his great efforts, and the United Nations may feel justly proud of this achievement.

The question of arms limitation and disarmament is timely today and will be much discussed in the foreseeable future. May I point out three examples that show the process of multilateralism at work. First, at the 1988 session of the Disarmament Commission, last May, the Commission was able to make specific consensus recommendations on two of its eight substantive items: verification and guidelines for confidence-building measures. Secondly, later in May the members of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, meeting at Havana, Cuba, continued the process by adopting a consensus appeal to the two major Powers to reach agreement on disarmament. Thirdly, although a consensus text could not be produced at the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, last June, a spirit of co-operation governed the deliberations of the working groups.

(Mr. Maynard, Bahamas)

That success in arms limitation and disarmament holds the key to reducing military confrontations and minimizing the danger of nuclear war cannot be denied. This fact has provided the impetus for the role that the Bahamas played in the negotiations at those several meetings and as Chairman of the Disarmament Commission.

Today, the confidence of the Bahamas in the United Nations is as strong as it was the day we joined the Organization in 1973, and our commitment to the United Nations has not faltered and will not falter. Indeed, we hope to translate this commitment into specific action by serving on the Economic and Social Council and the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination, for which our candidature is known, and on the Security Council, for which we will be a candidate during the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly. This action will be reinforced by the experience of more than 15 sovereign years of stability, moderation and prosperity, a record unmatched by any State of similar size and natural resources.

The recent momentum in solving some of the globe's most pressing problems has served to underscore inconsistencies that may challenge the solution of others. The AIDS (acquired immunodeficiency syndrome) epidemic has escalated to alarming proportions, while unabated drug abuse and addiction defy the powerful and baffle the weak. Internal and regional conflicts have been experienced on every continent, resulting in catastrophic casualties. Natural and created disasters have taken their crippling toll. It could be salutary were the diplomacy and enthusiasm brought to solving problems between the super-Powers in military matters to be applied and paralleled, with similar understanding, to these other problems, which are just as important to the survival of mankind.

Over a year ago there was much cause for optimism when the countries of Central America signed the peace accord. The Bahamas is convinced that

(Mr. Maynard, Bahamas)

Esquipulas II remains the most effective mechanism for achieving lasting peace in Central America. We join the international chorus in calling upon all parties to continue to search for peace, and challenge all States to support their efforts, encouraging but not pressuring them as they seek to find their own paths to lasting peace.

In our region, Bahamas wishes to encourage the parties to territorial disputes to continue to work towards a negotiated settlement. In welcoming the new initiatives, the Bahamas reiterates its support for the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Belize and Guyana.

As the international community confirms its commitment to democracy and human rights, South Africa remains the bastion of racism and apartheid. The racist policy has as its foundations discrimination, denationalization and the brutal repression of the black majority.

The rising tide of black resistance to apartheid is evidence that the black majority is undaunted by the brutal and savage repression of frequent and lengthy states of emergency such as the present one. Democracy, racial desegregation, social justice and the abolition of apartheid are now considered by many to be indispensable life-and-death issues.

Economic pressures have forced South Africa to offer the black majority only trivial concessions thus far. What is required is a range of economic sanctions that are sufficiently costly to compel South Africa to initiate the process of dialogue with representatives of the African National Congress and other legitimate organizations of the black population with a view to establishing a non-racial democratic Government.

(Mr. Maynard, Bahamas)

The sovereign States neighbours of South Africa ought to be protected from incursions and bombing by the South African military, which murder innocent civilians and wreak havoc on their societies and economies.

The Bahamas continues to encourage the United Nations and all Member States, especially those with significant economic relations with South Africa, to implement effective economic sanctions in an effort to abolish apartheid. For its part, the Bahamas will continue to lend full support to all efforts leading to the eventual dismantling of apartheid.

In the midst of international despair regarding the apartheid régime of South Africa there is a glimmer of hope. Recent developments in Namibia increase our optimism that Namibia may at last achieve its independence. We encourage all concerned to continue to strive for the achievement of that noble objective at the earliest date possible.

