



# General Assembly

PROVISIONAL

A/43/PV. 30  
14 October 1988

ENGLISH

Forty-third session

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE THIRTIETH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,  
on Thursday, 13 October 1988, at 10 a.m.

President:

later:

later:

later:

later:

Mr. CAPUTO

Mr. DLAMINI (Vice-President)

Mr. ACEVEDO PERALTA (Vice-President)

Mr. DLAMINI (Vice-President)

Mr. CAPUTO (President)

(Argentina)

(Swaziland)

(El Salvador)

(Swaziland)

(Argentina)

- General debate [9] (continued)

Statements made by:

Mr. Acevedo Peralta (El Salvador)

Mr. Basdeo (Trinidad and Tobago)

Mr. Gurinovich (Byelorussian SSR)

Mr. Mwananshiku (Zambia)

Mr. Borg Olivier (Malta)

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

AGENDA ITEM 9 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. ACEVEDO PERALTA (El Salvador) (interpretation from Spanish):

Mr. President, may I first congratulate you on your well-deserved election, which indeed guarantees the effectiveness of the work of the forty-third session of the General Assembly and which is a great honour for Argentina, a country with which we are united by ties of friendship and solidarity. We are certain that your outstanding personal qualifications and keen understanding of Latin American and world problems will lead to success in the work of the Assembly in its quest for concrete solutions at all levels of international life, which is today more than ever before filled with challenges, hopes and new ideals.

I am also very pleased to greet Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar, under whose leadership the United Nations has indeed demonstrated its ability to deal with very important international problems with regard to the maintenance of peace and security. I take special pride in congratulating him on the recent award of the Nobel Peace Prize to a courageous group of men devoted to peace who work within the structure of the Organization. Central America - which was similarly honoured last year when the Prize was awarded to a great Central American, a keen advocate of similar ideals, Mr. Oscar Arias Sanchez, President of the sister Republic of Costa Rica - wishes today to pay a well-deserved tribute to these dedicated guardians of peace.

El Salvador has done its part. When in 1984 José Napoleon Duarte, the first freely elected President of El Salvador in more than 50 years took office, my Government set for itself a very clear and precise goal: to establish democracy in the country as the basis and the principle for the long journey towards peace,

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reconciliation and social justice. Almost five years later, in the final stages of a convulsive and difficult constitutional exercise of titanic dimensions, we can say with dignity: mission accomplished. This is because the dynamic democratic process the Government of El Salvador initiated is of great historical significance, since it brought about opportunities for action which had never before had been able to develop. This progress is part of our national task in all its aspects; it is a viable component of the strengthening of our free, pluralistic and participatory society - the society most Salvadorians desire.

The hard work and will of a visionary statesman, José Napoleon Duarte, President of the Republic - whose mandate is to end on 1 June 1989 - must be emphasized. I wish to refer to him not only as a statesman but also as a man who is at this time undergoing great personal trial and tribulation.

President Duarte took on the responsibility of leading El Salvador in full awareness of the problems and sacrifices this entailed at a crucial stage of our history characterized by political repression and social upheaval. This was a formidable challenge, but he has faced up to it without respite, deeply committed to his Christian convictions and principles. Since then he has devoted all his energies towards completing the mission he undertook, despite the most varied difficulties and cruel vicissitudes.

The philosophy and plan of action of this man of unflinching will is and will be in the future of El Salvador the only practical way in which to develop a new country, a country whose image has largely been formed as one of a struggling people aware of its historical commitment to achieve its own ideals. Thus, President Duarte outlined the plan that will bring El Salvador out of its former stage of backwardness and alienation into an era of democratization, participation,

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pacification, humanization, economic revitalization and internationalization of dialogue, not of conflict.

Those are the moving forces, the ideas and the strengths that will continue to prevail until the final consolidation of the political landscape in El Salvador. The praxis of this programme is a unique challenge, because the application of these principles requires overcoming the forces of the extreme right and the extreme left while keeping a precarious centrist balance - what the President has termed, "treading the cutting edge of the blade or walking along the edge of a precipice".

This is Duarte's contribution at this most difficult juncture for our country. This is the challenge; this is the philosophy we must promote in the midst of misunderstanding and external aggression. To democratize a society enmeshed in a crisis with so many components and variables is indeed a formidable task.

But matters are now in the hands of the Almighty, a President and his courage, a people and a Government which have closed ranks in order to ensure the application of those principles. A great deal remains to be done, but what has been done with regard to each and every one of these principles has in sum yielded an outstanding result: democracy, freedom and participation in a true social and humanistic context. This is a concrete legacy, a legacy of hope which impels us to continue to work with the same strength as our President. No doubt, in retrospect we see misunderstanding and destruction; and when we look closer we see a narrow and difficult path; but when we look ahead we see the light at the end of the tunnel.

This forum - whose main task is the search for international peace and security - is the appropriate forum from which to draw attention to the situation

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in my country and in Central America in general. In both cases there is a need for broad understanding of the efforts to regain the path of democracy as a way of life and a system of government in which there is plurality of interests in an open society that tolerates differences and promotes fundamental freedoms and the values essential to human dignity.

Therefore, this forum must, as it has always done, firmly reject anti-democratic theses based on violence and terrorism and reaffirm the principles of non-intervention and self-determination, co-operation and respect for the expression of the popular will in the establishment of a Government clearly separate from the army, the product of free elections with the participation of all political and ideological groups. We believe that only tolerance and the rule of law can contribute to lasting peace and security for all.

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In this context and within the framework of these principles, which are basic to this august institution, the United Nations, I must, in all fairness, repeat that the Government of El Salvador has endorsed the option which allows and promotes political, economic and social democracy, respect for human rights, both of the individual and of society, and the broadest possible measure of freedom of expression and criticism for all political groups.

May I be permitted at this point to make a necessary and timely distinction with regard to the context in which the problem of Salvador is taking place. There are two systems at the present time. One is the institutional system, established on the basis of the freely expressed will of our people and embodied in a legitimate government. The other system, imposed from outside through Cuba and Nicaragua, has given rise to a conflict which has completely lost its legitimacy, as the candidate from Democratic Convergence for the presidency of the Republic, Dr. Guillermo Manuel Ungo, who is from the FDR, recently stated. The fact is that the conflict is obsolete: it is a belated interventionist strategy advocated by the international enemies of democracy.

In the same connection we must now distinguish between this problem and the treatment of the problem of human rights. In this context we see, first, an institutional area in which human rights and respect for them are treated in a normal way. They are part of the day-to-day activities of the government at the social level. Here we must recognize that the democracy to which I have just referred - free elections, the return and resettlement of refugees, the fullest possible measure of freedom, the broadest and most generous amnesty - all represent undeniable progress on the part of the Government of El Salvador.

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In the other context, that of the conflict that has been imposed, the problems which arise with regard to human rights, while they can be controlled through government action, as indeed has been done in the vast majority of cases, we must consider that in order to eliminate them, we must first remove their cause, which is the conflict itself. Secondly, we must also consider that in this field the most serious problems are brought about by the blind terrorist groups of the FMLN/FDR.

We therefore insist that terrorism and subversion are not an option for the Salvadorian people or for the international community. This has been shown by the political events that took place in March of this year, events in which the Salvadorian people participated and which were witnessed by more than 200 international observers, who confirmed that a pluralist democracy had indeed been established in El Salvador. The people expressed its views freely on 20 March and elected its deputies to the National Legislative Assembly and the municipal councils. The results of the vote favoured the political opposition. That event no doubt constitutes the strongest rejection of violence and is confirmation that most Salvadorians believe in the vote as the only way to obtain public power.

With regard to dialogue and peace, our determination to seek peace has been evident in our government activity since 8 October 1984, when President Duarte, speaking before this General Assembly, took the initiative in instituting a dialogue for peace. It was thus that on 15 October 1984, four years ago, in the city of La Palma, the first meeting took place with representatives of the FMLN/FDR groups.

Ever since then the path we have followed has gone through Ayagualo, Sesori and, finally, after many other dialogues, San Salvador in 1987, in the context of the Guatemala agreement, known under the name of Esquipulas II. Unfortunately, the

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strategic or tactical lack of understanding on the part of FMLN/FDR has impeded the incorporation of these groups, in their entirety, into the democratic process. However, as the undeniable result of this effort, we can now see that what was formerly a guerrilla band has now been reduced to a group of recalcitrant terrorists helplessly constrained by its very commitment, whose threatened violence even keeps its own comrades from joining in the institutional process.

Actually, the way towards the attainment of peace has been extremely difficult since we cannot compromise when it comes to the lofty values of freedom, democracy and the very institutionalization of the Republic. No doubt, the conflict has had implications in the economic and social spheres. Its consequences have been felt in that it has not been possible to offer the nation better living conditions. It is true that the people of El Salvador have suffered the loss of their property, which was systematically destroyed by the FMNL/FDR. This has resulted in suffering and poverty, and is a clear and obvious violation of the civil and social rights of the Salvadorian people.

We can say that in El Salvador there is a widespread feeling that action should be taken to ensure respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms; but in a form consistent with the circumstances, the right to self-defence is also allowed within the appropriate channels of a legal order to counteract terrorist action and the violence of the extremist groups.

The democratic process has established areas in which everyone can express himself and criticize as he wishes, without, however, exceeding the legal limits, since respect for these limits and for order are essential conditions of democratic life.



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The Government of El Salvador wishes to express its firm resolve to continue to strengthen democracy in which all participate. In this context the leaders of the FDR, together with the FMLN began to return to the country in November 1987, as the result of a general state of amnesty. Their incorporation into political activity is an established fact. They have enrolled in the national voters registry and they have announced that they will take part in the presidential elections of 1989 under the name of "Convergencia Democratica" - Democratic Convergence. Although the FDR, the political arm of the FMLN, still states that there is no democratic process, they fear fanatic reprisals from their own allies. The fact is, however, that their incorporation into the electoral process means that there is an obvious recognition on their part of our process toward democracy.

The agreement entitled "Procedure for the Establishment of a Firm and Lasting Peace in Central America", known as Esquipulas II, has not lost its meaning, because the spirit of peace contained therein lives on, and it was the Central Americans themselves, through their Presidents, gathered in Costa Rica on 16 January 1988, who confirmed the value and importance of that agreement, as well as their commitment to its implementation. Similarly, the General Assembly, in its resolution 42/1, expresses its firmest support for the agreement and requests the Secretary-General to afford the fullest support to the Central American Governments in their effort to achieve peace.

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El Salvador)

The quest for peace in Central America is a historic endeavour for El Salvador, and in this context, and within the framework of this session of the General Assembly, we have continued to pursue initiatives to follow up with meetings of foreign ministers first, and then meetings of presidents, which are to take place within the next few days.\*

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

(Mr. Acevedo Peralta, El Salvador)

The agenda that we shall discuss will include items on amnesty, dialogue, democracy and freedom, refugees, human rights and a Central American Parliament. In this review all countries will be shown to have assets and liabilities in terms of compliance, but, regrettably, it must be said that one of them, Nicaragua, despite its efforts, whether serious or not, will have a greater debit balance. The Sandinist Government, reverting to situations that existed prior to the Guatemala agreement, continues, unfortunately, to violate the most elementary freedoms and civil rights. It persecutes and imprisons politicians and activists, represses public manifestations and closes channels of expression. The Sandinist Government has not even made the required clear and definite public statement of a total break, with the armed subversion in El Salvador, which is a clear commitment under the Esquipulas II agreement.

