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PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE THIRTY-THIRD MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 18 October 1988, at 10 a.m.

<u>President:</u>	Mr. CAPUTO	(Argentina)
later:	Mr. MOUSHOUTAS (Vice-President)	(Cyprus)
later:	Mr. CAPUTO	(Argentina)
later:	Mr. DLAMINI (Vice-President)	(Swaziland)

- Emergency assistance to Jamaica: draft resolution [149]
 - Emergency assistance to the Sudan: draft resolution [150]
 - Short-term, medium-term and long-term solutions to the problems of natural disasters in Bangladesh: draft resolution [151]
 - Promotion of peace, reconciliation and dialogue in the Korean peninsula [146]
 - Credentials of representatives to the forty-third session of the General Assembly [3] (continued)
- (b) First report of the Credentials Committee; amendment

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

AGENDA ITEM 149

EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE TO JAMAICA: DRAFT RESOLUTION (A/43/L.5)

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): The Assembly has before it a draft resolution (A/43/L.5). I call on the representative of Jamaica, who will introduce it.

Mr. BARNETT (Jamaica): As representatives are aware, Jamaica was struck on 12 September last by hurricane Gilbert, one of the worst storms seen in this hemisphere during this century. The hurricane, which traversed the island from east to west, was the greatest disaster in the history of modern Jamaica. Fortunately, given the magnitude of hurricane Gilbert, the loss of life was mercifully low but nevertheless distressing. However, massive destruction was done to homes and other buildings, to domestic and export agriculture and to services such as electricity and water.

In its wake the hurricane left about 500,000 persons homeless, with one out of every two homes either destroyed or damaged. Public buildings such as schools, hospitals and health centres were also severely damaged. Agricultural crops and livestock were destroyed, and in many areas the economic base of the farming community was completely wiped out. This is a particularly severe blow, as over one third of the work-force is engaged directly or indirectly in this sector. Services such as electricity, water and communications were disrupted. Other sectors, such as tourism and mining, were less severely affected.

Latest estimates by the Government of Jamaica indicate the overall cost of the damage in both public and private sectors to be between \$US 818 million and \$US 1,000 million, representing approximately 80 per cent of our annual export earnings. But these are still in many respects preliminary figures.

(Mr. Barnett, Jamaica)

Jamaica therefore faces an enormous task in order to recover and rebuild from the devastation wrought by hurricane Gilbert. Happily, however, this process has already begun, largely due to the resilience of our own people and to the generous support of the international community.

Programmes, involving both public and private sectors, to ensure that the most needy have access to food, are in place. Assistance to householders is also being provided so that homes can be rebuilt or repaired by the end of this year. Inputs necessary to restore the agricultural sector are being assessed and obtained so that farmers can be back in operation - also, it is to be hoped, by the end of this year. Sources of vital imports of food, building materials and agricultural supplies have been identified and are arriving in the island as quickly as possible. Priority has been given to restoring areas of electricity which serve water supply systems, hospitals and major tourism and manufacturing operations so that production can restart.

Our aim is to ensure that economic adjustment measures which Jamaica has been carrying out over the last few years, and which had begun to show positive results, remain on course so that we can continue to focus on the social well-being programme recently introduced by my Government.

I should like, on behalf of the Government and people of Jamaica, to express our deep gratitude to those countries, including those in the Caribbean and Latin America and other areas of the developing world, agencies and individuals who responded so generously and so rapidly to the tragedy that befell my country. I wish also to express our appreciation to the Secretary-General and the United Nations, in particular the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator (UNDRO) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which have been so helpful, especially during the days immediately after the hurricane when communication with Jamaica was so difficult.

(Mr. Barnett, Jamaica)

Although we in Jamaica fully realize that recovery from this disaster lies within our own hands, the support and assistance of the international community are valuable elements in our reconstruction efforts. We hope that we can continue to count on this support during the medium and long-term process of our recovery.

Consequently, we wish to present for consideration and adoption by the Assembly the draft resolution entitled "Emergency Assistance to Jamaica" contained in document A/43/L.5. It has been sponsored by Algeria, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, the Bahamas, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Democratic Yemen, Dominica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Ghana, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Italy, Japan, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Mexico, Morocco, Mozambique, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Panama, Peru, the Philippines, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Sudan, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela and Zimbabwe.

In the preambular section, the draft resolution recognizes the destruction wrought by hurricane Gilbert and the efforts of the Government and people of Jamaica to alleviate the sufferings of the victims. It also recognizes the prompt response being made by Governments, international agencies, non-governmental organizations and private individuals to provide emergency relief. It further notes that the magnitude of the disaster and its long-term effects will require, as a complement to the efforts being made by Jamaica, a demonstration of international solidarity and humanitarian concern to ensure multilateral co-operation in order to meet the immediate emergency situation in the affected areas, as well as to carry out reconstruction.

(Mr. Barnett, Jamaica)

The operative paragraphs express solidarity and support for the Government and people of Jamaica; express appreciation to the States, international agencies and non-governmental organizations providing emergency relief; calls upon all States to contribute generously to the relief and reconstruction efforts; and requests the Secretary-General, in collaboration with the international financial institutions and the United Nations system, to assist the Government of Jamaica in identifying emergency, medium-term and long-term needs and in mobilizing resources, as well as helping with the task of reconstruction. It is our hope that the Assembly will be able to adopt by consensus the draft resolution before us.

Hurricane Gilbert has brutally reminded us of the vulnerability of island countries. However, as this year in particular has highlighted, all developing countries are vulnerable in the face of natural disasters. Our sympathy goes to the other victims of Gilbert in the Cayman Islands, Haiti, the Dominican Republic and Mexico, as well as to the victims of the floods in the Sudan, Bangladesh and India.*

Last year, the General Assembly adopted resolution 42/169, which declared an international decade for natural disaster reduction. That resolution recognized the importance of reducing the impact of natural disasters for all people, and in particular for developing countries. We were very pleased to sponsor that resolution; little did we realize that we would be able to share first-hand experience so soon. We therefore urge all Member States to work actively in ensuring that the goals of this decade are met and that the international community can, in the near future, use the enormous technological capacity available to it to ease the human suffering which is currently the result of such disasters.

* Mr. Moushoutas (Cyprus), Vice-President, took the chair.

The PRESIDENT: May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to adopt the draft resolution?

Draft resolution A/43/L.5 was adopted (resolution 43/7).

The PRESIDENT: That concludes our consideration of agenda item 149.

AGENDA ITEM 150

EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE TO THE SUDAN: DRAFT RESOLUTION (A/43/L.9)

The PRESIDENT: In connection with this item the Assembly has before it a draft resolution (A/43/L.9).

In this regard, I call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Sudan, Mr. Hussein Suleiman Abu Salih, who will introduce the draft resolution.

Mr. ABU SALIH (Sudan) (interpretation from Arabic): On behalf of the people and government of the Sudan, allow me at the outset to express our deep gratitude and profound appreciation to the General Assembly for its favourable response to my delegation's request to inscribe an additional item on emergency assistance to the Sudan on the agenda of the current session. This unanimous endorsement is a genuine reflection of the solidarity of the international community with the Sudan and a clear manifestation of the lofty principles of international co-operation, as Sudan confronts a serious and tragic economic situation brought about by unprecedented torrential rains and floods.