(Mr. Maynard, Bahamas)

The cease-fire is most welcome in the war between Iran and Iraq which has for eight years threatened international peace and security. The Bahamas was therefore pleased to note the recent developments which may at last lead to peace in that region. It is our fervent hope that all parties to the dispute will continue to search for a negotiated settlement in accordance with Security Council resolution 598 (1987) which would end the war and the attendant loss of life and destruction of property. The Bahamas wishes to record its appreciation for the mediation efforts of our Secretary-General and hopes that all States will lend him their full co-operation and support.

The Bahamas has always supported Israel's right to exist. The Bahamas also strongly supports the right of peoples to self-determination. Self-determination should be guaranteed to the Palestinian people. The Bahamas therefore supports the convening of the international peace conference on the Middle East, with all the parties to the conflict being represented. Although the Palestinian issue is complex, we are satisfied that until it is resolved the chances of peace may be remote.

Narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances remain a burning issue for our region and for the entire international community. The threat that drug abuse and drug trafficking pose to the security, stability and socio-economic viability of many States continues to elicit an unprecedented multilateral response. With the necessary political and diplomatic will, a plenipotentiary conference could adopt a new convention against the illicit traffic in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances later this year. Last year more than 130 States represented at the International Conference against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, convened on the initiative of the Secretary-General, unanimously declared drug control to be the collective responsibility of all States.

(Mr. Maynard, Bahamas)

The United Nations efforts for drug control are paralleled by standing bodies in virtually all regions of the world. In our own Latin American and Caribbean region, the Inter-American Drug Control Commission has taken up the challenge to co-ordinate a comprehensive hemispheric response to the phenomenal illicit production, traffic and abuse of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances in the Americas. The activities of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) accurately reflect the critical concern of Member States in reducing the vulnerability of the region to the illicit transit traffic in narcotic drugs. CARICOM's initiatives are substantially focused on protecting the people of the subregion from the scourge.

Also of concern to the Bahamas are the increasing interventionist attitudes, pronouncements and measures adopted in the region, which arise from the war on drugs. Although regional Governments agree on a common vigorous course of action against the drug trade, overzealous and unilateral measures are nevertheless taken which threaten the stability of co-operative Governments themselves. The pursuit of such attitudes, pronouncements and measures is a blatant abuse and is not in the interest of peace and security in the region and particularly of small States such as the Bahamas, which are vulnerable because of their geographical locations.

The antidote for such interventionism is the strengthening of multilateral co-operation. Small States, such as the Bahamas, with a stable economy, low inflation level, balanced budget and one of the highest per capita income in its region, must rely on the multilateral approach which this world Organization alone affords. The progress made toward solving some of the world's most serious problems is indicative of what can be achieved if more support for and less bashing of the United Nations is encouraged. The Bahamas takes positive note of and applauds recent decisions to deal with the troubling question of arrears in contributions.

(Mr. Maynard, Bahamas)

The Bahamas is heartened by the fact that, after months of discussion about Africa's crushing debt burden, the major Western creditor countries have finally agreed to ease the plight of the world's most indebted nations. At their summit conference in Toronto on 19 to 21 June the leaders of the leading Western industrial States - the Group of Seven - agreed in principle to a set of options to alleviate the debt-servicing burden. That breakthrough may be considered the result of pressure which the February report of the Secretary-General's Advisory Group on Financial Flows to Africa brought to bear upon the creditor nations.

Equally encouraging is the fact that preparations are in the final stage for an in-depth review of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Recovery and Development 1986-1990, just two years after its adoption by the General Assembly, in June 1986. The review will focus on the economic policy changes undertaken by African Governments and will also spotlight the role of the international community and the United Nations in supporting Africa's recovery and development efforts.

Before closing, I should like to join with those of my colleagues who have expressed caring concern over the human suffering, loss of life and serious damage to property caused by natural disasters in our fellow Member States of Bangladesh, Jamaica and Mexico. Bahamas is encouraged by the wide expressions of sympathy by, and commitments of support received from, the international community. We are hopeful that the support of the international community will assist those Member States in the immense task of their reconstruction.