The link between the Sandinist Government and the FMLN is not only at odds with prevailing circumstances in El Salvador, but also totally incompatible with the letter and the spirit of Esquipulas II. Furthermore, the system which the Sandinist Government is trying to consolidate has been shown to be inappropriate at a time when everyone is trying to arrive at formulas of freedom and understanding far removed from totalitarian, oppressive and expansionist systems. Very few are going against the tide of history. We urge the Sandinist Government to reconsider and to join at this time with the world and Central America and no longer to obstruct the co-operation that now may lead to more concrete freedoms in the region, co-operation which the Government and the people of Nicaragua need.

El Salvador has done its part. Esquipulas II has led to the successful implementation of important decisions in the country on, among other things, national reconciliation through the broadest measure of amnesty ever known in the country, the massive repatriation of Salvadorian refugees, and regional co-operation expressed in the Central American Parliament, which has been endorsed

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by our Assembly with a view to eventual, but certain, regional integration, which will have to be based on democratic and pluralistic principles.

The tragedy of Central America must be ended through global and regional solutions leading to a strengthening of peace and the restoration of security, recognition of democracy as the legitimate means of acquiring power, and rejection of all violence, totalitarianism and confrontation.

This entire regional process must be credible. Thus, El Salvador is proposing the establishment of a verification and follow-up commission at the political level to supervise in the various countries of the area the existence and validity of a true pluralistic, participatory democracy that broadly respects all individual, social, political and economic rights; the holding of truly free elections; and strict observance of human rights. We are proposing a commission linked to the executive commission of Esquipulas II, which may at its discretion visit the territory of the five countries to observe and determine compliance with these democratic commitments, which form the basic framework for real peace.

Regarding the organization and financing of this commission, it would be made up of five Central Americans designated by the executive commission of Esquipulas II, and would have the necessary assistance of the international community in securing the appropriate technical and financial backing. We Central Americans must accept the commission courageously as a challenge for our future, which will be all the stronger and more vigorous for being based on the concept of a true democratic structure.

This idea of the commission for democracy, far from being contrary to international law, had already been suggested in similar terms within the framework of the draft Contadora Act on Peace and Co-operation in Central America. Therefore it already had the support of the Latin American group and all nations that supported the draft. We certainly view with interest the suggestion by Honduras

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about establishing a security commission, which was also considered in the Contadora context. We believe, however, that peace and security in Central America can be achieved only through the radical and essential functioning of regional democracy.

El Salvador has done its part. What we have been able to do, guided by the far-sightedness of President Duarte, we have done and gone beyond; what has been beyond our ability and capacity, such as dealing with the effects of irrational conflict imposed from the outside, we have not been able to do, because the solution to this problem, unfortunately, does not depend solely on us; it depends on extraneous factors which violate the sacred principles that govern international coexistence and in which El Salvador firmly believes. These are the principles of non-intervention, non-interference, self-determination, good faith, loyal compliance with international commitments, and the consistent recourse to peaceful means of settling disputes.

Esquipulas II appeals to countries not to support insurgency or armed subversion in El Salvador or in Central America in general. Today, I reiterate that appeal most strongly from this forum of peace, so that our democracy, free from interference, may bear fruit.

We reiterate our call for development, peace and democracy. Co-operation must be directed especially to the less favoured countries. This entails the provision of financial, technical and human resources, because inequality and poverty are certainly hindrances to the permanent maintenance of international peace and stability. It is therefore urgently necessary that one of the most pressing problems in international economic relations between North and South - that is, the foreign debt - be tackled with justice and realism and without delay by creating

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mechanisms to establish the shared responsibilities of creditors and debtors and the link between this problem and international trade.

We appreciate the co-operation we have received in El Salvador and in Central America and the welcome intention of various countries and international organizations to continue to co-operate. In this connection, I reiterate the appeal in Esquipulas II to the international community to continue with urgency and determination to assist the region in its struggle to eliminate the deep structural causes of the conflict and to bring about the desired comprehensive development of its societies, while understanding that democracy and peace cannot be consolidated without a policy of sustained growth.

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El Salvador)

This effort is all-inclusive, and in the task of achieving the ideals of stability there are no priorities. All actions geared to the attainment of these objectives must run simultaneously and in parallel, so that if we wish to have democracy and peace we must also have development, to overcome poverty and backwardness. A colleague of mine has said that support should not wait for peace, because such support is needed to open up the road to peace.

In 1987 the General Assembly adopted resolution 42/1, on the situation in Central America, and resolution 42/204, on special economic assistance to Central America. In this context the Secretary-General submitted to the Assembly a report (A/42/949) containing a plan, which was prepared with the participation of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA). El Salvador welcomes these expressions of support and urges the international community of donors to adhere to the plan, which is of immediate need for the region.

Against that background, may I state, with regard to the tragedy of the Salvadorian refugees, that the Government has devoted important resources to their return to the country, in keeping with the principles of humanitarian international law and internal legal norms. More than 8,000 Salvadorians have returned to their country since October 1987 from camps on Honduran territory, which shows that there are indeed encouraging signs of development, peace and democracy in the country which have encouraged them to return.

El Salvador considers it necessary to convene the proposed international conference on Central American refugees and expresses its strong support for that conference. In this context we welcome the results of the San Salvador Declaration, in which the Central American countries and Mexico, with the valuable co-operation of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), within

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an apolitical and strictly humanitarian framework, decided that that international conference should be convened at the highest level and be held in the city of Guatemala in May 1989.

El Salvador wishes to thank the international community and the friendly countries which have shown special concern over this humanitarian question and have offered immediate help and co-operation. We commend the work done by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and we especially agree with the terms of the letter recently addressed by the High Commissioner to President Duarte, recognizing his exemplary attention to this delicate and sensitive problem, which has been addressed exceptionally and with dedication by the Government of El Salvador, as the High Commissioner has stated.

Democracy, peace and development - that is the triptych of principles which will lead us to regional integration, that being the only politically valid, stable solution to the problems of the isthmus. Only a strong Central America, united in democracy and progress, will provide a sufficient guarantee of subregional stability in a world which is becoming increasingly free and pluralistic and which, fortunately, is overcoming the stages of confrontation through dialogue, understanding and the requirement of plans of action oriented towards gradual universal integration in which technology and science would serve as the binding and motivating element.

This year, in which El Salvador was elected by an overwhelming majority to be the seat of the eighteenth General Assembly of the Organization of American States (OAS) as a gesture of continued support for the sacrifices of its people and Government to achieve democracy, we welcome the presentation to this session of the Secretary-General's report on the item entitled, "Co-operation between the United Nations and the Organization of American States", which is evidence of world



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solidarity. Our common universal objectives make it imperative for us to work together and, I repeat, we welcome this with great hopes.

El Salvador considers that peace and efforts to guarantee peace continue to be threatened in South Africa by the policy of racial discrimination practised by the South African Government. We also share in the wish for the adoption of a realistic solution for peace between Iraq and Iran. We continue to be concerned over the situation in Lebanon. We condemn the occupation of Kampuchea by foreign troops and we express the wish that there should be a progressive withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan. We support the strategy of the Republic of Korea, in the framework of its initiative towards reconciliation, co-operation and national reconciliation through dialogue and its wish to become a fully-fledged Member of the United Nations

El Salvador has played its part. My Government welcomes and views with hope the progress and the achievements of this Organization and the international community towards consolidating democracy, peace and co-operation throughout the world on the basis of transnational agreements. Six months before the ending of the constitutional Government of President Duarte, after four and a half years of severe tests and enormous work, our commitments have been strengthened to the point where there is an awareness among all of the vital sectors of the country - the armed forces, the private sector, social and cultural organizations and so on - that it is no longer possible to go back. That is our destiny and our conviction. Democracy has been won. We now await peace and we will achieve peace through democracy, in the certainty that the vast majority of the peoples and the Governments represented in this Assembly stand with us in this endeavour.

Mr. BASDEO (Trinidad and Tobago): It is indeed a pleasure and an honour for me to convey to Mr. Dante Caputo, on behalf of the Government and people of Trinidad and Tobago, our sincere congratulations on his election as President of this forty-third session of the General Assembly. In the light of the political and diplomatic experience which he brings to this office, we are assured that the deliberations of the Assembly will be conducted in a manner that will redound to the credit of his own country, Argentina, as well as to our region of Latin America and the Caribbean.

It is also with considerable pleasure that I commend his predecessor, Mr. Peter Florin of the German Democratic Republic, for the efficient manner in which he persided over the forty-second session of the General Assembly and the third special session of the Assembly devoted to disarmament.

Trinidad and Tobago fully shares the view which the President of the Assembly recently expressed on the role of the United Nations as an instrument of survival for the small and medium-sized countries of the world. For that reason, we attach a very special significance to our membership in the United Nations. We remain firmly committed to the purposes and principles of the Charter. Indeed, we steadfastly believe in the sovereign equality of all States, in the peaceful settlement of international disputes, in respect for human rights, and in international co-operation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural or humanitarian character.

(Mr. Basdeo, Trinidad  
and Tobago)

We acknowledge that the Organization has not always lived up to the expectations which we harboured when Trinidad and Tobago joined the United Nations 25 years ago. Its role, clearly identified by the founding fathers in 1945, as the guardian of international peace and security and as the conscience of mankind has not always been fulfilled.

However, there is a mood of optimism which suggests that 1988 may well be recorded as the year in which the international community rediscovered the potential of the United Nations for solving seemingly intractable problems. The recent award of the 1988 Nobel Peace Prize to the United Nations peace-keeping forces bears ample testimony to this resurgence of faith in the ability of the Organization to achieve its objectives.

Trinidad and Tobago salutes the important contribution made by the super-Powers in lessening international tensions. It also highly commends the work of our Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, whose indefatigable efforts in the cause of peace have contributed to, and continue to influence positively, the current international climate.

In this regard, I wish to allude to the signing of the Geneva Accords in April, which was achieved through the good offices of our Secretary-General and, in particular, the tireless efforts of Mr. Diego Cordovez, the former Under-Secretary-General for Special Political Affairs. We welcome most whole-heartedly the successful outcome of those negotiations between the United States, the Soviet Union, Pakistan and Afghanistan, which has now set the stage for the resolution of the situation in Afghanistan. My Government wishes to place on record its appreciation of Mr. Diego Cordovez's services to the cause of international peace and security and to extend to him our congratulations and best wishes on his appointment as Foreign Minister of Ecuador. Lest his efforts be

(Mr. Basdeo, Trinidad  
and Tobago)

wasted, we urge the parties to the Accords to respect their terms and the spirit in which they have been agreed, so as to facilitate the work of the United Nations Good Offices Mission for Afghanistan.