In August and September 1988 the Sudan was hit by a natural disaster unprecedented in its modern history when torrential rains and widespread floods devastated the country, causing massive destruction. More than 350,000 houses were totally destroyed and an estimated 2 million people left homeless and without food. A substantial sector of the country's infrastructure has been severely disrupted, including crops, roads, railway lines, water and electricity supplies, hospitals, schools, health centres and other communication systems. For

(Mr. Abu Salih, Sudan)

instance, in the agricultural sector, over 2 million acres of cultivated lands were inundated, 600 villages and islands completely submerged; over 7,000 small farmers' projects and co-operatives were considerably damaged. As a consequence, the national economy has lost a substantial portion of its major agricultural exports, such as cotton and oil seeds, as well as food crops, such as wheat and sorghum. The total loss to the economy in this disaster is estimated at 14 billion Sudanese pounds, including 4 billion in lost output.

No doubt the Assembly is aware that this disaster represents a serious setback to the country's economy and to the Government's efforts to accelerate social and economic development, particularly since this disaster coincides with the already existing complex difficulties brought about by the prolonged drought and desertification, the massive influx of refugees and 2 million displaced persons, as well as the locust invasion.

The Government of the Sudan, in co-operation with friendly countries, the Secretary-General, specialized agencies and non-governmental organizations, has exerted enormous efforts to transport emergency supplies to the affected population.

(Mr. Abu Salih, Sudan)

All these disasters were further aggravated by the adverse external economic environment, characterized by high-level indebtedness and a deterioration in terms of trade and in commodity prices, which continue to confront developing countries in general and the least developed in particular.

My Government has spared no effort in the mobilization of material and human resources to mitigate the serious consequences of this disaster and to alleviate the suffering of our people. However, the magnitude of the devastation and damage is far beyond the means and abilities of the Sudan alone to rectify. Here lies the critical importance of the role of the international community in providing assistance and supporting our efforts towards alleviating this disaster.

I should like first of all to express, on behalf of the Government and people of the Sudan, our sincere gratitude and appreciation to all sister and friendly countries and to the international institutions and non-governmental organizations which contributed generously in supporting our country in the field of humanitarian assistance. I should like in particular to thank the Secretary-General of the United Nations for the effort he has undertaken, particularly his initiative in issuing an international appeal for assistance to the Sudan shortly after the occurrence of the disaster. That initiative had a positive impact in the alleviation of the sufferings that faced our people at an extremely difficult time.

However, I wish to point out that the volume of international assistance received so far falls far short of the real and urgent needs. Additional and substantial international assistance is therefore absolutely crucial for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of the socio-economic infrastructure, and all these efforts require more perseverance on the part of the international community to render the urgent assistance we need in this phase.

From this rostrum I call on all friendly States, United Nations bodies and

(Mr. Abu Salih, Sudan)

specialized agencies to continue to respond promptly and generously to our emergency needs and requirements in the period ahead.

In conclusion, it is my honour and privilege to introduce briefly the draft resolution entitled "Emergency Assistance to the Sudan" (A/43/L.9) which is sponsored by 36 countries: Algeria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Cameroon, Chile, Colombia, Comoros, Cuba, Democratic Yemen, Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, Guinea-Bissau, Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Mauritania, Mozambique, Pakistan, Peru, the Philippines, Qatar, Romania, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Tunisia, Uganda, the United Arab Emirates, the United Republic of Tanzania, the Yemen Arab Republic, and my own country, Sudan.

The preamble to the draft resolution recalls resolutions 35/56, on the International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade, and 42/169, on the international decade for natural disaster reduction and the substantial new programme of action for the 1980s for the least-developed countries. The resolution expresses concern over the extensive and unprecedented damage to the infrastructure and the productive sectors of the economy and affirms that Sudan has shouldered the major part of the burden in dealing with the disasters. Furthermore, the resolution affirms the need for the response of the international community to the request for emergency, humanitarian assistance as well as rehabilitation and reconstruction of a least developing country in facing grave and compounded disaster situations.

The resolution also expresses appreciation for the response to date of various countries and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations for their contribution and notes that the Secretary-General has sent an inter-agency mission to the Sudan to assess the emergency conditions and that a United Nations

(Mr. Abu Salih, Sudan)

Development Programme/World Bank multi-donor flood recovery programme mission is currently in the Sudan to assess the impact of the floods and prepare programmes for reconstruction.

The operative paragraphs of the draft resolution express solidarity with the Government and people of the Sudan in facing this complex disaster and its appreciation to all friendly countries and international organizations which have rendered support and assistance to the Sudan in its relief and rehabilitation efforts. It expresses gratitude to the Secretary-General for the steps he has taken to co-ordinate and mobilize resources for relief and rehabilitation efforts. It calls upon all States to contribute generously and respond urgently and effectively to the needs of relief operations, rehabilitation and reconstruction.

The draft resolution requests the Secretary-General, in close co-operation with the Government of the Sudan, to co-ordinate efforts of the United Nations system to help Sudan in its emergency rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts and to mobilize resources for the implementation of the said programmes.

Finally, the draft resolution requests the Secretary-General to report on the implementation of the present resolution to the General Assembly at its forty-fourth session.

In presenting this draft resolution for consideration by the General Assembly I am confident that it will be adopted, unanimously.

The PRESIDENT: In connection with the draft resolution which has just been presented and introduced by the representative of Sudan, the following countries have become sponsors: Ecuador, Ethiopia and Gambia.

(The President)

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to adopt the draft resolution?

Draft resolution A/43/L.9 was adopted (resolution 43/8).

The PRESIDENT: The Assembly has concluded its consideration of agenda item 150.

AGENDA ITEM 151

SHORT-TERM, MEDIUM-TERM AND LONG-TERM SOLUTIONS TO THE PROBLEMS OF NATURAL DISASTERS IN BANGLADESH: DRAFT RESOLUTION (A/43/L.10/Rev.1)

The PRESIDENT: I call upon the representative of Bangladesh to introduce the draft resolution.

Mr. R. RAHMAN (Bangladesh): The draft resolution in document A/43/L.10 of 14 October, entitled "Short-term, medium-term and long-term solutions to the problems of natural disasters in Bangladesh", was initially sponsored by 41 countries, including Bangladesh. It has, however, always been our endeavour to strive for consensus on a draft that seeks the support and assistance of the entire world community. With that objective in mind we have consciously sought to accommodate divergent concerns that have been expressed and to arrive at a draft acceptable to all countries. That new draft is in document A/43/L.10 Rev.1 of 17 October.

In view of time constraints it has not been possible to contact or consult all the sponsors on the new text submitted, and I ask their indulgence to accord the same unreserved solidarity and support to this draft, which we hope and believe could be adopted without a vote.

(Mr. R. Rahman, Bangladesh)

Since the submission of this new, revised text, several more members have accorded their sponsorship, bringing the number to 53. In addition to those already mentioned in the document, we now have Jamaica, Democratic Yemen, the Philippines, the Maldives, Canada, Japan and the United Kingdom.