I conclude by referring to a view which I quoted from a leading national journal of a Member State some years ago. It said:

"... the sad, even bitter, truth is that the United Nations is no longer in the mainstream of world politics".

(Mr. Maynard, Bahamas)

At the time, I stated my opposition to that statement. Years later the United Nations has undeniably vindicated itself.

We owe it to present and future generations to establish a legacy of peace and security, which can be realized only through an effective United Nations.

Mr. SRITHIRATH (Lao People's Democratic Republic) (interpretation from French): On behalf of the delegation of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, I extend to Mr. Dante Caputo sincere congratulations on his election as President of the forty-third session of the General Assembly. I know that his wisdom and competence will enable him to guide the present session to a fruitful conclusion. My delegation also pays a tribute to his predecessor, Comrade Peter Florin, whose talents as a diplomat and dedication to peace and disarmament contributed to the success of the work of the General Assembly during a particularly difficult period.

(Mr. Srithirath, Lao People's  
Democratic Republic)

We should also like to take advantage of this opportunity to reaffirm our confidence in the Secretary-General in carrying out his outstanding role in strengthening peace and co-operation among peoples and his efforts to resolve the very sensitive international problems that have arisen during the past years.

The international situation as a whole has shown signs of improvement. Since the four Soviet-United States Summit Meetings, which made it possible to ratify the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles - INF Treaty - signed in Washington, a new era has opened in the history of international relations. The period of the extended cold war between East and West, characterized by mutual distrust, confrontation and the use of force in the settlement of conflicts is drawing to a close and seems gradually to be giving way to a new era in which the primacy of the principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter, namely, those of dialogue and the settlement of disputes by peaceful means, is reaffirmed.

In the context of the implementation of the provisions of the INF Treaty, a control and verification commission has been established by the two parties, and it is encouraging to note that so far its work has been extremely satisfactory. Our delegation sees in this a commendable effort by all concerned gradually to achieve nuclear disarmament, which, if it is to be effective, requires other more energetic measures which can make a significant contribution to halting the nuclear arms race. In this context, the Lao delegation hopes for a speedy conclusion by the two great Powers of another treaty on a 50 per cent reduction in strategic offensive weapons, thus opening the way to the creation of a new, safer, non-nuclear world, as proposed by the Soviet Union on 15 January 1986 in its programme for the progressive elimination of all nuclear weapons by the end of the century.

(Mr. Srithirath, Lao People's  
Democratic Republic)

The disarmament process is extremely complex. While the danger of nuclear war continues to be the most serious threat to mankind, other categories of weapons of mass destruction also threaten the security of peoples. We are thinking of chemical weapons and, in particular, binary, neutron and radiological weapons. In this regard, it is urgently necessary that greater progress be made in the Conference on Disarmament in working out a convention prohibiting the production and use of such weapons.

It is true that the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, held in New York last June, did not achieve the expected results, because of the lack of political will on the part of certain imperialist Powers. Nevertheless, it provided an opportunity for the international community to become more aware of certain new, positive developments in the world situation and, consequently, to agree to devote greater efforts to achieving the desired objective, namely, general and complete disarmament under effective international control.

The world of today, whether we like it or not, is becoming increasingly interdependent. In the nuclear and space age, security can be conceived only comprehensively, and must be equal for all countries and peoples regardless of their size, their social and economic system and their level of development. It is therefore essential for the international community to contribute actively to exchanges of views and frank and constructive discussions on ways and means to achieve the formulation and establishment of a general system of peace and international security designed to cover the political-military sphere as well as the economic, humanitarian and ecological spheres. The Lao Government reaffirms its full support for both the concept and the effective implementation of that system.

(Mr. Srithirath, Lao People's  
Democratic Republic)

The favourable international climate created by the Soviet-American summit meetings has undoubtedly made a positive contribution to the search for solutions to certain regional conflicts, including some of the most complex of our century. However, obstacles to the equitable settlement of certain other conflicts continue to exist.