Yet another event which has given us cause for optimism is the recently concluded cease-fire agreement in the Iraq-Iran war. The Secretary-General is to be complimented on his success in achieving this first step in what is likely to be a long and difficult road to a final settlement. My delegation assures the Secretary-General of its complete support in his efforts to implement Security Council resolution 598 (1987), and takes the opportunity to urge both parties to do all that is possible to arrive at a permanent peace settlement.

Further, in Western Sahara the Secretary-General's mediation efforts, conducted jointly with the Chairman of the Organization of African Unity, aimed at ending the war between the Kingdom of Morocco and the POLISARIO Front, appear to be bearing fruit. The recent agreement in principle between the disputants on a United Nations peace plan, which provides for a cease-fire, the deployment of United Nations peace-keeping forces and the conducting of a referendum on the future status of the Territory, is most encouraging. The Government of Trinidad and Tobago will continue to support this peace process, which should result in the just and permanent resolution of the Western Sahara conflict.\*

These successes represent signs of encouragement for the peaceful settlement of disputes and generate an element of hope and optimism about the willingness of nations to co-operate in the resolution of their problems. Small States in particular welcome these developments, since invariably such States stand to benefit greatly from an improved international climate.

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\* Mr. Acevedo Peralta (El Salvador), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Basdeo, Trinidad  
and Tobago)

But, while in these instances we have cause to rejoice, the situation elsewhere is far from comforting. The disturbances in the Israeli-occupied territories have exposed the inevitability of change, as millions of Palestinians continue to be deprived of their basic human rights. We in Trinidad and Tobago strongly support the proposal for an international conference on peace in the Middle East, and feel that the terms of any settlement to emerge from such a conference should include a clear recognition of the right of all States to exist within secure and recognized boundaries, and the guarantee of a homeland for the Palestinian people.

The problems posed by the racist régime in Pretoria continue to plague the lives of millions of black people in southern Africa. There the white minority seeks to perpetuate its virtual enslavement of the black majority by banning and imprisoning its leaders, incarcerating children and denying fundamental human rights on the basis of race and colour of skin. For us in Trinidad and Tobago, 1 August 1988 brought poignant memories of the inhumanity of slavery, for we commemorated on that day the 150th anniversary of the emancipation of the slaves in the English-speaking Caribbean. As members of the Organization and of the world community, we cannot consider ourselves to have been truly emancipated so long as the black majority in South Africa is enslaved in the name of an obscure and discredited concept of ethnic superiority. For this reason, the delegation of Trinidad and Tobago once more calls upon the international community to bring about a speedy end to the odious system of apartheid by the imposition of a comprehensive régime of mandatory sanctions.

Trinidad and Tobago is encouraged by recent indications that implementation of Security Council resolution 435 (1978), on independence for Namibia, may be imminent. However, the international community has too often witnessed the

(Mr. Basdeo, Trinidad  
and Tobago)

machinations of the Pretoria régime. We therefore view this development with guarded optimism, for we are painfully aware that many details of the process of withdrawal of armed forces from Namibia and preparations for the holding of elections in that Territory are still to be worked out. Many opportunities exist, therefore, for the South Africans to derail the process of implementation at any time. Trinidad and Tobago attaches great importance to the question of Namibia and will be paying close attention to progress in implementing the Security Council decision on the matter. We would like to think that at the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly we shall have the opportunity to join others in supporting the admission of a free and independent Namibia to this world body.

Trinidad and Tobago recognizes the limited progress made in respect of the problems related to Kampuchea and Cyprus, and we hope that the new initiatives being taken at the present time by the parties concerned will lead to a peaceful resolution of these outstanding issues.

In like manner, my delegation has noted with some satisfaction that positive efforts are being made by both parties to bring about a settlement of the Korean problem through dialogue and negotiation. It is our fervent wish that this process will result in the resolution of the problem in accordance with the hopes and aspirations of the peoples of the Korean peninsula.

(Mr. Basdeo, Trinidad and Tobago)

Coming nearer to home, my delegation notes with regret that progress towards peace in Central America has slowed down somewhat during the past year. The delegation of Trinidad and Tobago is firmly of the view that the spirit of co-operation that resulted in the Contadora initiatives and, more recently, in the Arias plan and Esquipulas II is a demonstration of the ability of the peoples of Latin America to devise appropriate solutions to their problems. We believe that progress towards peace can be achieved only where mutual trust and understanding prevail. We would therefore urge the countries of the region to work assiduously to create those conditions in their continuing search for a negotiated and lasting solution.

In this nuclear age, in which man possesses the capacity to obliterate life and civilization as we know it with his own weapons, the issue of nuclear disarmament will continue to be a major source of concern to all mankind, and rightly so. During the past year action in this critical area of international relations has produced decidedly mixed results.

In many respects arms reduction and arms control are a litmus test, not only of bilateral relations between the two major nuclear Powers, but also of the present state of multilateralism. The signing and subsequent ratification of the Treaty between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States of America on the Elimination of Their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles - the INF Treaty - were encouraging developments which, it was hoped, would have had beneficial effects on both bilateral and multilateral negotiations on disarmament.

Unfortunately, such has not been the case. The initial optimism brought about by the resumption of negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union on the reduction of their strategic arsenals has waned. Problems concerning verification procedures and differences over "Star Wars" testing still exist.

(Mr. Basdeo, Trinidad and Tobago)

In like manner, the high hopes invested in the success of the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament ran afoul of unresolved political differences. The States Members of the United Nations failed to agree on the content of a declaration outlining a new programme for global disarmament.

It is also a source of deep regret to my Government that, 25 years after the signing of the Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and under Water, the international community has not yet succeeded in reaching agreement on a comprehensive test-ban treaty. We continue to believe that such an agreement could be achieved if the requisite political will were to be displayed. In addition to curbing the qualitative spiral of the arms race, the delegation of Trinidad and Tobago believes that a test-ban treaty would have an incalculably advantageous effect on both bilateral and multilateral disarmament negotiations.

Halting and reversing the nuclear-arms race should not prevent us from focusing greater attention on the issue of conventional weapons. These have become more sophisticated, more devastating, and certainly more costly. Their use in the developing regions of the world since the end of the Second World War has brought untold misery, destruction and death. Their procurement has burdened, and continues to burden, too many economies in the developing world.

There is increasing awareness today that the accumulation of weapons, nuclear or conventional, does not guarantee security and that greater importance must be attached to social, economic, environmental and other factors that have hitherto been neglected. Is it not paradoxical that, despite this, we continue to squander stupendous amounts of financial, material and human resources on the development and acquisition of armaments?

This waste of resources is all the more deplorable when sickness, starvation, malnutrition and deprivation are still the daily lot of a large percentage of the



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world's population. It is the firm belief of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago that if only a fraction of the resources frittered away on armaments were to be devoted to developmental activities, it would result in a tangible improvement in the living standards of that vast proportion of humanity whose basic needs for food, shelter and health care remain unfulfilled.

Many speakers from this very rostrum have reminded the Assembly of the dismal economic performance of the developing countries. That issue is of particular importance to Trinidad and Tobago, which, like most other developing countries, is now threatened by rising levels of unemployment, falling export revenues, low commodity prices, and spiralling external debt. It is clear that in this decade the momentum of development achieved in previous decades by the countries of the South has been reversed. A great deal of the regression - and certainly of the stagnation - we have endured can be attributed to an international economic system that has not supported our efforts and that, at times, has even been openly hostile.

In response, developing countries are now implementing structural-adjustment programmes with the objective of reviving their flagging economies through the rationalization of their economic structure. The individual and collective experiences of our countries have demonstrated that this process of structural adjustment is painful and, at best, difficult. It must be handled sensitively and sensibly so as not to sow the seeds of political and social instability and unnecessary discontent.

To be successful ultimately, structural adjustment must be bolstered by a favourable international economic environment. An indispensable component of such an international economic environment is a free and open trading system that offers competitive prices for our products and allows us to exploit whatever comparative advantage we may possess. Trinidad and Tobago therefore looks forward to positive

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results emanating from the ongoing multilateral trade negotiations under the auspices of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and, in particular, from the ministerial session in December 1988. We hope that the requisite flexibility will be displayed and will result in progress on issues of importance to the developing countries. We share the view that in the negotiations special attention should be given to completing the unfinished work of previous rounds before moving on to new issues. The international community should take full advantage of this opportunity to restore discipline and equity to the international trading system.

It is imperative that there be an increased flow of financial resources to developing countries. Flows of concessional resources in particular, which have stagnated in recent years, need to be increased if developing countries are to obtain new money for investment. Such action would contribute to a reversal of a situation in which some developing regions have become net exporters of capital as a result of their obligations to service their external debt.

The Assembly must also address itself to the issue of debt, which is a major barrier to development and which, if neglected, will render futile all efforts at adjustment. Since the Assembly last met, there has not been any major breakthrough in the identification of a comprehensive strategy acceptable to debtors, creditors, commercial banks and multilateral financial institutions. In the interim, a series of new and innovative mechanisms, such as debt-equity swaps, exit bonds, secondary market trading, and conversion of debt into securities, have been introduced. Those new instruments, by themselves, will have little success in reducing the stock of debt and will merely reduce the exposure of some of the creditors.

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Clearly, such an anomalous situation cannot be sustained. The community of nations, therefore, has no alternative but to elaborate a new and comprehensive strategy that takes into account the capacity of debtor countries to repay their debt to developed countries and financial institutions, and at the same time allows room for economic growth. I suggest that the search for such a strategy is not beyond the collective imagination, capability and wisdom of this Assembly.

The major multilateral financial institutions, particularly the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, must play a more constructive, supportive and progressive role in the global economy. They must critically examine their portfolios and disbursement practices. In keeping with their influence and prestige, they must respond to the demands of a constantly changing global economic environment.

There is no doubt that for many countries of the South there would be increased access to financial resources if the question of graduation were reviewed favourably by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Bretton Woods institutions, using the most recent information available. Trinidad and Tobago, which saw its per capita gross national product fall dramatically by 69 per cent, from over \$US 7,000 in 1983 to just over \$US 2,000 in 1987, welcomes the decision of the World Bank to degraduate it. We call on the World Bank to review the graduation of other countries that have similarly experienced a fall in their gross national product. We call also on the UNDP to recognize the importance of using the most recent data available in its application of the concept of net-contributor status, and to follow the example of the World Bank in identifying criteria which would ensure greater equity in the process of graduation.

The interdependence of the global economy requires the major industrial countries to recognize that the co-ordination of their macro-economic policies is a

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responsibility which devolves on them, owing to the substantial power and influence they exert on the international system. It is therefore incumbent on these States to reduce and eliminate the imbalances in and among their economies which have created distortions in the international economy. My delegation welcomes the corrective measures that have so far been taken and urges that they be continued and strengthened.

It is crucial for the community of nations to give form and substance to the reality of interdependence. It is necessary, therefore, to revive immediately the dialogue between North and South on the full range of issues encompassed in the concept of a new international economic order. To this end, the Trinidad and Tobago delegation supports the call for a special session of the United Nations General Assembly to address the interrelated problems of uneven growth rates, increasing protectionism, low commodity prices and the net transfer of resources from the South to the North.