I believe that it is necessary at the outset to establish the background and setting that has led to the submission of this assistance draft resolution, which background and setting cannot, of course, find detailed reflection in the text. In the last few days of August 1988 Bangladesh was engulfed by a flood of disastrous magnitude, blanketing more than three quarters of its land mass of 144,000 square kilometres in a sheet of water for almost three weeks. Last year's flood, which struck in July, had been considered the worst in decades. This year's flood overstepped the high danger mark of 48 metres, set after last year's freak occurrence, by almost 3 metres, or 8 feet. Both the major rivers, the Ganges and the Brahmaputra, which normally rise at dispersed levels, flooded simultaneously. These two rivers and their more than 50 tributaries, which literally serrate the territory of Bangladesh, became indistinguishable in a continuous expanse of water stretching over 122,000 square kilometres.

The consequences defy description. Some 20 million to 30 million people, rendered homeless, were forced to seek shelter on the only high ground available - the embankments raised to protect the land from flooding. These themselves were sundered by over 30 miles of breaches.

A similar of number of people were affected by flood waters that marooned them in the relatively few pockets of land above sea level and in the higher shelters available in urban areas. More than 1.2 million houses were completely destroyed, and 2.5 million houses were partially gutted. Millions of hectares of crops were damaged in the main rice-growing season, which normally produces 8 million tons.

(Mr. R. Rahman, Bangladesh)

Estimates of imports of food grains are now put at 3 million tons. The effect on livestock can readily be imagined: over 190,000 head of cattle were drowned or died of starvation. Damage to the infrastructure was extensive, paralysing all communication. Even the Dhaka International Airport was under water for more than 10 days. Three thousand kilometres of metalled roads were damaged, as were more than 60,000 kilometres of earthen roads. Over 600 kilometres of rail tracks were totally damaged, including 44 railway bridges. Some 20,000 educational institutions that serve as focal points for shelter in disaster situations were completely or partially damaged. In the aftermath of the floods we had the dire danger of water-borne disease, affecting tens of thousands of people.

These are but some of the highlights of the colossal damage inflicted. The cost in monetary terms is truly incalculable. The impact must take into account the cumulative weight of national disasters that have stricken Bangladesh with progressive intensity in the past. Over 17 killer cyclones have struck Bangladesh in the last 25 years, the worst, in 1970, taking a toll of more 300,000 lives. Floods have occurred in regular succession in 1974, 1977, 1983, 1984 and 1987, with their accompanying toll of death, destruction and total dislocation of the economy and the infrastructure. Incongruously, in the dry season drought has also raised its ugly head, with the accompanying spectre of famine.

An obvious factor of relevance are the causes of these recurring disasters, particularly flooding. The factors are manifold, bearing cumulative weight, but their exact impact in many cases is still the subject of study and discussion among scientists and experts. Climatologists believe that the main cause is heavy rainfall. Moisture-laden trade winds sweeping across the Bay of Bengal are attracted to the low pressures created by the Gobi Desert in China and the Thar Desert in western India. They come up against the length and breadth of the Himalayas, are cooled, and fall as rain along the entire Indo-Gangetic Plain.

(Mr. R. Rahman, Bangladesh)

Bangladesh and the fork of the Himalayas is the recipient of some of the heaviest rainfall. Towards September the winds retreat back towards the low pressures on the Equator and bring their accompanying, though generally lower, rainfall. This constitutes the monsoon period, which lasts about four months, from June to September.

Since this period also coincides with the hot summer, the rain-fed waters are augmented by melting snow in the high reaches of the Himalayas. Climatologists have also pointed to such diverse environmental effects as what is called the "El Nino southern oscillation" over Latin America, which appears to affect carbon dioxide and ozone concentrations in the world's atmosphere and has an inverse relationship with the impact of the monsoons.

Another contributing factor is the geophysical instability of the area stretching from Nepal to Assam in northern India, which has seen periodic earthquakes and tremors of high intensity. Indeed, the floods in Bangladesh were preceded by severe tremors in Nepal and the onset of heavy landslides. As it is, literally millions of tons of silt are carried down the rivers to Bangladesh, raising the level of the surface waters and making difficult, if not impossible, the task of dredging on a continuous basis.

Above and beyond these natural phenomena are the obvious consequences of the environmental depredations of man - massive deforestation and the dire impact of poverty and increasing population. In the larger context, the precise impact of human technological activities on the Earth's ecosystems is still unknown, and is the subject of both controversy and increased study.

In elaborating these concerns, the point to be underscored is that in the search for remedial action the impact of the recurring disasters that afflict Bangladesh is obviously far beyond its capacity to control or effectively to mitigate.

(Mr. R. Rahman, Bangladesh)

It is in this context that we turn to the main thrust of the preambular paragraphs of the draft resolution that has been submitted. This is two-fold: first, the dire macro-economic impact on the economy of Bangladesh and the consequent need for sustained development assistance over the long term to renew and revitalize the economy; secondly, the need for viable approaches in coping with the phenomenon of natural disasters, particularly their assessment, prediction, mitigation and prevention, and for assistance over time in this specific regard.

Obviously, responsibility in dealing with both these aspects rests primarily on the Government of Bangladesh. Disasters are not new in Bangladesh, and, despite well-known and even crippling limitations, strenuous efforts have been undertaken to meet and mitigate them to the best of our ability. That has been illustrated this year by the fact that the number of deaths has been restricted to only about 2,000, relative to the massive loss of life in past disasters.

(Mr. R. Rahman, Bangladesh)

Under the present Government, a comprehensive national programme was drawn up and is being continuously refined to deal with the three major aspects of disaster: short-term measures for relief and rehabilitation; medium-term measures for immediate recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction of the economy; and longer-term measures, with special emphasis on disaster preparedness and preventive schemes. These have been accompanied by broad-based institutional arrangements, including the establishment of a national disaster prevention council, directly under the President; and standing operational procedures, to be activated throughout the country at the immediate onset of a disaster and for quick deployment of civilian and armed forces personnel and pre-positioning of food and essential materials.

The sheer magnitude of these disasters, however, inevitably defeats the degree to which we have been able to respond. As was pointed out by the Foreign Minister of Bangladesh in his statement in the general debate, despite the vicissitudes caused by the floods in 1987, genuine progress had been made this year towards the achievement of a 6 per cent growth target, spearheaded by good recovery in the agricultural sector at the beginning of this year. The latest floods have constituted a severe brake on our efforts. The ability to manoeuvre is severely constrained, and this is exacerbated by the balance of payments disequilibrium, the mounting burden of external debt and dwindling domestic resources. Projections for growth has been dramatically scaled down, from 6 per cent to 2 per cent. Diversion of tightly budgeted resources to meet the exigencies of the latest disaster has made literally impossible the tasks of adjustment in our plans.

The constraints on Bangladesh's ability to deal with the critical issue of disaster prevention and preparedness are highlighted not only by our present economic malaise but also by the fact that they are in many cases beyond our

(Mr. R. Rahman, Bangladesh)

control. Thus, the need to strengthen bilateral co-operation among countries of the region has been highlighted in the draft resolution, as well as the possibility that these multiple bilateral approaches will strengthen co-operation, co-ordination and convergence of mutual interests, leading to practical arrangements to promote solutions for the assessment, prediction, prevention and mitigation of natural disasters and to joint approaches for a permanent solution.