In southern Africa, following serious military setbacks in Angola since the beginning of the year, the myth of the military invincibility of the Pretoria Government has become untenable. Faced with such a situation and given the strong pressure being exerted by the international community, South Africa has had to beat a retreat with regard to its criminal policy of apartheid, without, however, renouncing its fundamental desire to persecute the black majority of the South African population, its continued illegal occupation of Namibia, or its acts of aggression and destabilization against independent, sovereign front-line States. Nolens volens, the racist régime has had to agree recently to a series of negotiations with the representatives of Cuba, Angola and the United States aimed at reaching a lasting political solution to the Angolan and Namibian problems. The Lao Government reaffirms its full solidarity with the oppressed peoples of South Africa and Namibia in their heroic struggle under the leadership of their respective national liberation movements to regain their right to self-determination and independence in accordance with the spirit and letter of the relevant United Nations resolutions.

In the Maghreb, a climate of understanding has been established recently, thus opening the way to the settlement of the conflicts in the region. In this context, our delegation welcomes the efforts made by the United Nations Secretary-General, in carrying out his mission of good offices, to achieve a just and final solution

(Mr. Srithirath, Lao People's  
Democratic Republic)

to the problem of Western Sahara. We favour a speedy settlement of this problem, that guarantees the exercise by the people of Western Sahara of its inalienable right to self-determination and independence, in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the United Nations.

In the Indian Ocean region, the imperialist Powers continue to maintain their military presence, thus causing a permanent threat to the independence and security of the coastal and hinterland States. It is essential that in the interest of peace and international co-operation, the International Conference on the Indian Ocean be convened in Colombo at an early date, and in any event not later than 1990, in consultation, as proposed by the General Assembly, with the host country.

(Mr. Srithirath, Lao People's  
Democratic Republic)

In the Middle East, given the policy of oppression and barbaric Zionist aggression, the heroic Palestinian people, both in the occupied territories and outside Palestine, continues to struggle for recognition and the recovery of its fundamental inalienable rights, including that of founding its own State in Palestine. The international community can only welcome the resolutions of the Arab summit meeting held last June in Algiers and its insistence on the need urgently to convene an international conference on peace in the Middle East, with the participation of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) on an equal footing with the other parties involved.

There has been an important new, positive development in the situation in the Persian Gulf, following the establishment of the cease-fire, concluded under the aegis of the United Nations, between Iran and Iraq. Now that prospects for peace seem to be emerging in the region, everything possible should be done to ensure integral implementation of the provisions of Security Council resolution 598 (1988).

The Lao Government and people are gratified by this and consider it an important step towards the definitive cessation of this terrible conflict. They support the sincere and tireless efforts of the United Nations Secretary-General in the search for a just and honourable conclusion to this war, which has lasted too long. Moreover, the Lao delegation calls on the great Powers immediately to put an end to their military presence in the region, a presence which up to now has served only to aggravate the situation. The withdrawal from the Gulf of foreign military forces would in our view create favourable conditions for the integral implementation of Security Council resolution 598 (1988).

(Mr. Srithirath, Lao People's  
Democratic Republic)

In Central America and the Caribbean, the peoples of Nicaragua, Panama, Argentina and other countries are continuing to wage their determined struggle to preserve their independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity and to recover their inalienable rights to self-determination and genuine independence. The Lao Government deems it its duty to support that struggle in order to thwart and stop in time any manoeuvres based on aggression, intimidation, destabilization and sabotage undertaken by the imperialist circles of a certain great Power regarding the regional peace process.

The Lao Government and people welcome and firmly support the tireless efforts of the coastal countries of the Mediterranean to transform this strategic region into a zone of peace, security and co-operation. Thus they are following the development of the situation in Cyprus with concern and sympathy and express their full solidarity with the people and Government of the Republic of Cyprus in the struggle they are waging to preserve their independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity and the non-aligned status of their country, by demanding the immediate cessation of all separatist actions and by actively encouraging the Secretary-General of the United Nations in his mission of good offices in order to achieve a just and lasting solution to the grievous problem of Cyprus.