Among the countries of the South there has been a growing awareness that we need to reverse the roles that we have been assigned in the international economy and to become active participants in, and contributors to, our own development. Reinforced by a shared perception and a common desire for a just and equitable global community, we, the countries of the South, need to stand together to tap and explore our tremendous potential and strengths. Our aspirations have found expression in the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the Group of 77 and, recently, the South commission. Trinidad and Tobago has supported, and will continue to support, the efforts and initiatives of these groupings and to encourage other developing countries to make greater use of the South-South dimension and thus translate rhetorical allusions to co-operation into concrete action.

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In addition to the economic vicissitudes that developing countries have been encountering, we are faced with other threats to our sovereignty, security and well-being, in the form of cross-border criminal activities, including the traffic in illicit drugs and the highly immoral and reprehensible dumping of toxic waste.

In recent times the dumping of toxic waste in developing countries, particularly those in the Caribbean and in Africa, has become a matter of great concern. It is unconscionable that industrial agencies from certain developed States, oblivious of the serious threat to the health and the environment of the peoples of the regions affected, seem prepared surreptitiously to use developing countries as a dumping-ground for highly toxic wastes which they find difficult and/or expensive to dispose of at home. Furthermore, these activities place an unreasonably severe burden on the slender technical and management expertise of developing countries in monitoring this illegal dumping. We therefore join with others in deploring in the strongest possible terms this irresponsible conduct on the part of those industrial enterprises which are engaged in this pernicious practice.

My delegation has noted with appreciation the several international and regional initiatives being undertaken to address the dangers of trans-boundary movement of hazardous wastes. We urge the Assembly to request the competent specialized agencies, acting jointly, to take appropriate measures to formulate as a matter of urgency a comprehensive global convention to regulate and/or prohibit the trans-boundary dumping of toxic and other hazardous wastes. Pending the conclusion of an international convention, my delegation proposes for the Assembly's consideration that a moratorium be declared on further trans-frontier movement of hazardous and toxic waste.

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The second concern that Trinidad and Tobago has voiced on other occasions and in other forums relates to the illicit production of, trafficking in and abuse of drugs and to the interrelated trafficking in destructive weapons. My Government continues to be committed to the eradication of this scourge. We believe, however, that, in the strategies adopted to combat the drug problem, greater emphasis must be placed on efforts to reduce demand, as well as to improve facilities for treatment and rehabilitation. It will be necessary to continue to intensify and co-ordinate efforts to tackle this problem at all levels.

It is with grave disquiet that my Government views the callous disregard with which international conventions prohibiting the use of certain types of weapons have been flouted. In this context the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago proposed, in June of this year during the third special session of the General Assembly on disarmament, that the United Nations commence discussion on the criminal responsibility of individuals who act in breach of relevant norms of international law. The Prime Minister also requested the Secretary-General to prepare, for submission to the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly, a report on the criminal responsibility of persons who use, or authorize the use of, prohibited weapons and weapons that cause unnecessary human suffering, or who engage in illegal drug trafficking across national frontiers. We are gratified that, at our request, an item dealing with this matter has been included on the agenda of this session. During the discussion of that item it will be necessary eventually to examine the existing international criminal codes and the possibilities of using international commissions of inquiry and of instituting, in the long term, an international criminal court. We are convinced that we can count on the support of other concerned delegations when the item is discussed.

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Over the last three years the United Nations has been in the throes of a financial crisis that threatens the viability of the Organization. There is no need to labour the point. The solution to the problem lies in the full and timely payment of all assessed contributions and the full payment of all arrears.

More recently, the United Nations has been engaged in reform mandated by General Assembly resolution 41/213, and much of the focus has been on a tightening of expenditures. It would seem, however, that due attention should also be devoted to the income side of the balance sheet and, since United Nations income derives almost exclusively from the contributions of Member States, a re-examination of the present methodology for calculating the scale of assessments appears necessary. One of the major drawbacks of this scale is that it is based primarily on per capita income figures - data which were never intended as a measure of capacity to pay.

My delegation believes that each country's gross national income is the corner-stone of that country's budgetary process, in that it in effect finances the country's expenditure. Naturally enough, each country's pattern of expenditure responds to its own needs, including its basic requirements of food, housing, health, education, public utilities and transport. These are some acceptable basic requirements - that combination generally defined as the infrastructure. It is my contention that the degree to which a country must concentrate its resources on the provision of this minimum standard is a significant factor in determining its capacity to meet its other financial commitments. Furthermore, measures such as the percentage of one or a few main export commodities to total exports, food imports as a percentage of domestic use, and external debt as a percentage of export earnings, among other things, determine each individual State's capacity to pay.

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My delegation believes that the Committee on Contributions should focus on its consideration of the use of social and economic indicators with a view to devising a basket of minimum requirements which could be used to construct what I will loosely call a development index. This index, reflecting each country's developmental status along the continuum from least developed to developed countries, could then be used as a factor, a multiplier, to convert raw per capita income into assessable income from which a United Nations rate of assessment could be calculated. The ultimate aim would be to adopt a simple, transparent formula for determining the scale of assessments, which it is hoped would be a straightforward process not requiring ad hoc adjustments or further resort to the mitigation process.

The issue of a programme of action for small island developing countries is of utmost importance to Trinidad and Tobago. As early as 1976 the General Assembly issued a call for attention to be paid to the special needs and problems of such countries, as reflected in resolution 31/156 and others, the most recent being resolution 39/212.

Among the catalogue of difficult problems faced by island developing countries the General Assembly identified their vulnerability to natural disasters - a vulnerability demonstrated very dramatically in the devastation wrought by hurricane Gilbert on our sister island of Jamaica. We therefore call on the United Nations to render all possible assistance to Jamaica and to accelerate the larger process by which the particular problems of these countries may be successfully addressed.

In conclusion, the Trinidad and Tobago delegation wishes to note that the improved climate of relations between the super-Powers, the recent successes of the United Nations in bringing to an end a number of long-standing conflicts and the



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improved administrative capability of the Organization have combined to restore in some measure the credibility of the United Nations. However, notwithstanding these achievements, this body still has a long way to go to achieve the goals of the Charter and fulfil the expectations of the peoples of the world. To do this, it must be provided with adequate resources. More important, Member States must conduct their relations in accordance with their obligations under the Charter. Needless to say, at this moment all the ingredients are present for bringing about a revitalization of the United Nations.

As we painstakingly pursue this formidable task, we must ensure that the basic principles that are the corner-stone of the Organization are strictly observed. We must seize the opportunity at this important juncture in the history of the United Nations, for it is only by continuous and universal adherence to the principles enshrined in the Charter that we shall truly embark upon a new and more positive phase in international political, social and economic relations and help to create a better civilization for all mankind.

Mr. GURINOVICH (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) (interpretation from Russian): The Byelorussian delegation congratulates the Foreign Minister of Argentina, Mr. Dante Caputo, on his election to the presidency of the forty-third session of the General Assembly and wishes him success in his work. We also wish to pay a tribute to the President of the last session, Mr. Peter Florin of the German Democratic Republic, and the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, for the work done in the past 12 months.

Today's international situation, the global processes under way in the world and their qualitatively new nature, prompt us to consider what the course of action should be today and in the years to come for this universal, world forum, whose

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primary objective is to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. In view of the scope and character of contemporary international problems, it is necessary to consider to what extent the older, traditional methods are applicable in resolving those problems. Clearly, the strain of day-to-day affairs should not force the General Assembly to lose sight of this serious problem, the Assembly being, which in a sense, the collective mind of international politics. Movement without a clear-cut perspective is, at best, like the Brownian movement - chaotic, leading nowhere, and at worst leading directly to complications or even catastrophe, not only in military terms but also in the social, economic, ecological and other spheres.\*

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

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To set the correct course, a navigator must know where his ship is and how and where to steer it. Looking back at the distance covered, and at the role the United Nations has played in the world, we realize the complexity of the Organization's development, which has gone through various stages; it has had its ups and downs and has overcome numerous crises. Yet we are confident that those were the difficulties of growth, rather than a decline, as claimed by those who do not believe in the potential and effectiveness of the United Nations. On the whole, those were the formative years of the United Nations, a period for promulgating its purposes and principles. Today, despite existing problems, the United Nations seems to be reaching the age of maturity, a process fueled both by the internal logic of its development and, more important, by the urgent challenges of the day.

The world has become far too complex, multipolar and interdependent for nations to be in a position individually or in small groups to achieve the goals set by our time. Today, policies of restricted alliances can no longer ensure real security. What is needed is a global alliance and joint, concerted efforts. To achieve that, we require global multilateralism, which alone has the potential to measure up to the goal of a really secure world, a world secure for all, not just for some.

The report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization states that "Multilateralism has proved itself far more capable of inspiring confidence and achieving results than any of its alternatives". (A/43/1, p. 2)

In our view, multilateralism is more than a system of international organizations. It is an approach, a concept, a method. In the final analysis, it is a régime of international politics whose pillars are universal priorities and joint endeavours.

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The current paradigm of international relations inherited from the past and based on the primacy of the narrowly interpreted interests of a given State has come to the end of its usefulness, just as in the past the theory of the sun rotating around the Earth was shown to be inadequate by Newtonian physics. This is clearly demonstrated by numerous threats to the existence of mankind, ranging from the nuclear threat to the ecological menace and acquired immune-deficiency syndrome (AIDS), which mankind cannot overcome through isolated efforts.

A new paradigm of international politics is needed; in fact, such a paradigm exists. It is a policy stemming from the priority of universal interests, the comprehensive nature of security, the primacy of international law and, consequently, an agreed multilateral approach. Taking a multilateral approach is not idealism. On the contrary, it is pragmatism, since it increases many times over the capacity of nations to cope with major international problems and, first and foremost, to ensure security.

This is amply proved by recent positive changes with respect to disarmament, the solution of a number of conflict situations and the establishment of co-operation between States. All these changes were made possible by the use of procedures and methods of multilateral diplomacy, including efforts made by and through the United Nations.

History and experience unfortunately show that the parties to a conflict often arrive at a reasonable solution only when all other options have been exhausted and their forces depleted. But is it always necessary to let problems reach such extremes and drain the parties' forces before a mutually beneficial solution is reached? Multilateralism can help avoid that.

Individually, nations are prone to giving short-term responses to long-term problems. Here too, multilateralism has advantages. It provides for a more

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reasonable, balanced and prudent strategy. International politics must be given an important new dimension: insight into the future. While traditional foreign policies are more often geared to reacting to specific emerging situations, multilateralism has the advantage of permitting greater foresight and preparation, which can make it possible to prevent the unfavourable development of a given situation.

Finally, multilateralism is far more in keeping with the principles of equality, and it restrains extremists from improper actions. It substitutes mutual influence and the primacy of common interests for unilateral domineering. In the final analysis, this is beneficial for all sides. That has been extensively demonstrated in the general debate that is to close today.