The draft resolution also recognizes the responsibility of the United Nations system to facilitate this process, particularly through stimulation of studies and dissemination of latest information, and through programmes for technical assistance and technology transfer. These have already been highlighted by the United Nations resolution on the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction.*

The operative paragraphs follow on the basis of the two major elements of the preamble - an appeal to sustain development assistance to Bangladesh to enable it to restore its overall economy and undertake its plans and programmes for longer-term rehabilitation and reconstruction; and, secondly, to bolster its capacity to address the critical aspects of coping with natural disasters, their assessment, prediction, mitigation and prevention and in this regard to assist Bangladesh to draw up a specific feasibility plan.

Obviously, the operative paragraphs refer to our deep gratitude to Member States, international organizations within and outside the United Nations system, non-governmental organizations and individuals and groups that have so generously assisted the Government of Bangladesh in its immediate relief and rehabilitation

* The President returned to the Chair.

(Mr. R. Rahman, Bangladesh)

efforts. They also express our deep appreciation to the Secretary-General for the urgent steps he has taken to mobilize humanitarian assistance and through the appointment of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator as his Special Representative to co-ordinate activities of the United Nations agencies in the field for purposeful and unified assistance by the international community.

The impact of natural disasters is nothing short of the impact of a major war - but in a shorter, more concentrated period of time. As the United Nations gears itself to undertake the responsibility of dousing regional conflicts and securing peace, it is our belief that it has an equal responsibility, and perhaps a more direct and effective one, in helping to mitigate and prevent natural disasters.

It is our hope that this draft resolution will constitute one step in that direction and will be adopted by consensus.

Before I conclude, I would call attention to a slight change in construction in the penultimate preambular paragraph of the draft resolution in document A/43/L.10/Rev.1. The beginning of that paragraph should read:

"Recognizing the responsibility of the United Nations system, at the request of concerned Governments, to facilitate studies ...".

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): I wish to inform members that Algeria, Italy and Mexico have become sponsors of the draft resolution now before us in document A/43/L.10/Rev.1.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to adopt this draft resolution?

Draft resolution A/43/L.10/Rev.1 was adopted (resolution 43/9).

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): That concludes our consideration of agenda item 151.

AGENDA ITEM 146

PROMOTION OF PEACE, RECONCILIATION AND DIALOGUE IN THE KOREAN PENINSULA

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): In accordance with the decision taken by the General Assembly at its 3rd plenary meeting, held on Friday, 23 September 1988, I shall call on the President of the Republic of Korea, His Excellency Mr. Roh Tae Woo, who has expressed the wish to participate in the consideration of this item.

Mr. Roh Tae Woo, President of the Republic of Korea, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations the President of the Republic of Korea, His Excellency Mr. Roh Tae Woo, and to invite him to make his statement.

President ROH (spoke in Korean; English text furnished by the delegation): Forty-three years ago, as the Second World War came to an end, the world was taking steps towards the creation of the United Nations, with great hope for lasting peace. The new body was to be entrusted with charting a new international order of peace and stability.

In my country the end of the Second World War gave rise to overwhelming jubilation and hope as the Korean people were liberated from the yoke of colonial rule and recovered the land which had been theirs for thousands of years. The joy of liberation, however, soon turned to despair over the tragic division of our homeland.

(President Roh)

As a matter of convenience, in the process of disarming the defeated colonial forces, a line of artificial division was drawn through the mid-section of the Korean peninsula along the 38th parallel. The decision to divide our land was made against the will of the Korean people, dictating the fate of the nation in the decades to come. Overnight, this cruel division turned brother against brother and plunged the Korean peninsula into a violent storm of the cold war.

On a peaceful Sunday morning in June 1950, war broke out on the Korean peninsula, and soon the whole nation was in flames. Over the next three years, tens of thousands of young people from 20 countries entered the war, and eventually over three million lives fell victim to the clash of ideologies. The war also reduced nearly everything on the peninsula to ashes.

Experiencing battle as a volunteer soldier still wearing my high-school uniform, I saw the young and innocent die in the flames of war and came to long for peace and reconciliation. I also came to believe that we must make all possible efforts to end the division and confrontation which were causing such great suffering in our nation.

The conflict ceased in 1953 with the signing of an armistice, but this did not bring about genuine peace. A state of tension and confrontation between the two parts of Korea has persisted ever since. Even though many seasons have come and gone and the world has changed dramatically over the decades, this hostile confrontation along the Korean Armistice Line has remained frozen in time and continues to be a source of danger which could trigger hostilities involving the whole world.

Beyond these political and strategic implications, the human costs of this stand-off have been enormous. Millions of family members - fathers and mothers, husbands and wives, brothers and sisters - have remained separated between the

(President Roh)

North and the South since the war and have been unable to exchange even letters or telephone calls. The emotional strains caused by this situation run deep in both the North and the South of Korea.

Is there no way out of this impasse? I stand here today to answer this question with a message of hope. We must henceforth do everything possible to hasten the coming of the springtime of peace and reconciliation on the Korean peninsula.

In this connection, I wish to welcome, on behalf of the Government and people of the Republic of Korea, the timely decision of the General Assembly to adopt the agenda item entitled "Promotion of peace, reconciliation and dialogue in the Korean peninsula."

I should also like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as President of the General Assembly. I hope that this session of the General Assembly will produce fruitful results.

In the world today we can see movements towards openness and reconciliation. The cold-war conflicts which have dominated the international scene since the end of the Second World War have begun to surrender to the power of human reason and common decency. Mankind's expectations are changing from confrontation to coexistence, from antagonism to reconciliation. I join all the members of this Assembly in welcoming these trends.

I should also like to express my gratitude and respect to the Secretary-General, Mr. Perez de Cuellar, for his insight and leadership, which have helped achieve a cease-fire in the eight-year-old Gulf war.

Thanks to the Secretary-General's role, all of us have greater confidence and expectations regarding this bulwark of peace. The Nobel Peace Prize just awarded to the United Nations Peace-keeping Forces is a testimony to this.

(President Roh)

In Afghanistan, Cambodia, Namibia and the Western Sahara, steps are being taken towards peaceful resolution of outstanding conflicts.

Furthermore, it is highly encouraging that, through their summit meetings, President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev have been able to reduce the number of deadly weapons capable of annihilating mankind.

I have come here in the spirit of "harmony and progress", the theme for the Seoul Olympiad, which ended exactly two weeks ago. The 24th Olympic Games were a great festival of co-operation and understanding in which young people from 160 countries gathered together despite differences of ideology, race and religion. Furthermore, the East and the West met in sporting arenas for the first time in 12 years at the Seoul Olympiad.

As one of the most successful Olympiads ever, the Seoul Games have instilled in all of us the hope that at last peace and reconciliation are beginning to spread throughout the world. Still, it is ironic that that wonderful festival of peace should be held in a land where the danger of conflict still looms large. But this also gives us great hope for the future. In fact the historical drama I am referring to must be seen as a part of the larger global development that is emerging from man's aspirations for peace and common prosperity.

I should like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to the peoples of all the countries whose participation and support helped make the Seoul Olympiad a successful and safe festival for all mankind.