The international community welcomed with satisfaction and hope the agreements concluded in Geneva on the Afghan problem but for the time being it would seem that its greatest concern is focused on their sincere application by all signatory States. While up to now the Soviet Union and the Republic of Afghanistan have correctly and rigorously applied them, it is regrettable to note that other parties to the agreements have not fully honoured the commitments they have undertaken.

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Democratic Republic)

The international community must therefore encourage and urge them scrupulously and sincerely to carry out those agreements.

A situation of tension still prevails in the region of Asia and the Pacific, because of the neo-globalist policy pursued by an imperialist super-Power. The Lao People's Democratic Republic reaffirms its support for the constructive proposal of the People's Democratic Republic of Korea regarding the gradual reduction of armed forces of the two parts of Korea and opposes any attempt to push through the admission of the two parts of Korea to the United Nations, which would hamper efforts aimed at the peaceful and independent reunification of that country.

Another highly relevant proposal, advocated by the People's Republic of Mongolia, the goal of which is to promote a climate of peace and co-operation in the region, provides for the establishment of a régime of non-use of force in relations among the countries of the region. My Government firmly supports that proposal.

The situation in South-East Asia has developed in accordance with general world trend towards the search for the settlement of conflicts through negotiation. Following the proclamation last year by the Government of the People's Republic of Kampuchea of its policy of national reconciliation, the President of the Council of Ministers, Mr. Hun Sen, and Prince Sihanouk held two series of important talks in Paris. In addition to the informal meeting in Jakarta, Indonesia, Mr. Hun Sen once again put forward on behalf of his Government a seven-point proposal to find a political solution to the Kampuchean problem. That proposal attests to the growing development, maturity and political wisdom of the Government of the People's Republic of Kampuchea. The Lao People's Democratic Republic greatly appreciates the results of that meeting and firmly supports the joint position adopted by the latter, namely, that the problem of Kampuchea

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Democratic Republic)

must be resolved by political means leading to the building of an independent Kampuchea, a sovereign, neutral and non-aligned country, on the basis of national reconciliation and respect for the right to self-determination of the Kampuchean people, and that the withdrawal of Vietnamese troops from Kampuchea must proceed together, with the non-return to power in Kampuchea of the Pol Pot clique, which practises a policy of genocide and with a guarantee of the cessation of foreign interference in the internal affairs of Kampuchea as well as of military assistance to the opposing Kampuchean forces. To move forward the encouraging results of their informal meeting, Mr. Hun Sen and Prince Sihanouk have taken the wise decision to meet again in Paris at the end of this year.

(Mr. Srithirath, Lao People's  
Democratic Republic)

We also welcome the positive initiative recently taken by the current Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement for a technical meeting in Harare to discuss the question of Kampuchea and to establish for that purpose an ad hoc committee of the non-aligned.

The Lao Government is firmly dedicated to the fundamental principle of settling all disputes between States by negotiation. We believe that, on the basis of the Bandung Principles, the 1971 Kuala Lumpur Declaration of the countries of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the seven-point proposal that the Lao delegation put forward at the Jakarta Informal Meeting in July, the countries of the region will be able to consult regularly to bring their points of view closer together and to strengthen mutual understanding, in order to transform South-East Asia into a zone of peace, friendship and co-operation, thus meeting the legitimate aspirations and interests of their respective peoples.

In this context, it is regrettable that the border dispute between my country and Thailand has not yet been resolved. The two rounds of negotiations which took place last March in Bangkok and Vientiane have not yet yielded concrete results. The third round of negotiations could not be held in Thailand because of the recent political crisis in that country. Following general elections, a new Thai Government has been established, and since then exchange visits of delegations at different levels between the two countries have been carried out in a genuine search for better mutual understanding. Given that atmosphere, we believe it is high time for the two countries to open new negotiations, as the Lao side has proposed. The Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic is ready to do everything in its power to settle the border dispute between it and Thailand immediately and finally.

(Mr. Srithirath, Lao People's  
Democratic Republic)

Since the forty-second session of the Assembly the lot of the peoples of the third world has not notably improved. Poverty, hunger, sickness and backwardness are still the daily plight of the great majority of them.