An individual human being is too weak and his voice, as the poet put it, is "thinner than the buzzing of a mosquito". Had he not learned to pool his efforts with those of others, he would have remained an unprotected, frightened creature in the immense wilderness of nature or might even have disappeared as a species unable to meet the challenges of the elements. But joint creative efforts have made him master of the planet. Today we have to learn anew to pool our efforts and overcome disunity, this time at the level of peoples and States. This might not be easy, but it is necessary.

The international community has experience here, and it is positive experience. In this context, I would refer to existing agreements and conventions on curbing the arms race, as well as international co-operation in the framework of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), relief aid in cases of natural disaster, certain development programmes and recent very important examples

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concerning procedures for a political settlement of situations around Afghanistan and Kampuchea, the Iran-Iraq war, and certain aspects of the situation in southern Africa, Cyprus and Western Sahara.

It has been correctly emphasized during the general debate that the policy of national reconciliation and the achievement of the Geneva Accords on Afghanistan have become a model for the political settlement of other crisis situations. Those agreements were reached through the mediation and with the assistance of the United Nations. It is our common duty to ensure that all contracting parties without exception comply with the balance of commitments contained in the Accords.

The peoples of the world have enormous potential good will for peace and co-operation. A major task of the United Nations is to encourage its realization in appropriate forms.

It is obvious that in order to ensure the success of multilateral endeavours all nations should give up policies of force, diktat and interference in the internal affairs of other countries and peoples, and should abandon obsolete stereotypes of thinking based on suspicion, enmity and the pursuit of domination.

The sphere in which multilateralism is applicable is boundless. The multilateral approach is needed above all to respond to the most urgent global challenges in the military, political, economic, social, humanitarian and ecological areas.

What is the effective way to resolve the problem of preventing war, ending the arms race and making a resolute move towards disarmament, first and foremost nuclear disarmament? The fact is that efforts to that end have been made regularly for several decades now. But over the same period the seriousness of the problem has tended to increase rather than decrease. Therefore, being realists, we have to admit that the challenge cannot be met by traditional, established, conservative ways of thinking and by military and strategic approaches.

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Indeed, can the international community, facing the exotic and extremely destructive types of weapons of the late twentieth century, afford to follow the nineteenth century way of thinking? Does it have the right to do so? Can the community of States continue to live with the fact that the development of technology is outpacing the development of political and strategic thought? No, it cannot.

What is needed is a new, realistic approach based on an understanding of the special realities of the human predicament resulting from the emergence and accumulation of nuclear weapons and other types of weapons of mass destruction. The Soviet-United States Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles - the INF Treaty - is the first and, for that reason, all the more significant sprout of that understanding. However, one sprout does not make a good harvest. In order to ensure security and make the process of disarmament irrevocable, it is necessary to move seriously and radically to further goals - namely, a 50 per cent reduction in the strategic offensive weapons of the Soviet Union and the United States, while strictly complying with the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Systems, as signed in 1972, and not withdrawing from it for a specified period of time; a comprehensive nuclear-weapon-test ban; the elimination of chemical weapons and other weapons of mass destruction on a global scale; the prevention of the development of new and ever-more-destructive weapons and, in the long run, complete and general nuclear disarmament; a radical reduction of conventional weapons; and the use of outer space exclusively for peaceful purposes.

It is clear that palliative measures will at best produce palliative security. That is not enough for the peoples of the world. However, the development of more far-reaching measures in this area is blocked by the continued

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commitment of some nuclear States to a speculative paradox which holds that life is guaranteed by nuclear-death stockpiles. Life on this blue planet of the solar system may well be the price we shall have to pay for taking so much time to test that paradox. Experimenting on mankind in that way is inadmissible - all the more because the experiment is being conducted against the will of mankind. As one apt expression has it, one day we will have total and complete nuclear disarmament - with or without people - resulting from the use of nuclear arms in a war. Let us work together to ensure that total and complete nuclear disarmament will be the result of the peaceful dismantling of nuclear arms for the sake of guaranteeing the security of mankind.

The Soviet Union has already stated its readiness to renounce the status of nuclear Power in the interest of the whole of mankind. The abandonment of old stereotypes could provide other nuclear Powers with an opportunity to take that worthy position.

The new thinking also suggests a fundamental way to ensure security in the field of conventional weapons and armed forces: to eliminate imbalances and asymmetries and to achieve equal, radically reduced levels and a strictly defensive structure for the armed forces. The question of what a defensive structure and a purely defensive nature of military doctrines are can and should be addressed at a multilateral level - for instance, involving to that end the Security Council and its Military Staff Committee; the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic actively supports that approach. There is also a vast potential in the idea of establishing a multilateral military-risk-reduction centre, as proposed by the Secretary-General, as well as in the Soviet Union's initiative for setting up a European centre for reducing the risk of war and preventing surprise attack.



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One has mixed feelings about the evolution of events over the past 12 months in the area of approaches to disarmament. On the one hand, there have been uncontested achievements, including those in the multilateral area - the INF Treaty, the progress in the work to ban chemical weapons, the movement in the area of confidence-building, openness, verification, the relationship between disarmament and development - and, on the other hand, there is the failure to reach agreement on a final document of the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. However, the spirit of that special session, the great wealth of new ideas, proposals and approaches that countries brought to the special session and have brought to the current session, their readiness to establish mutual understanding and to co-operate, are all encouraging signs. We are confident that quantity will inevitably result in new quality - the new quality of multilateralism, when the position of one State would no longer block the realization of the will of all other countries.

The United Nations is capable of scoring serious successes also in the peaceful settlement of regional conflicts. The United Nations Charter and resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly contain both the conceptual and the structural basis for a multilateral and constructive approach. That is another approach that offers vast possibilities. The recent achievements by the United Nations in this field are encouraging and should stimulate the international community to be creative and bold and to take active, concerted measures in the Middle East, Central America, southern Africa, the Korean peninsula and other conflict areas.

As is well known, the United Nations peace-keeping forces have been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. However, are the potential and the capacity of the institution of military observers being used to a full extent? In our opinion,

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United Nations observation posts could be set up in potentially explosive areas; military observers could be placed along borders where countries are trying to protect themselves from outside interference; special fact-finding missions could be sent out, on the decision of the Security Council, to investigate situations connected with mutual accusations, to study ways of settling such situations and to monitor the termination of any foreign military presence in foreign territories.

Just as a really good doctor not only treats but also prevents disease, the United Nations operations could be used not only for settling conflicts but also for preventive purposes, in order to defuse emerging military confrontations. The future lies with preventive diplomacy. We should also discuss the question of United Nations naval operations, in the first place to ensure safe navigation in international waters, as well as the idea of setting up a United Nations military observer and armed forces reserve.

Comprehensive security requires a comprehensive approach. There is a growing awareness that if the peoples of some regions and even entire continents are left, deliberately or unwittingly, to be exploited and to lead a miserable existence, mankind runs the risk of setting off an explosion no less destructive than a military confrontation. Let us view the question of war and peace from another angle: In the wars of recent years, people have died and the resources of developing countries, so badly needed for their economic development and social progress, have been increasingly diverted. Therefore, to make the world a safer place, steps in the military and political spheres alone are not enough: what is also needed is a different - that is, a more just and mutually beneficial - economic order under which co-operation and assistance would serve mutual progress rather than the enslavement of some countries by others. It is necessary to help combat underdevelopment, manage the external-debt problem and promote the genuine stability of the world economy and co-operation.

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Implementing the basic principle of disarmament for development should become a major element of this approach. This can and should unite humanity and promote the emergence of universal consciousness. The United Nations must move to take action on these issues.

The concept of internationalism permeates the Charter. The significance of the values it sets forth - peace, security, justice, freedom, human rights, equality and co-operation - will grow as the world becomes more interdependent.

Ensuring in practice the freedom of the peoples to choose their ways of development, putting an end to continued attempts to destabilize legitimate Governments and to impose a social and political system from outside means meaningfully consolidating the foundation of security in the world. Providing all with truly peaceful conditions of life and just conditions of economic development with jobs for the unemployed, bread for the hungry, shelter for the homeless, knowledge for the illiterate, rights for the deprived, satisfying the basic needs of hundreds of millions of people who still live below the level of human decency, pursuing everywhere the practical and full implementation of international human rights instruments, eliminating international terrorism and drug trafficking all mean enriching the content of security and creating realistic conditions for the world community to be able to focus fully on the lofty spiritual requirements of man and on reversing the dangerous and rapid depletion of the balance, purity and beauty of the environment.

Incidentally, ecology is the most vivid example, on the one hand, of the unique role and possibilities of multilateralism and, on the other hand, of the impotence of purely egotistical and narrow national approaches. Let us learn in this area as well how to work jointly on problems that do not lend themselves to unilateral solutions.

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The symbiosis of States with different interests, of systems with different social and political structures and, finally, the symbiosis of man and nature presupposes, to be successful, compliance with certain principles and rules of behaviour. Acting on this premise we favour serious efforts to assure the real primacy of law in all areas of international relations under the motto, "Security, confidence and co-operation through law". Obviously such efforts must include both the necessary rule-making and the mechanism needed to ensure strict implementation of the rules adopted. It is important to seek a common understanding of them so that when agreeing on the rule we do not sow the seeds of future discord because of differences regarding its interpretation.

Undoubtedly the development, testing and fine-tuning of a complex multilateral mechanism cannot be done overnight. It is a long-term objective, requiring effort, patience and understanding of the balance of interests. However, we must begin moving in the required direction now, focusing on those measures that are ripe and can produce realistic results.

We should try to consolidate in the United Nations a spirit of true multilateralism in the profound sense of the word. In particular it is appropriate to intensify the search for consensus decisions, and what counts here is not formal but effective consensus; what matters is consensus on the substance and not only in procedure. We need to think jointly about how to improve the procedures and the working methods of the General Assembly and its bodies; we need to consider the method of convening special sessions, rational and economic spending of available financial resources. The Security Council stands to gain greatly from the interaction of its permanent members and the elaboration of mutual commitments in the spirit of restraint and respect for the freedom of choice of the peoples, and the exclusion of great-Power involvement in regional conflicts. Its effectiveness

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would be enhanced by periodic meetings at the level of foreign ministers and by holding sessions in conflict areas away from Headquarters.

It would be very useful from every point of view if the permanent members of the Security Council and other States would accept the binding jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice on a mutually agreed basis.

A greater role for the Secretary-General in the settlement of conflicts and their prevention would also be in the interest of all. The potential of that role has recently been convincingly demonstrated by Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar and his staff. The Secretary-General could take initiatives in the Security Council, suggest measures he considers appropriate and submit reports to the Council on questions deserving attention. Investing the Secretary-General with functions of monitoring compliance with United Nations decisions, in particular in the disarmament area, could become an important responsibility for the Secretary-General.

The Byelorussian SSR shares the position of the socialist community that has been expressed during the general debate on the range of issues under discussion in the General Assembly and today has especially addressed the problem of developing and strengthening a multilateral approach to solutions to international problems, the analysis of its advantages and some concrete proposals in this respect. In so doing, we are profoundly convinced that multilateralism, as a system for dealing with international issues, constitutes a basic instrument for constructing a truly comprehensive approach to the issues of international peace and security. What we need are joint efforts of all States in all areas. There can be no customers or contractors in such construction work; there can only be equal shareholders. The

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contribution of each is readiness for honest co-operation in the interest of the common cause. The dividend for each is solid security, freedom, equality and prosperity.