Only a generation ago the Korean nation lay in ruins and was shackled with great suffering, hunger and poverty. We have overcome these adversities and made great progress through diligent work mixed with blood and tears. We are quite proud of our achievements, which we believe have contributed to releasing the well-springs of harmony among diverse peoples. It is also our sincere wish that

(President Roh)

these achievements offer hope and courage to all people in developing nations who are struggling against similar circumstances.

Only three decades ago we were a poor, agrarian society dependent on other nations' help for survival. We were able to transform ourselves into a newly industrializing nation only through our people's great desire to achieve, together with a passion for education.

We also took advantage of an open and competitive political and economic system which allows individuals to achieve their highest potential. Mankind's inviolate rights and inborn creativity are essential elements for making societal progress.

International trade also has played an important role in our rapid economic growth. As the 12th largest trading nation in the world, we are keenly aware of the fact that the growth of world trade has helped promote the rise in income and employment of trading partners. In this, the Republic of Korea has been especially fortunate. So, although the world brought national division and other trials to Korea, it also made it possible for us to grow and make substantial progress in many areas.

(President Roh)

There are undoubtedly many problems facing mankind today. But it can be discerned, nevertheless, that progress is being made towards reconciliation, peace and prosperity.

In order for man's hope to survive and progress to be realized, we must spare no effort to promote openness and mutual exchanges, co-operation and reconciliation. There is no alternative. Isolation and confrontation will bring only calamity and suffering to every corner of this global village.

As far as the Korean people are concerned, we believe we have been able to progress through international co-operation and openness toward others. That is why we are looking to the future with optimism and confidence that we will eventually achieve democracy, prosperity and national reunification for all Koreans on the peninsula. There is vitality in every corner of the Republic of Korea today as well as in every individual, thanks to the freedoms protected by our social system. I am sure that this new vitality will accelerate our progress and bring nearer the springtime of peace and reconciliation on the Korean peninsula.

Today our world stands at an important turning-point that delineates one era from another. It has been said that the only thing that does not change is the inevitability of change itself. The world of confrontation and conflict is giving way to a world of détente, a trend which is taking place right here at the United Nations. Serious efforts are also commencing to bring peace and the relaxation of tension to the Korean peninsula, one of the last vestiges of the cold war.

The distrust left behind by the Korean war gave rise to the confrontation between North and South Korea. During the 35 years since the Armistice Agreement, enormous military forces have continued to confront each other across the armistice line. In order to put an end to this hostile stand-off, there is no alternative but

(President Roh)

to build mutual trust by engaging in exchange and co-operation, and destroying the wall that separates us. To achieve this, we need a fresh approach. And that is precisely what I unveiled on 7 July this year.

I have declared that the North and the South of Korea should immediately end all forms of hostile, confrontational relations. For instance, we should immediately cease publicly attacking each other. I have made it clear that we are determined to pursue a relationship of partnership with North Korea. Our cultural and historical unity demands that we devote ourselves to the pursuit of common prosperity and mutual well-being for all Koreans. In the same declaration, I proposed that we allow not only the reunion of millions of separated family members but also free exchanges among political, economic and religious leaders as well as ordinary citizens. Also, I have taken concrete steps to pave the way for free trade between the northern and southern parts of Korea.

We must transform the North-South Korean relationship so that we can reconnect every roadway, whether a major highway or a little path, linking the two sides which remain disconnected now. Then we could be enabled to go on to develop our common land by combining our human, technological and financial resources.

If there may be any difficulties for North Koreans in opening their doors just now, I believe that we could work together towards this by building a "city of peace" in the demilitarized zone. Within such a city, family members who have remained separated for more than three decades could freely reunite. Broad trade and other kinds of exchanges could also be facilitated by establishing in the new "city of peace" such venues as a home for national culture, a centre for scholarly exchanges and a trade centre.

Similarly, I stated in the same 7 July declaration that we are determined to end confrontation with North Korea in our external relations. It is our sincere

(President Roh)

hope that North Korea will participate fully in the international community. Doing so can only benefit the North Korean people, not harm them. Within the world community, the North and the South must recognize each other and co-operate to promote the common interest of the entire nation.

It is our wish that our allies and friends will contribute to the progress and opening of North Korea by engaging Pyongyang in expanding relations. It is also our position that those socialist countries with close ties to North Korea continue to maintain positive relations and co-operate with North Korea even as they improve their relations with us.

The pursuit of mutual respect and prosperity through increasing co-operation, however, is not our ultimate goal. It is a requisite process we must go through in order to build the relationship of trust necessary for the nation's reunification. When such a relationship is firmly established, we can look forward to realizing peaceful reunification.

On the anniversary of our national liberation last August, I proposed to North Korean President Kim Il Sung that we hold direct talks. Since the peninsula became divided, both sides have put forth many different proposals concerning peace and reunification. But what is necessary now is that the leaders of both sides who hold the ultimate responsibilities in their areas meet together without setting any pre-conditions. We must initiate discussions with a new spirit of openness and explore together possible avenues of compromise acceptable to both sides. We must find a common ground to build institutions for peace and create a single national community.

Hence, I have taken particular notice of the fact that President Kim Il Sung has reacted to my proposal for a North-South summit meeting. I hope I can visit

(President Roh)

Pyongyang as soon as possible. When the summit meeting does take place, I would like to propose that we agree to a declaration of non-aggression or non-use of force in order better to construct a framework for mutual trust and security.

In order to end the military confrontation which has lasted for more than three decades now and build a new relationship dedicated to shared peace and prosperity, we need to create a new basic framework for progress. Creating such a framework, of course, can be accomplished only at the level of direct contact between the leaders of the North and the South.

In this connection, I want to make it absolutely clear that even before a non-aggression declaration is made with the northern side, the Republic of Korea will never use force first against the North. We cannot expect durable peace on the Korean peninsula without ending the current military confrontation.

I propose that at our summit meeting, we discuss sincerely and resolve all the problems raised by either or both sides with regard to disarmament, arms control and other military matters. We must also explore institutional structures for peaceful relations, mutual contacts and co-operative ventures and, of course, ways of bringing about reunification. We can at the same meeting also search for concrete ways to transform the Armistice Agreement into a permanent peace arrangement.

Clearly, the problems between the northern and southern Korean sides must be dealt with and resolved by the independent efforts of the Korean people themselves. But due to Korea's geopolitical situation, the problem of durable peace on the Korean peninsula cannot be considered in total isolation from its relations with the surrounding nations.

(President Roh)

In order for durable peace to prevail on the Korean peninsula, it is necessary not only for the northern and the southern Korean sides to reach rapprochement, but for both of them to build and maintain more rational and normal relations with all the nations that have an interest in peace on the Korean peninsula.

(President Roh)

The Republic of Korea will continue to maintain and expand close co-operation with its traditional allies and friends, including the United States. In particular, we will continue our consultations and common efforts for the maintenance of peace and stability on the peninsula. In parallel with such efforts, we are also taking positive steps to improve our relations with countries such as the People's Republic of China, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and many Eastern European nations with which we have had only remote relationships due to our ideological differences.

By conducting normal relations with one another under the principles of equality and mutual respect, all the nations of the world will contribute to mutual prosperity. This also serves the cause of world peace because, through dialogue and mutual understanding, nations can work to eliminate sources of conflict while cementing friendship and partnership.