The restrictive macro-economic policy pursued by certain market-economy developed countries has only aggravated the effects of the world economic crisis, and it is the developing countries, particularly the least developed, that have suffered the most. The resurgence of protectionist measures, high interest rates, the deterioration of the terms of trade and the crushing burden of the external debt, which has continued to grow over the years, are all major reasons for the gravity of the situation.

My Government believes that in the struggle to establish a more just and equitable new international economic order the strengthening of collective autonomy must take pride of place. The Lao Government sincerely welcomes the first results of the implementation of the process of co-ordination and harmonization of programmes of action for economic co-operation between the non-aligned countries and the other developing countries. In the light of its growing interest in international co-operation for development, and in order to make its participation in the struggle to establish a new international economic order more effective, the Lao Government recently announced its new economic policy, which includes a law on foreign investments, under which it intends to develop and expand its economic and trade relations with all other countries.

The present session of the General Assembly is taking place in a climate that is both encouraging and alarming. Numerous challenges continue to emerge on the way to a new era of a non-violent world free of nuclear weapons. However, it is encouraging that there is unanimity in the Assembly in favour of peace, thus

(Mr. Srithirath, Lao People's  
Democratic Republic)

attesting to the unquestionable desire of Member States to live in universal understanding and full security. To achieve that objective, and thus meet the legitimate aspirations of the peoples of the world, our Organization must undertake an enormous, complex task which requires of us all a sense of responsibility and common political will. The Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic reaffirms its unswerving dedication to the cause of peace, peaceful coexistence and international co-operation, and will associate itself with the efforts of the international community to attain that common goal.

Mr. RICARDO GARCIA (Dominican Republic) (interpretation from Spanish):

On behalf of the Government of the Dominican Republic and the delegation of which I am Chairman, I have pleasure, Sir, in asking you to convey to Mr. Dante Caputo my sincere congratulations on his election to preside over the General Assembly at its forty-third session. His personal and professional qualities and his dedication to the path of diplomacy augur well for the outcome of the session.

I also congratulate his predecessor, Ambassador Peter Florin, on the exemplary and impeccable way in which he presided over the forty-second session. His work contributed greatly to the Organization's good image.

(Mr. Ricardo Garcia,  
Dominican Republic)

We also wish warmly to congratulate the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, for the successes he has scored thanks to his persistent efforts for international peace and co-operation, efforts that have been widely and fully recognized by all members of this world body. The Nobel Peace Prize given to the peace-keeping forces is the best testimony of what we have just said. The Secretary-General's report on the work of the Organization in addition to being a source of information of incalculable value for us all is a sure guide to follow in the various situations that exist in the interdependent world of today.

As a member of the great Caribbean family I wish also to hail an exceptional Caribbean, the Ambassador of Barbados, Dame Ruth Nita Barrow. Her intelligence and her hard work have earned her the appreciation of the international community represented in this forum, as shown by the support given to her candidacy for the presidency of the General Assembly.

In referring to the Dominican Republic as a member of the great Caribbean family I am highlighting its geographical, political, economic and ethnic facts. For those same reasons, and out of a birthright, we are also part of that great thriving, generous, suffering reality, although a land aware of its effective capabilities, and I am referring to Iberian America.

We hope that our island, as in the past, will be the catalyst in all necessary endeavours to achieve a worthy life, something to which our brothers in the mainland and in the Caribbean archipelago are entitled.

The complete text of my address has been distributed to all delegations and members attending this session of the General Assembly as well as to the various officers of the Secretariat. However, I will now read a summary which contains the

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Dominican Republic)

most salient points which the Dominican delegation wishes to bring to your attention. First I wish to refer to the situation in Haiti, our brother country with which we share geography, economic and social interests, history, culture and hopes. The Haitian people have striven to open up a path to freedom, to the application of human rights and to democracy; but it would be naïve optimism to hope that all traumas and remnants of the oppressive system in existence for so many years and with such deep roots, will disappear from one day to the next. It will take time to root them out definitively.