Throughout its history the Byelorussian SSR has pursued these noble goals. Seven decades of hard work and struggle - this landmark will be celebrated by the Republic and the Communist Party of Byelorussia on 1 January 1989 - and the fundamental restructuring of our society on a socialist basis have enabled the Byelorussian people not only to ensure continuous economic and social progress, but also to make an acknowledged contribution to efforts to reach those goals at the international level. At the present new stage of the development of international relations the Byelorussian SSR is ready for further fruitful co-operation in building a world free of war or weapons, a world of co-operation and prosperity.

Mr. MWANANSHIKU (Zambia): Allow me to start by congratulating Mr. Dante Caputo of Argentina on his election to the presidency of the forty-third session of the General Assembly. This attests to his proved diplomatic skills and tact as a statesman and to the important role that his country, Argentina, continues to play in promoting international understanding, peace and co-operation. With his wisdom and experience, I have no doubt that he will guide our deliberations with distinction.

Last year we elected Mr. Peter Florin of the German Democratic Republic to preside over the meetings of the Assembly. He discharged his onerous duties with outstanding competence and dedication. I should like, therefore, to take this opportunity to thank him for his contribution to the work of our Organization.

I wish also to express Zambia's appreciation to the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, for the leadership he has provided to the United Nations and for his patience and tenacity in bringing peace to areas of tension.

Until recently, the United Nations, and indeed the entire multilateral system, have been subjected to severe strains and challenges because of the continuing threat of nuclear war, regional conflicts and the most difficult economic crisis facing the developing countries.

However, as we move closer to the beginning of the 1990s, hope and promise are beginning to emerge in the sphere of international political relations. The most important indication of changed perspectives and policies is the improvement in the relations between the Soviet Union and the United States signified by the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles - INF Treaty - in a concrete and significant step towards disarmament.

The hope that we all now share is that the United States and the Soviet Union will build on this foundation and cut back on the remaining nuclear stockpiles, on

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chemical and biological arsenals and on conventional arms, with a view to their eventual elimination in pursuance of general and complete disarmament under effective international control.

The convening of the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament here in New York earlier this year represented yet another multilateral effort to advance the cause of disarmament. The failure of that session was a source of great disappointment to many of us because it was a blow against multilateralism as well. We had hoped that progress at that conference would give further encouragement to the Soviet Union and the United States to undertake further disarmament efforts. We should, however, not relent in our efforts to bring about general and complete disarmament under effective international control. It is our considered view, therefore, that another attempt should be made in the not-too-distant future to hold a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament to address the urgent issues facing mankind today.

Another area where there has been co-operation between the Soviet Union and the United States is the Treaty negotiated by the United Nations aimed at ending the conflict in Afghanistan. It is a matter of regret, however, that although the Treaty was intended to bring peace to that long-suffering country, the reality is that the provisions of that Agreement are not being fully observed. Zambia urges all those involved to give real and practical meaning to the Treaty so that peace may quickly return to Afghanistan. Zambia also wishes to compliment the Soviet Union for observing its side of the Agreement.

For a long time, we have been greatly distressed by the war between Iran and Iraq. The heavy loss of life and property, the danger that the war might spread beyond the borders of the two combatants and the presence of foreign fleets in the Gulf have all underlined the gravity of the situation. We are delighted that both Iran and Iraq have now accepted Security Council resolution 598 (1987) which



(Mr. Mwananshiku, Zam' a)

provides for ending the war. Zambia commends both countries for their courage and statesmanship in adopting diplomacy as a substitute for war. It is a historical fact that conflicts end at the negotiating table. For this reason we are encouraged by the recent report that the two parties met in direct talks under the auspices of the Secretary-General at United Nations Headquarters. We urge them to move rapidly towards the implementation of the remainder of resolution 598 (1987).

In urging Iran and Iraq to move towards the cease-fire, the United Nations has played a singular role demonstrating once again that the world body and its Charter remain important instruments of peace.

The United Nations has also been active in Western Sahara. The fact that the Sahraoui Arab Democratic Republic and Morocco have accepted in principle the Secretary-General's proposal that a referendum be held to determine the future of the territory is an important step towards resolving this problem. However, a number of important issues remain to be resolved. Only when these are resolved can there be a free and fair referendum in the territory. Furthermore, in carrying out this process, it is important to ensure that the credibility and image of the United Nations remain untarnished.

The Middle East remains an area of tension. The central issue has always been whether the Palestinian people will be free, like any other people, to attain and exercise their inalienable rights, their self-determination and their right to national independence. But there are, in addition, the questions of occupied Arab lands and the status of Jerusalem. In our view, these issues require to be addressed if peace and security for all are to return to the Middle East.

Recently the Palestinian people stepped up their resistance to Israeli rule and occupation. Instead of resolving the underlying problems, Israel has responded with an iron hand, resulting in great loss of Palestinian life. It is our belief

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that a just and comprehensive peace in the region can only come out of an international conference on peace in the Middle East in conformity with paragraph 6 of the Geneva Declaration, General Assembly resolutions 38/58 C of 1983, 42/66 D of 1987, and other relevant resolutions.

The Palestinian people and the people of Israel both desire peace and security. That is why it is important that both peoples be represented at the proposed conference by their genuine leaders. The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) represents the Palestinian people and must therefore attend as a full member. The security of Israel lies in negotiating peace with the genuine leaders of the Palestinian people.

Last month I joined my colleagues of the non-aligned countries at our conference on the island of Cyprus. We saw for ourselves the reality of the division of the island into two separate communities. My delegation to that conference was heartened by the Secretary-General's efforts which culminated in the Geneva meeting last August between the President of Cyprus, Mr. George Vassiliou, and the leader of the Turkish Cypriot Community, Mr. Rauf Denktash.

Zambia hopes that the negotiations under way will result in the reconciliation of the two sides, the withdrawal of foreign troops and settlers, and the voluntary return of refugees to their homes.

(Mr. Mwananshiku, Zambia)

May I be permitted to make a few remarks about Kampuchea and the Korean peninsula? Zambia welcomes the recent statement by Viet Nam about the withdrawal of its troops from Kampuchea. We also support the results of the Jakarta informal meeting by the various factions of Kampuchea. We believe that the road to peace lies in the withdrawal of foreign troops from that country and in a political settlement by the various factions.

Tension continues in the Korean peninsula. The issue is the peaceful reunification of that land through dialogue and consultation between the North and South. Zambia welcomes the recent moves aimed at reducing tension and increasing trade between the two sides. These must be seen as initial steps towards the political reunification of Korea.

Central America is another troubled region that requires serious attention. Peace will never return to that region until foreign interference and destabilization cease. Nicaragua, in particular, is one country that has been and continues to be a victim of externally sponsored acts of destabilization.

Zambia welcomes and supports the Peace Agreement signed by the five Presidents of the area in Guatemala in August last year and calls upon the rest of the international community to endorse those efforts whose aim is to bring peace to Central America. At the same time, we urge the Governments of the region to continue their efforts by complying with the terms and conditions provided for in the Agreement. We also appeal to the United States to cease its support to the contras and efforts to undermine the economy of Nicaragua. This will enable the process of dialogue between the Government of Nicaragua and the contras to move forward and make progress.

(Mr. Mwananshiku, Zambia)

The situation in southern Africa continues to be grave. The South African apartheid régime, though still entrenched, is shaken by the general opposition to apartheid by the international community and by the courage and determination of the black population in the fight against the evil system.

State terrorism against the black population remains the cornerstone of apartheid, with the South African army playing the leading role in the campaign of repression and violence. The number of organizations and individuals banned keeps growing as the opposition to apartheid increases.

Evidence available indicates that the economic and financial sanctions already in place are working. South African leaders have themselves admitted this, thereby disproving those who have said that sanctions do not work. There is, however, evidence to show that a small number of countries in the Far East, Europe and Latin America, is taking advantage of the situation created by the sanctions. We appeal to them to cease aiding South Africa and to join the rest of the international community in opposing apartheid. In this respect we commend those countries which are faithfully observing the existing sanctions against South Africa. We appeal to the rest of the international community to apply more sanctions and to tighten the existing ones. In this regard we commend those countries and institutions which have taken and are taking measures to further isolate South Africa economically.

There is also evidence to show that arms in various forms are still flowing to racist South Africa in contravention of the arms embargo against that country. South Africa must be denied the means to wage war against its own people and its neighbours. We appeal to the Western countries involved to strictly observe the mandatory United Nations arms embargo against South Africa enshrined in United Nations Security Council resolution 418 (1977) and in subsequent resolutions. We

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appeal to the United Nations Security Council finally to give real meaning to its resolution 421 (1977) and make the Committee established under that resolution more effective. As a further means of isolating the apartheid régime, we also strongly urge the strict observance and enforcement by the international community of the United Nations oil embargo against South Africa. The time has come for the United Nations Security Council to institute a mandatory oil embargo against South Africa. Moreover, in order to intensify dissemination of information against apartheid, the United Nations should expand its anti-apartheid programmes to combat racist South Africa's censorship measures and disinformation campaign.

The additional pressure on South Africa we are calling for is intended to persuade the régime to hold talks with the genuine leaders of the black population so that together they can chart a new future for their country and their people. It is our firm belief that the best way of moving forward is for the genuine leaders of the oppressed majority and their white counterparts to be present at the negotiations. That is why we have called for the release from prison of Nelson Mandela and his colleagues and the unbanning of the African National Congress (ANC) and the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (PAC).

Ten years after the adoption of United Nations Security Council resolution 435 (1978), the situation in Namibia remains unchanged. South Africa continues its illegal and armed occupation of that territory despite the efforts of the international community to end such occupation and the gallant efforts of the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO), the sole and authentic representative of the Namibian people. We continue to reject "linkage" as irrelevant to the issue of Namibia's independence.\*

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\*The President returned to the Chair.

(Mr. Mwananshiku, Zambia)

As in South Africa, the apartheid régime employs terrorism as the cornerstone of its policy in Namibia. The régime also uses the territory of Namibia for the purpose of carrying out aggression against the neighbouring independent African States, especially Angola and Mozambique. We call on the international community to intensify its pressure on the Pretoria régime until Namibia is free. We also call on those concerned to cease exploitation of the natural resources of Namibia.

South Africa's aggression against the neighbouring independent States continues unabated. Angola and Mozambique have suffered the most from this aggression, which has been perpetrated in collaboration with local bandit groups. The rest of our countries in the region have also suffered direct aggression by South Africa.

The economic cost of apartheid to us has been extremely heavy. An estimate of physical damage in Angola between 1975 and 1985 totals \$US 17 billion. Mozambique has estimated its losses between 1980 and 1985 at \$US 5.5 billion. If damage in the rest of the region were added, the total estimated cost would be between \$US 25 billion and \$US 30 billion. Against this background the front-line States and other neighbouring independent African States need urgent assistance, including military assistance, to enable them to withstand the effects of South Africa's destabilization and aggression.