It is from this perspective that I welcome as an encouraging development the fact that socialist countries such as China and the Soviet Union are showing a forward-looking attitude in recent months concerning mutual exchanges and co-operation with the Republic of Korea in a number of fields. I find it significant that China, a nation which traditionally was a good neighbour of Korea, is moving to overcome the wall of separation that has lasted for nearly half a century and is expanding its mutual exchanges and co-operation with the Republic of Korea. I have also taken careful notice of the positive signals being made by General Secretary Gorbachev of the Soviet Union.

At the same time, we will continue to deepen our co-operative relationships with developing countries and, in fact, we intend to strengthen our political, economic and cultural ties with many nations of the third world and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. It is our intense desire to do all that we can to share our

(President Roh)

developmental experience and technical resources with the developing nations. To be able to contribute to the development of the third world nations would give immense satisfaction to the Korean people who are themselves a developing nation.

The Asia-Pacific region is marching forward towards a new era of prosperity. This is taking place thanks to the strengthening of international co-operation as well as the strong will of the region's peoples to achieve progress based on their infinite potential and dynamism. Within the Pacific Rim, north-east Asia constitutes the seat of age-old oriental civilization. Yet that region has challenged world peace as it has endured a century of conflicts, namely the Sino-Japanese War, the Russo-Japanese War, the Pacific War, and the Korean War. It is my belief that without peace in north-east Asia, there cannot be peace in the world, and that without co-operation among the area's nations, there cannot commence an era of Pacific prosperity.

Therefore, I take this opportunity to propose a consultative conference for peace among the United States of America, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the People's Republic of China and Japan as well as North and South Korea, in order to lay a solid foundation for durable peace and prosperity in north-east Asia.

Such a conference can deal with a broad range of issues concerning peace, stability, progress and prosperity within the area. To be sure, it may not be easy to gather these States together at the same table because of the outstanding differences in ideology, social systems and policies among them. But I am sure we can overcome such difficulties if we all acknowledge the fact that we are inseparable partners in the pursuit of peace and prosperity. The realization of this proposal will certainly create an international environment more conducive to peace in Korea and reunification of the peninsula.

(President Roh)

Looking forward to the twenty-first century, I sense that a new chapter of human history is unfolding. Indeed, changes are taking place in this global village, and mankind is increasingly guided by tenets of reason and wisdom rather than by ideological obsessions. None the less, there is no guarantee that mankind will not some day be plunged into the whirlwind of global conflict. If we are to avoid this tragedy, openness, peace and co-operation are the only options left to us.

I look forward to this new chapter of history wherein peaceful efforts towards co-operation and progress will be the norm rather than the exception. Likewise, the time will certainly come on the Korean peninsula when the brotherhood of all Koreans, North and South, will triumph over our differences, leaving the Korean nation free of tension, conflict and the threat of war. I believe that the present ordeal will finally come to an end and the blessing of peace and reunification will be bestowed upon the Korean people who, incidentally, have never attempted invasion of a foreign country throughout their five milleniums of history.

Upon the day when swords are beaten into ploughshares on the Korean peninsula, the opportunity for lasting world peace will be strengthened. Believing that this day will come, I will continue my efforts, together with my 60 million compatriots, in seeking lasting harmony in our nation. This is a solemn responsibility of my generation and the dream and passion of our younger generations in Korea. Through concerted efforts, we are determined to overcome whatever difficulties we may encounter. As the most successful Olympics ever held just concluded in a land once dominated by conflict and poverty, so too the day will come when the wall of separation on the Korean peninsula will fall and harmony will prevail.

Lastly, I earnestly appeal to you all to support and encourage the aspirations of all the Korean people who, as expressed by the theme song of the Seoul Olympics,

(President Roh)

so strongly desire to go "hand in hand over the walls" and realize the goals of peace and reunification. May I also assure you that the Korean people will demonstrate that they are worthy of your support, as we build a unified, peaceable nation on the peninsula.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Korea for his statement.

Mr. Roh Tae Woo, President of the Republic of Korea, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

The meeting was suspended at 11.30 a.m. and resumed at 11.45 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 3 (continued)

CREDENTIALS OF REPRESENTATIVES TO THE FORTY-THIRD SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

(b) FIRST REPORT OF THE CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE (A/43/715); AMENDMENT (A/43/L.11)

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): I invite members to turn their attention to the draft resolution recommended by the Credentials Committee in paragraph 22 of its report (A/43/715), which reads as follows:

"The General Assembly,

"Approves the first report of the Credentials Committee."

In this connection the Assembly also has before it an amendment (A/43/L.11) to that draft resolution submitted by a number of States.

I call on the representative of Democratic Yemen to introduce the amendment.

Mr. AL-ASHTAL (Democratic Yemen) (interpretation from Arabic): I wish first to mention that there are two documents concerning this subject. The first, document A/43/707, contains a letter from the Chairman of the Arab Group to the Secretary-General; the second, document A/43/722, contains a letter from the representatives of a number of countries to the Secretary-General.

In my capacity as Chairman of the Arab Group for this month and in the name of the Member States which have sponsored it, I wish to introduce the amendment (A/43/L.11) challenging the credentials of the delegation of Israel to the forty-third session of the General Assembly. The sponsors are: Algeria, Bahrain, the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, Djibouti, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates and the Yemen Arab Republic. I speak also on behalf of the Palestine Liberation Organization.

(Mr. Al-Ashtal, Democratic Yemen)

Israel's membership in the United Nations goes back 40 years, during which time Israel has proved beyond any shadow of a doubt that it does not respect or fulfil the obligations which it has accepted in accordance with the United Nations Charter. Furthermore, it has not respected or implemented any of the decisions of the General Assembly or the Security Council.

The General Assembly, in resolution ES-9/1, of 5 February 1982, noted the following:

"that Israel's record and actions established conclusively that it is not a peace-loving Member State and that it has not carried out its obligation under the Charter".

On this basis we challenge the credentials of the delegation of Israel to the forty-third session of the General Assembly for the following reasons.

First, Israel has not complied with Security Council resolutions concerning the Palestinian question and the situation in the Middle East, thereby violating Article 25 of the Charter.

(Mr. Al-Ashtal, Democratic Yemen)

Second, Israel has not implemented General Assembly resolutions on the question of Palestine and the situation in the Middle East calling for the restoration to the Palestinian people of their inalienable rights, including the right to return and the right to self-determination and to establish their independent State, Palestine, and stressing the need for the ending of the Israeli occupation of Arab territories, in keeping with the principle of the non-admissibility of the acquisition of territories by force, and for Israeli withdrawal from all the territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem and the Syrian Golan Heights.

Third, Israel has not implemented General Assembly resolutions concerning other matters in connection with the question of Palestine and the situation in the Middle East.

Fourth, Israel is violating human rights in the occupied Palestinian territories and the other occupied Arab territories, including Jerusalem, and, in particular, it is violating the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 12 August 1949. Here we refer specifically to the escalation of Israeli repression against the Arab Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territories and against the inhabitants of the other occupied Arab territories, including the deportation of Arab citizens from these lands, since the beginning of the Palestinian uprising against the Israeli occupation.

Fifth, Israel persists in the annexation of Arab and Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem and the Golan, thereby violating the provisions of the United Nations Charter and international laws.