The situation obtaining in that sister nation is a sensitive one and the international community should lend generous and understanding assistance, not as charity but as investment in a people which was the first to become independent in the continent colonized by Spain and which has maintained its independence despite all difficulties. The Dominican Republic has received some Haitian leaders as guests. These were human beings who feared for their lives, rightly or not; this was above all a humanitarian action. This act of generosity is in keeping with the ethics of the Dominican people. Some groups in my country have criticized this action as if generosity should follow the concepts of discrimination or should be guided by political motivations. It is better that one hundred guilty parties go free than that one innocent person be condemned. The Dominican Government will continue to honour that precept, because to offer asylum on a discriminatory basis would be to violate the honour of our people and one of the most sacred principles of the Ibero-American system.

Last year we stated:

"Peace is not merely the absence of war or peace imposed by a superior force." (A/42/PV.18, p. 3)

(Mr. Ricardo Garcia,  
Dominican Republic)

Today we say that peace should not be the outcome of a balance of forces, of the so-called forces of deterrence. An error of judgement, a mechanical failure or action in bad faith could bring about an outbreak leading to a final destruction that would spare neither the developed nor the developing countries.

We consider that the agreement reached between the two super-Powers on the elimination of intermediate-range missiles is a positive step for world peace. The Dominican Republic congratulates the United States and the Soviet Union on this important agreement and trusts that the action which has begun after lengthy conversations will not be interrupted.

The Dominican Republic reaffirms that maintaining peace and the principle of non-intervention are the unvarying standards of its foreign policy.

For the Dominican Republic the United Nations is the appropriate, irreplaceable forum in which to debate the major problems facing the world today. We believe that it is neither wise nor in order to propose other forums or the creation of new organizations to discuss matters of world peace.

In the list of items to be discussed in this speech we would like to refer first to drugs, since my delegation considers the drug problem to be one of the major scourges of our respective nations. Drugs are a real and growing threat to all mankind. Every effort must be brought to bear and the various organizations fighting this scourge must unite under leadership that would avoid duplication and wasted effort. We also believe that the fight against drugs must begin in those places where the raw material is produced. To that end, however, imaginative procedures must be used which go beyond the borders of the developing countries where the farmer, frustrated and ruined by the low prices of his commodities on international markets, proceeds to sow marijuana and coca which are more

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Dominican Republic)

profitable. It is the protectionist measures which establish quotas and prices that have taken traditional crops out and geared action towards the attractive and profitable crop of coca leaves.

Owing to the characteristics of its social components the Dominican Republic rejects every form of discrimination, be it racial, apartheid, political or religious. Such discrimination runs counter to every ethical concept. That is why the item on South Africa has continued to appear on the agenda of this great forum and will remain there until that country changes its behaviour.

(Mr. Ricardo Garcia,  
Dominican Republic)

In our view, external debt poses a great challenge to the Governments of developing countries; it is a shadow that follows us in all we do, both on the international scene and domestically. Because of its economic, social and political consequences, the level of indebtedness of developing countries is an urgent and complex problem. It grows worse given external factors weighing heavily on the debt of developing countries. These include interest-rate fluctuations, unstable floating exchange rates and action by industrialized countries to maintain their protectionist measures.

To ease the debt problem, some industrialized countries should promote a reduction in their real interest rates, even though to do this they will have to reduce their excessive budget deficits. International banking could contribute to the solution of this pressing problem by reducing loan margins, especially for countries in the midst of an adjustment process.

Efforts by lending institutions are limited to viewing the situation from the monetary and economic point of view; rather than helping, their measures merely contribute to unemployment, shrinking real income and deteriorating public services: in short, to plummeting standards of living for the lowest-income and therefore neediest groups. During this crisis, lending institutions must maintain a positive net flow of resources towards our countries. Otherwise debt servicing to those institutions will be nearly impossible to carry.

The debt problem is not the sole responsibility of the debtor countries. The responsibility is shared variously among the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, the Governments of creditor countries, the Governments of debtor nations, private and public debtor institutions and, very important, the policy of expanding credit promoted by the big banks until 1981.