Last August, in Oslo, we tried to address the humanitarian dimension of destabilization. At the International Conference on the Plight of Refugees, Returnees and Displaced Persons convened by the Organization of African Unity and supported by the United Nations we discussed how the international community can best assist the more than 1.3 million refugees, 5 million displaced persons and the countries of refuge.

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The immediate requirements are basic: food, medicines, water, sanitation, shelter and clothing. Parallel with the provision of these necessities, is the need to resettle all these people and to rehabilitate the economic and social infrastructure, mainly in Mozambique and Angola.

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One aspect of destabilization that continues to concern us is the ongoing supply of arms to the UNITA bandits. We appeal to the United States to end this support so that the Angolan people themselves can commence the process of restoring peace to their country.

Let me refer briefly to the ongoing negotiations involving Angola, Cuba, South Africa and the United States. While we welcome these developments, we remain cautious about South Africa's credibility in negotiations involving self-determination and the peaceful settlement of disputes. South Africa's record is replete with failed commitments to international agreements. The Nkomati and the Lusaka Agreements come readily to mind. With regard to the recent diplomatic offensive by South Africa, it is our conviction that this is merely a ploy designed to buy time for apartheid and to enhance South Africa's tarnished image in order to pre-empt further sanctions.

At the outset I referred to the crisis facing the third world economy. Let me now turn to that issue and speak specifically about the economic crisis facing Africa.

This session of the General Assembly is taking place against the background of a continuing economic crisis in Africa despite the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development. This crisis has revealed itself in poor economic performance and falling standards of living among the people of Africa. The political and social consequences of the crisis are alarming.

A combination of domestic, external and natural factors accounts for this situation. The domestic factors are essentially structural and include the following: low saving ratios, narrow export base, shortage of key skills and rapid growth of population. Under the ongoing reform programmes in many African countries, these problems are being addressed, often at a very high social and political cost.



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However, it is in the external sector that Africa's problems are greatest. The fundamental issue is the unequal economic relations between the rich North and the poor South and the persistent refusal by the former to establish a new international economic order based on the principles of equity and mutual interest. The fact that the South has no role whatsoever in fixing the prices of its exports and imports is the central problem.

The inevitable outcome of these relations is that invariably the prices of our commodities are almost permanently depressed while those of industrial goods are always on the rise. No wonder our terms of trade are always against us. This, in turn, affects our capacity to import the raw materials and spare parts we need. Nor has this trade imbalance been made up by sufficient capital flows to Africa. During the early 1980s, deficits in our current account were financed by net capital flows. These flows have since declined and what we now have is net outflow of resources mainly to the multilateral financial institutions.

The debt problem has contributed very significantly to the economic difficulties of Africa. The debt burden, as measured by such indicators as the ratio of debt-service payments to export receipts, has reached alarming proportions. In an increasing number of African countries, such ratios are well in excess of 100 per cent. In such countries, the resolution of the debt problem is a necessary condition for the resumption of growth. That is why Zambia expresses its thanks and appreciation to those countries that have agreed to forgive part or the whole of the outstanding debt by African countries.

A number of other proposals have been made on ways and means of assisting Africa to overcome its economic difficulties and especially the debt problem. While these proposals are welcome, it is necessary to observe that they have often been made without any input from Africa itself. As a result, many proposals have not taken into account the political and social conditions prevailing in our

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respective countries. These conditions affect our capacity to implement the proposed solutions.

It is against this background that Africa has proposed a meeting with the creditors on the issue of the external debt so that measures to resolve the problem take into full account the realities of the situation.

Another external factor that has affected some of our economies is political and economic destabilization such as that carried out by South Africa against the neighbouring independent African States. As I have shown, the cost of destabilization is very high indeed.

In addition to these domestic and external factors, Africa has suffered from natural catastrophies. The most important of these are floods, drought, desertification, and more recently, locusts. All these impact our economies negatively. In these circumstances, Africa's plea has been that its reform programme be supported by greater inflows of real resources, from Africa's own exports, from increased bilateral and multilateral assistance and from debt relief. In this way, the international community will be responding adequately to Africa's current economic crisis.

Finally, with the lowering of tension between the East and the West, the world has an opportunity to create a safer and better future for all through genuine disarmament and co-operation in resolving all other global, regional and indeed the economic crises facing the third world. As has been demonstrated in recent years, the multilateralism that the United Nations represents remains the key to world peace and progress. Therefore, it is my country's fervent hope that all Member States will renew their commitment and continue to render full and unconditional political and financial support to our Organization for the common benefit of mankind as a whole.

Mr. BORG OLIVIER (Malta): Mr. President, I am delivering this statement on behalf of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Malta, Mr. Vincent Tabone. Unfortunately, unforeseen circumstances did not permit my Foreign Minister to be in New York at this time and he has requested me to convey his sincere regret for not being able to deliver this address in person as he had intended.

Although I am addressing the General Assembly late in the course of the general debate, my congratulations to you on being elected to the presidency of the Assembly are no less warm and genuine than those of all the preceding speakers. Your excellent credentials, your vast experience in the field of international diplomacy as well as your skill and leadership assure us of a fruitful session.

(Mr. Borg Olivier, Malta)

Our appreciation and thanks go also to the outgoing President, Mr. Peter Florin, the Deputy Foreign Minister of the German Democratic Republic, for the way he led the Assembly during the past 12 months.

A year ago the Prime Minister of Malta, in his first address to this General Assembly, confirmed Malta's confidence

"in the role that the United Nations has to play in the maintenance of peace in the world, the enhancement of security for each and every Member State, the substitution of dialogue and negotiations for armed conflict, and the encouragement of co-operation at all levels and across the barriers of race, ideology, size, power and wealth for the welfare of mankind." (A/42/PV.32, p. 58)

Twelve months later we can look on the intervening period as one in which the United Nations has demonstrated as never before that it is capable of rising to the expectations that its founders placed in it. As we speak of the Organization we should not lose sight of the fact that we are, by and large, speaking about its Member States, because the Organization is what we make it. Many things have changed over the recent past and each one, in its own way, may have had an effect on the improved situation. But when all is said and done it is not the Organization or the world around it that has changed but our perception, our values, our confidence, our readiness to stretch out our hands to help each other. There is no reason why we should look back. The more we put into this Organization by way of support and faithfulness, the more we get out of the United Nations.

I would be failing in my duty if I were not to underline the indefatigable efforts of our Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, to ensure that the efforts of the United Nations for peace bear fruit. He refused to be daunted by the difficulties in front of him, and his perseverance and faith in the goodwill of

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negotiators succeeded in several instances which had defied solution over very long years. The greatest tribute and thanks that we can render him is to facilitate his task through greater co-operation and trust among each other.

It was therefore very apt that the United Nations peace-keeping forces should become the recipients of the Nobel Peace Prize this year. The role of these forces usually remains unsung, but their very silent performance is their very strength. It is well that we should be reminded that there are States and people facing risks in areas of conflict which are not their own - that is, looking from a very narrow geographic point of view, for after all we all live in the same world and there is hardly any conflict that may not engulf other bystanders.

Even in moments such as this, when we share our satisfaction at the role of the United Nations and its peace-keeping forces, we cannot but be reminded that there are still many areas where peace does not reign as yet. The military United Nations peace-keeping force has still to be replaced by stronger and more lasting forces forged across the negotiating table in the realization that it is in the common interest of our peoples to arrive at solutions peacefully.

My Government does not miss an opportunity to stress the common responsibility in this respect of all States, and to urge that all our actions and public pronouncements should have as their end the drawing together of peoples, the solution to conflicts, the generation of co-operation. We cannot, with a sense of responsibility, concentrate on condemnations, accusations and negative pronouncements which tend to heighten tension and stiffen attitudes rather than bring together the parties that must live together in peace.

The developments in the international situation over the recent past should encourage all of us to have more faith in the process of negotiation. This Assembly has heard over and over again of these positive developments and I need

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not go into great detail. I shall simply list them because the list is indeed impressive, especially when compared with the failures of the past. We note the Geneva accords on Afghanistan; the cessation of hostilities between Iran and Iraq and the start to a negotiated peace; the agreement on the implementation of a peace plan for Western Sahara; the renewed intercommunal talks in Cyprus; the encouraging movements towards the implementation of the independence plan for Namibia; the rapprochement among the parties involved in the Kampuchea question; the positive measures taken by the parties concerned in New Caledonia; the opening of new avenues of peace between Chad and Libya; and the declarations from both sides in favour of the reunification of Korea. Even in southern Africa there seem to be the first indications of a movement towards a change.

But, of course, the agreement between the United States of America and the Soviet Union which heralded the first steps in the dismantling of their nuclear arsenals, the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles - the INF Treaty - was without a doubt the most significant success which has encouraged all to realize that with goodwill, perseverance and mutual confidence what had been considered impossible becomes possible after all. We note with satisfaction that these two nations have not stopped at that point but, encouraged by what they have achieved, have embarked on further negotiations aimed at more significant reductions in their nuclear arsenals.

These positive developments have not been mentioned by the various speakers without a sense of realism that makes us all aware that there are still problems, very serious ones, that still defy solution in spite of efforts from a number of well-meaning sources. The reasons for failure may be several, but if we analyse them we are sure to find that they do not differ essentially from the same reasons

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that held back progress and solutions on those problems where we are now registering success. It is attitudes that have to change.

Earlier this year we had the third special session of the General Assembly on disarmament, which held high promise of success - and indeed consensus was reached on some very important issues. However, on other issues, such as the arms race in outer space, disarmament and development, zones of peace and nuclear-weapon-free zones, no agreement could be reached. What was gained during that special session should not be allowed to evaporate; on the contrary, it should be preserved and developed and exploited in the hope that it will lead to agreement on a wider area. Malta made its studied contribution to that session and I need not go over the same ground at length.

I would, however, stress that we should not be carried away by slogans and clichés but should remember at the same time that since the last world war any number of regional conflicts have been fought with conventional and not nuclear weapons, and that these have wrought havoc and death and caused tidal waves of human refugees. Let not the awesome fear of a nuclear holocaust make us insensitive to the threat of other weapons. Disarmament must be all-embracing and balanced to ensure the security of all, where zones of peace and nuclear-weapon-free zones become credible and meaningful.

As an island State Malta cannot but pay special attention to the seas around us and the weapon systems that proliferate therein. It is with the aim of maintaining a balance that we urge that disarmament and confidence- and security-building measures should not be limited to the land masses only. We are not alone in stressing this point and we expect that due attention will be given to this aspect in international disarmament forums.

(Mr. Borg Olivier, Malta)

No statement could possibly do justice to all the issues that are of interest to all Member States of the United Nations, and I shall definitely not try to do so. On the other hand, no statement would be complete without a reference to two problem areas that have been facing us for far too long without any real progress towards their solution. These are the question of apartheid in South Africa and the constant turmoil in the Middle East, where the Palestinians are still without a homeland of their own. Can the world, can the people in these areas, go on living in these conditions of strife, deprivation and death? Do we expect the deprived ones to accept with good grace the conditions imposed on them? Is there anyone who can really believe that in this era of awakened awareness of human rights a solution is possible without due regard to the cries of those who do not enjoy full rights in their own homeland? A change of attitude of the mind is required, a change which needs courage, foresight and faith, change as momentous as that which made the INF Treaty possible.