Sixth, Israel is continuing its acts of aggression against Arab countries and extending them to Lebanon, Iraq and Tunisia.

(Mr. Al-Ashtal, Democratic Yemen)

Seventh, Israel's co-operation with the racist South African régime, especially in the nuclear and economic fields, continues.

Eighth, and finally, the credentials of the delegation of Israel at the forty-third session of the General Assembly are issued from the occupied city of Jerusalem, in violation of Security Council resolutions, especially resolution 478 (1980), and relevant General Assembly resolutions, especially resolution 35/169 E, dated 15 December 1980.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): I call on the representative of Norway, on a point of order.

Mr. TELLMANN (Norway): I raise a point of order on behalf of the five Nordic countries - Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Sweden and Norway - in connection with the amendment (A/43/L.11) just introduced by the representative of Democratic Yemen, which proposes rejection of the credentials of the representatives of Israel.

On behalf of the Nordic countries, I formally move that no action be taken on the amendment and ask the President to be good enough to put this motion immediately to a vote. The motion is made within the terms of rule 74 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly. It should be emphasized that our motion is motivated by our dedication to upholding the capacity and authority of the United Nations to act in fulfilment of its primary purpose, the maintenance of international peace and security.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): The representative of Norway has moved, within the terms of rule 74 of the rules of procedure, that no action be taken on the amendment circulated in document A/43/L.11. Rule 74 reads as follows:

(The President)

"During the discussion of any matter, a representative may move the adjournment of the debate on the item under discussion. In addition to the proposer of the motion, two representatives may speak in favour of, and two against, the motion, after which the motion shall be immediately put to the vote."

As a result, I shall now put to the vote the motion submitted by the representative of Norway that no action be taken on the amendment circulated in document A/43/L.11.

A recorded has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour: Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Barbados, Belgium, Belize, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Burma, Burundi, Cameroon, Canada, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cyprus, Denmark, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Germany, Federal Republic of, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Luxembourg, Malawi, Mali, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, Romania, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, Sao Tome and Principe, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Spain, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela, Yugoslavia, Zaire, Zambia

Against: Afghanistan, Algeria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Congo, Cuba, Democratic Yemen, Djibouti, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritania, Mongolia, Morocco, Nicaragua, Niger, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Somalia, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Arab Emirates, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zimbabwe

Abstaining: China, India, Madagascar, Rwanda, Turkey, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania

The motion was adopted by 95 votes to 41, with 7 abstentions.

Mr. OUDOVENKO (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) (interpretation from Russian): On behalf of the delegations of the the People's Republic of Bulgaria, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, the German Democratic Republic, the Hungarian People's Republic, the Mongolian People's Republic, the Polish People's Republic and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and on behalf of my own delegation, I wish to express serious objections with regard to the credentials of the group of persons who claim that they represent so-called Democratic Kampuchea.

At previous General Assembly sessions our countries have stated their position on the subject clearly and unambiguously. The Government of the People's Republic of Kampuchea is the sole, legitimate representative of the Kampuchean people; it exercises unconditional control over the entire national territory and has full jurisdiction over the entire population of the territory. Only that Government is authorized to take the seat that rightfully belongs to it in the United Nations and other international forums, since it is the People's Republic of Kampuchea that has given back to its people their dignity and human rights, which for years had been trampled on by those who are trying today to pass themselves off as the representatives of that people.

(Mr. Oudovenko, Ukrainian SSR)

The participation of the representatives of so-called Democratic Kampuchea in the work of the General Assembly is illegal. Their presence here insults the memory of the millions of victims of the genocide practised by the Pol Pot clique. It violates the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and erects obstacles in the way of a comprehensive political settlement of the Kampuchean problem. The continued acceptance of the fictitious credentials of Pol Pot's closest associates flouts the positive processes which have taken place in the region. Support for those credentials is not the best way to approach the solution of the Kampuchean problem and the normalization of the situation in South-East Asia.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): I now call on those delegations who wish to speak on the recommendation of the Credentials Committee. May I remind delegations that, in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, such statements are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

MR. KHAMSY (Lao People's Democratic Republic) (interpretation from French): On behalf of the People's Republic of Kampuchea, the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam and my own country, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, I must express the greatest regret that the Credentials Committee has again this year endorsed the presence in our midst of the representatives of the so-called Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea. We all know that this so-called Coalition Government is a Government in name only, because it represents only those of whom it is made up. It has no seat, it has no capital and it does not control any part of Kampuchean territory. At best it is a juridical fiction and its main constituent is shamefully represented by the Pol Pot executioners, whose genocidal crimes against their own people are known, deprecated and condemned by all.

The Government of the People's Republic of Kampuchea, whose representative is unfortunately not in our midst, on the contrary, exercises all State prerogatives

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

and competence throughout the territory of the country. It can truly be said that it is under the Government of the People's Republic of Kampuchea that the martyred people of Kampuchea has been able to regain its fundamental right to life and now enjoys that right like other peoples of the world. This people has been reborn and lives once again. We are witnesses to that. It is living happily, in freedom in its own country.

We therefore believe that the People's Republic of Kampuchea, the sole legitimate representative of the people of Kampuchea, deserves to be recognized by the international community. It would be a serious error and a flagrant injustice to deny it the seat to which it is entitled in our Organization. Therefore, on behalf of the delegations and the Governments of the countries that I have enumerated, I wish to enter our most express reservations on the report of the Credentials Committee with regard, in particular, to the representation of Kampuchea at the forty-third session of the General Assembly.

Mr. LI LUYE (China) (interpretation from Chinese): The Chinese delegation is of the view that the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea is the sole legitimate Government of Kampuchea. At all previous sessions the General Assembly has made correct decisions on the credentials of its representatives. With regard to the régime propped up by foreign aggression - that is, the Heng Samrin régime - it can in no way represent the people of that country.

The Chinese delegation recommends that the General Assembly accept the credentials of the representatives of Democratic Kampuchea.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): The Assembly will now take action on the recommendation of the Credentials Committee in paragraph 22 of its first report (A/43/715).

(The President)

The Credentials Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 43/10).

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): I shall now call on representatives who wish to explain their positions.

Mr. BADAWI (Egypt) (interpretation from Arabic): My delegation wishes to place on record the following points.

First, support for the procedural motion submitted by the Norwegian delegation is in keeping with the attitude adopted by Egypt with regard to the method of dealing with the efforts to bring about a peaceful settlement in the Middle East and a just settlement of the Palestinian question, that is by encouraging negotiations between all the parties and their participation on a footing of equality in an international peace conference.

Secondly, Egypt's position concerning a just and comprehensive settlement of the Middle East question reaffirms the need for Israel's withdrawal from all the Arab territories occupied since 5 June 1967, and the need to restore the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, foremost among which is the right to self-determination.

Thirdly, Egypt, in its serious attempt to attain such a settlement, believes that it is necessary to create in the region conditions and circumstances that will encourage the parties concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, to strive for such a settlement.

(Mr. Badawi, Egypt)

Hence, Egypt once again condemns all the practices of the occupying Power in the Arab territories in the West Bank, Gaza and the Golan, which run counter to all international law and conventions.*

Mr. Son SANN (Democratic Kampuchea) (interpretation from French): The Assembly has just adopted without a vote the recommendation in the first report of the Credentials Committee, thereby once again confirming the authenticity of Democratic Kampuchea as a full Member of the United Nations and of its Government, the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea, as the sole lawful and legitimate representative of the people of Kampuchea.