(Mr. Ricardo Garcia,  
Dominican Republic)

To emerge from the international debt crisis, the industrialized nations must agree to share fairly in the adjustment efforts and sacrifices we in the developing countries are carrying out. Their greater economic power obligates them to join in this task, from which we shall all benefit.

Let me refer again to the protectionist policies of developed countries. Free and vigorous world trade is indispensable for the well-being of the international economy. Every protectionist measure drives us further from such trade.

Notwithstanding the great trials it has had to go through, and thanks to the work of one of the greatest statesmen in the Americas, Mr. Joaquin Balaguer, the Dominican Republic is growing, using its own resources and with a very small external debt and a policy of absolute probity in the use of public resources. Only a man like President Balaguer could have achieved this feat while maintaining the climate of political, social and economic stability enjoyed by Dominican society.

With respect to foreign policy, we have from the very outset supported all efforts to end the conflict in Central America, and we shall support all future efforts. We firmly believe that dialogue among the parties, free from selfish intervention by third parties, is the best way to resolve situations that could develop into conflicts.

For that reason we opened our doors this year to the parties to the conflict in Nicaragua so they could speak freely, protected by Dominican impartiality. Our sole interest in Central America is the achievement of peace among brothers, with all its attendant benefits.

(Mr. Ricardo Garcia,  
Dominican Republic)

In the Dominican Republic all ideas - political, religious or connected with any other school of thought - can be expressed freely and without constraints. That is because ideological pluralism is the norm in Dominican political life. We therefore call for better political will to reach accord and to enable us to move forward with programmes of action already agreed upon to strengthen peace.

In the Korean peninsula there have been encouraging steps towards better understanding between two countries with a common origin and language and a shared history and culture.

We hope that an independent Namibia will shortly join our Organization.

The situation in the Middle East is very close to us as Dominicans, because in our ethnic makeup there are major components of Arab and Jewish culture and blood. We maintain a steadfast friendship with the family roots of the branches that flourish on our soil, and we hope dialogue will take the place of terrorist attacks in that part of the world.

I regret I cannot refer in this statement to all the issues worthy of attention from the nations represented here. But I cannot omit a brief reference to the situation in my country in the political and social realms, a situation founded on the institutional and democratic process that began in the early 1960s when the Dominican Republic began a fresh period in its history as a republic.

The road has been long and tortuous, but we are now setting an example of stability and substantial progress towards the final consolidation of a rule of law that will guarantee the survival of our institutions and civilized coexistence among all Dominicans, with absolute respect for individual rights and total loyalty to the independence of State institutions.

(Mr. Ricardo Garcia,  
Dominican Republic)

Today, the Dominican Republic is an example in the Americas of stability and democracy, notwithstanding the harsh economic pressure to which all third-world nations are subject. All this has been possible thanks to steadfast efforts by a leader who has been able to combine the solution of our local problems with fulfilment of the State's commitments. He understands and has repeatedly stated that we have a duty and an obligation to honour our debts, but not at the sacrifice of resources needed for the growth and development of the Dominican people.

(Mr. Ricardo Garcia,  
Dominican Republic)

In the Dominican Republic, the cradle of Spanish activities in the new world, there is absolute respect for human rights and, from the pinnacles of power, the independence of the institutions of the State is maintained as an inviolable norm. That is a reality which only those confused by the promptings of their conscience could deny or call into question.

In my country there is not a single political prisoner: justice acts with absolute independence and the free exercise of political pluralism is increasingly widespread and established.

What we have said is a fact that neither our nationals nor foreigners can deny without a breach of the truth. What we are referring to is an achievement which is a source of pride to us and for which we Dominicans feel religious respect, because we have learned that this is a source of social well-being and harmony for our fellow citizens. We say this because we understand that, as was said by His Holiness Pope John Paul II in his address in the Holy See to the diplomatic corps in 1988:

"Lasting peace is that which ensures that social injustices do not occur."

This is what we Dominicans believe and this is the spirit which the delegation I have the honour to head is bringing to this gathering on behalf of the Government and people of the Dominican Republic.

The meeting rose at 11.35 a.m.