This year this Organization is commemorating the fortieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It would therefore be appropriate if we reaffirmed the pledge made 40 years ago, that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights, and worked with greater vigour to put that noble principle into practice for all peoples throughout the world.



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Life is precious, but the quality of life is of no less importance. When one speaks of the quality of life one's mind may focus on a number of issues, but one which is very likely to be prominent is the degradation of the rational human being through an irrational dependence on dangerous or debilitating drugs. The international community recognized this danger long ago, and we have within the United Nations system the International Narcotics Control Board and a long-standing Convention to control the use of drugs. Regrettably, the abuse of drugs and illicit drug trafficking have become more widespread and are closely linked with international crime. The forthcoming Vienna conference of plenipotentiaries convened to adopt a new Convention against the illicit traffic in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances is therefore timely and important.

Development leading to better economic performance and an improvement in the way of life are generally acknowledged as valid national aims, which, however, can best be realized through international co-operation. There are still great inequalities between States and, let us admit it, within States. The reasons are numerous and spread in all directions. Any attempt to reduce the complicated interplay in the world economy to simple stereotyped clichés is unrealistic; worse still, it is ineffective in offering a solution to those in need. The United Nations can also play a constructive role in this respect, especially through the intergovernmental agencies that deal with specialized economic and social human activity. National interests are bound to feature prominently in negotiations within these bodies, and, since intransigence at such meetings rarely leads to dramatic consequences like those in the field of security, State representatives tend to become less accommodating.

Even here a change of mind, a change of attitude, is called for. After the Second World War a far-sighted United States of America realized that a destroyed Europe could only breed strife and discontent. It realized that a healthy Europe

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could be a partner in economic development, and the Marshall Plan came into being. Everyone knows what a huge success the Plan turned out to be, to the benefit of both the donor and the recipient countries and to the world economy as a whole. Today the same situation can be said to apply with the developed countries on one side and the developing countries on the other. Stagnation in the world economy brings us all down, while the stimulus of actively developing economies presents opportunities to all. On the problem of massive national debts such an awareness is emerging, but there are other spheres where greater and more efficient international co-operation could alleviate the plight of developing States, to the benefit of economic development in general. Restrictions and other protective measures should be used sparingly.

The United Nations Development Programme is one very effective vehicle in the promotion of economic and social development. Malta has benefited from the Programme, and we are grateful for this. We urge that the funds at the disposal of the Programme be increased and that the criteria for establishing the national indicative planning figures be less tied to the criterion of gross national product per capita, which can be grossly misleading.

Many previous speakers have raised the question, in one way or another, whether economic development is compatible with the maintenance of a good quality of life. The fact that the question is being raised with greater frequency at national and international levels is an indication that development has, at times, led to a degradation in the quality of life. Often this was done without a full realization of the consequences. As we come to understand the world around us better, and to appreciate nature's precarious balance, we come to realize that not all so-called progress is an unmixed blessing.

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This is a new challenge to the world community, one which is gaining urgency as we realize that our environment is being adversely affected by human activity. It is unrealistic to expect that the solution lies in returning to the old days, which are sometimes described in idyllic but incorrect terms. Many of the problems we face today have grown with us over the past decades. They grew as national policies were evolved either with an imprecise appreciation of the consequences or in a shortsighted assessment that the consequences could be blown away, literally, flushed down the drain, metaphorically, or buried - in someone else's back garden.

This is an area where, hopefully, traditional rivalries and groupings will not interfere in international co-operative efforts. The Mediterranean Action Plan, which grew out of the Barcelona Convention drawn up under the aegis of the United Nations Environment Programme, has demonstrated that human awareness can overcome political limitations. The Mediterranean Sea does not belong to any single State or group of countries, or indeed to the Mediterranean people alone. It belongs to all of us, and the onus falls mainly on the coastal States to ensure that it remains a healthy living resource for the benefit of them all. Other States which ply this sea or use it in one way or another, or affect its environment through discharges or activities which may initiate well beyond its shores, have the obligation to respect the concern expressed by the people in the area and to co-operate to the maximum extent possible.

I do not speak of the Mediterranean because it is a special area. It happens to be the area where Malta is situated; an area where the countries of the region are more actively involved in co-operative efforts to preserve the environment; an area which is of direct interest to many States outside the region; in short, an area which illustrates the issues involved and indicates the way of co-operation at the regional level and beyond. Other regions are similarly placed.

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Sometimes the problem which faces us is of even greater dimensions, where we have to think more in global than regional terms. Climate, or, rather, the way in which human activity can affect changes in the world climate in general, with consequences for the life we lead, the food we grow, the land we inhabit, the air we breathe, the light and warmth we need - all this is the concern of the human race as a whole. The problem itself is too big to be tackled piecemeal by individual nations. It is for this reason that Malta proposed that a new item be put on the agenda for consideration at this session of the General Assembly, and the fact that the proposal was unanimously accepted as a matter of urgency demonstrates that there is an awareness of the problem. In fact, there are already initiatives under way, and one cannot fail to mention the work of the World Meteorological Organization and the United Nations Environment Programme within the framework of the United Nations system. There are also other national and international initiatives, especially at the scientific level, and we have had the formidable report of the World Commission on Environment and Development, under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Brundtland of Norway, which has rightly been praised by several speakers as a most important contribution to the issue before us.

The title of the new agenda item, "Declaration proclaiming climate as part of the common heritage of mankind", reflects the vastness of the problem and its importance to the human race, and indicates the positive action envisaged. Since the item will soon be discussed in detail, this is not the time to elaborate or to propose solutions. My delegation would only underline the need for as broad a study of the problem as is possible, given the resources of the United Nations, the intergovernmental agencies and other international and national specialized institutions, and the need for drawing up a co-ordinated plan of action which will

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serve as a guide to all of us in a co-operative action which will make national efforts more effective for the benefit of all mankind. This should not be a dream; it should be stark reality for ourselves, but more so for future generations. Past generations and civilizations have grown and died, some literally buried in sands where lushness existed before. Those people may not have realized what was going on and ascribed their fate to unfriendly gods. Today we know more - though we should be humble enough to admit that there is still more to be learned. We know at least that the gods that cause such dislocation as past generations experienced may well be found not in heaven or Hades but here on Earth amongst us.

One cannot speak of future climatic changes that could affect our lives without a reference to the spate of unusual natural disasters that have afflicted so many parts of the world in recent months, with grave consequences to the people who have become victims to these forces that dwarf human efforts. Floods, winds, droughts, storms, earthquakes - all took their toll. The world as a whole is required to help not only to make good the damage and to rehabilitate life, but more effectively to understand the cause of such disasters and to prevent them or to minimize as much as possible the effects of such natural phenomena. We are convinced that efforts in the field of conservation of climate will produce side benefits which will also apply to situations such as these.

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Our attention is often drawn to problems, conflicts and disasters that make us forget that there are also positive developments that require equal attention and encouragement. Most speakers - and I myself - have made reference to some major positive developments, but permit me to put on record a few other, perhaps more modest, developments with which Malta is more directly concerned.

As a participating State in the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE), Malta continues to co-operate with all the 34 member States, but more particularly with the participating neutral and non-aligned States on whom falls the unenviable task of trying to reconcile the initial distant views and interests of the other States without forgetting that they themselves have particular interests to safeguard. We are convinced that a positive end to the Vienna follow-up conference is now in sight. That should usher in a substantial programme of action that should consolidate co-operation and security, not only on the continent of Europe and the seas and regions immediately surrounding it, but in an even broader area as tensions and suspicion subside.

In the wider area of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries Malta is pleased to note that a wind of change is blowing that takes into account the changing international scene, where the traditional military-bloc confrontation is giving way to a realization that the common will calls for more co-operation than confrontation. The non-aligned countries of the world, whether members of the Movement or not, have a constructive and supportive role to play in this connection. All our efforts, all our pronouncements and our behaviour, should encourage this trend towards détente.

The Commonwealth is another group of nations that can - and does - contribute to greater international understanding and peace. Malta is pleased to participate in Commonwealth training programmes for students and refugees from Namibia and

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South Africa and proudly continues to offer scholarships for that purpose in its educational institutions.

Conscious that our main resources are in the human field, we seek ways in which we can exploit them to our benefit and that of the international community. Earlier this year, following up the initiative taken by Malta in the United Nations on the question of aging, we opened in Malta the United Nations International Institute on Aging. We were gratified to welcome the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Javier Perez de Cuelar, on that occasion, thus further strengthening the agreement signed on 9 October 1987 between the Prime Minister of Malta and the United Nations Secretary-General.

On Saturday, 8 October 1988, the International Maritime Law Institute was officially established in Malta. On that occasion we had the honour to receive His Excellency Chandrika P. Srivastava, Secretary-General of the International Maritime Organization (IMO), which has given its name and sponsorship to that initiative. The Secretary-General of the IMO, in officially declaring the Institute open, explained that the Institute would fill a void that has long been felt for the training of lawyers from developing countries in international maritime law.

In accordance with articles 276 and 277 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, the Government of Malta has taken the initiative of proposing the establishment, in Malta, of a Mediterranean centre for research and development in marine industrial technology, which would strengthen the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. Malta already acts as host to the IMO Regional Oil Combating Centre. Both initiatives would bring together the resources of developed and developing countries for the benefit of all in the field of the transfer of science and technology.

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One of the most important decisions taken by the Heads of Government of the Commonwealth at their October 1987 meeting at Vancouver was the creation of a new Commonwealth institution to promote co-operation in distance education. Malta has offered facilities concentrating on marine studies and the problems of small States, and that offer has been accepted.

As a European country, Malta plays a role in that region as well. I have already referred to Malta's role in the CSCE. At this moment it is also offering its services as Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Council of Europe. That task came at a propitious moment when that Council is giving more attention to greater co-operation and dialogue with European States that do not yet meet the criteria set up by the Council of Europe. The concept of a united Europe that stretches to the Urals is one in which Malta believes, and we will not lose any opportunity to explore avenues that could bring it nearer to realization.

In the meanwhile the process of closer co-operation and unity cannot be stopped, and Malta seeks to follow the natural course open to it: that of strengthening its links with the European Economic Community. Within a few months the Government of Malta has cleared the deck of the accumulated debris that had stood in its way. That is not an end in itself, but a preparatory step for the next logical one, namely, an application for full membership in the Community.

That, in brief, is the road of international co-operation that Malta has followed in the last few months.

As a small island State in a sea that has seen the rise of one Power after another, Powers both military and cultural, we cannot but be aware of our openness and vulnerability. We believe that only unity and friendship can safeguard the peace that is necessary for development, for ordered development that does not overlook the quality of life. The task ahead is not easy, but we would submit that



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if the determination, effort and sacrifice that most nations are willing to make in time of war, when the threat facing them is more dramatic, were to be directed with equal energy towards the pursuit of peace, we would be able to take the great strides that are required to make the difficult easy and the impossible possible.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.