On behalf of the entire people of Kampuchea, the victim of Vietnamese aggression and occupation, and the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea, and on my own behalf, I wish to express our most profound gratitude and appreciation to all those who have contributed in one way or another to this act of justice.

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

(Mr. Son Sann, Democratic
Kampuchea)

Through this noble decision the international community has once again shown that it is deeply committed to the rule of law and to the fundamental principles of our Organization against all attempts to impose a new world political order based on the force of arms. To the people of Kampuchea that decision is a further confirmation of the justness and legitimacy of the patriotic struggle it has been waging heroically for almost 10 years in order to recover its sacred rights to self-determination, independence, freedom and dignity. This invaluable act gives us much comfort and encourages us to persevere in the fierce struggle that has been imposed upon us by the Vietnamese invaders and occupiers, until the total liberation of our homeland has been achieved.

The reservations that have been entered with regard to the credentials of Democratic Kampuchea by the representatives of Viet Nam and its allies are nothing but baseless propaganda, the purpose of which is to discredit the just, patriotic struggle of the people of Kampuchea, the national resistance forces and the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea. In so doing, Viet Nam and its allies have not abandoned their misguided attempt to mislead the international community into believing that the problem of Kampuchea was not created by Vietnamese invasion and occupation but that it is a civil war, a conflict between Khmers, and that Viet Nam is merely an outsider. Thereby, Viet Nam seeks to make the world believe that the puppet régime in Phnom Penh is growing stronger and to denigrate the struggle of the people of Kampuchea and its Coalition Government, which have driven back the Vietnamese forces and brought them to a complete standstill on the battlefields in Kampuchea.

The reservations show clearly that Viet Nam is not willing to put an end to its military occupation and to respect the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Kampuchea. They also show that Viet Nam is not ready to

(Mr. Son Sann, Democratic
Kampuchea)

abandon the puppet régime. On the contrary, Viet Nam is seeking to prettify that régime in order to realize its dream of Indo-Chinese federation. In this regard, last May, when Viet Nam announced the so-called withdrawal of 50,000 troops from Kampuchea, it went so far as to state that "Vietnamese forces remaining in Kampuchea" would be placed under the command of the puppet régime in Phnom Penh. Since then, Viet Nam has striven furiously to deflect the attention of the international community from the only real key to the problem of Kampuchea - the withdrawal of Vietnamese forces - towards the so-called "threat of the return of the Khmer Rouge", with a view to "maintaining the status quo in Kampuchea", as was stated impudently by the Vietnamese Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, Tran Quang Co, before this Assembly on 4 October last.

However, we are convinced that the international community, which has already expressed itself unequivocally and repeatedly in this regard, will not be misled by Vietnamese falacious declarations on Viet Nam's intentions at a time when Vietnamese forces remain in Kampuchea and the Kampuchean people continues to be deprived of its right to self-determination.

A genuine and lasting peace will return to Kampuchea only when Viet Nam totally and unconditionally withdraws its forces, when the Kampuchean people is able to exercise fully its right freely to decide on its own future through elections under international supervision, and when Kampuchea becomes an independent, neutral and non-aligned State.

Mrs. GARCIA (Cuba) (interpretation from Spanish): The delegation of Cuba regrets the fact that the credentials of the representatives of so-called Democratic Kampuchea have been accepted, these people do not represent either the Government or the people of Kampuchea. Their presence here is not in keeping with either the spirit or the letter of the United Nations Charter. They are only

(Mrs. Garcia, Cuba)

trying to deny the existence of the Government of the People's Republic of Kampuchea, which, since 1979, has represented the fundamental rights of the Kampuchean people, and, with great effort, is restoring the national economy, which the genocidal Pol Pot clique had brought to the brink of ruin.

We continue to believe that only the legitimate representatives of the People's Republic of Kampuchea have the sovereign right to represent the interests of their people at the United Nations.

Mr. BIRCH (United Kingdom): The fact that my delegation has raised no formal challenge to the credentials of the delegation from Afghanistan should not be taken as implying that the British Government will deal with the present régime in Kabul on a Government-to-Government basis.

I should also like to make it clear that our acceptance of the Credentials Committee's recommendation in respect of the credentials of the representatives of Democratic Kampuchea signifies no intention on our part to contribute to the re-establishment of the abhorrent Pol Pot régime, from which we withdrew recognition in December 1979.

Count YORK von WARTENBURG (Federal Republic of Germany): I should like to put on record our position on the credentials of the delegation of Afghanistan. Our vote in favour of the report of the Credentials Committee does not imply that we recognize the legitimacy of the régime in Kabul.

Mr. NOTERDAEME (Belgium) (interpretation from French): The Government of Belgium has noted with pleasure that significant progress has been made towards a peaceful solution of the Afghan conflict, particularly the signing, last April, of the Geneva Accords. However, my delegation's wish not to break the consensus on the report of the Credentials Committee should not be construed as implicit recognition of the present régime in Afghanistan.

Mr. KAMAL (Pakistan): In regard to the report of the Credentials Committee, contained in document A/43/715, dated 14 October 1988, which is before the General Assembly, my delegation wishes to record its formal reservation to the credentials of the delegation representing Afghanistan at this forty-third session. In view of the decision taken by the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the realities of the situation in Afghanistan, Pakistan continues to adhere to its policy of withholding recognition to the régime in Kabul.

Mr. ROSHAN-RAWAAN (Afghanistan): This morning, statements have been made by the representative of Pakistan and by a number of other representatives with regard to the credentials of the delegation of the Republic of Afghanistan. I should like to put on the record the total and categorical rejection, by my delegation, of the assertions made in this regard. These statements are totally baseless and are obviously invalid.

The State of the Republic of Afghanistan draws its legitimacy solely from the sovereign will of the people of Afghanistan. The people of Afghanistan have expressed their will through their traditional Loya Jirga - Grand National Assembly - which has adopted the Constitution of the land and has elected the President of the Republic. Furthermore, they are exercising their will through the deputies they have elected to the Parliament of the country. This Parliament has given its votes of confidence to the Government.

(Mr. Roshan-Rawaan, Afghanistan)

I would add that after the entry into force of the Geneva agreements, and the new conditions obtained, my delegation had not expected that these old clichés would be repeated in the General Assembly. These statements have obviously been made in total disregard of the letter and spirit of the Geneva agreements, and they constitute a flagrant violation of its explicit provisions.

My delegation is convinced that the time has come for all concerned to face the objective realities prevailing in and around Afghanistan and to contribute positively to the normalization of the situation through the full implementation of the Geneva agreements, which alone, we trust, can settle the situation at hand.

Mr. AL-MASRI (Syrian Arab Republic) (interpretation from Arabic): My delegation wishes to place on record its reservations concerning the credentials of the so-called delegation of the Democratic Republic of Kampuchea. My delegation has at previous sessions of the Assembly explained the reasons for those reservations.

The PRESIDENT: The Assembly has concluded its consideration of the first report of the Credentials Committee.

The meeting rose at 12.20 p.m.