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Held at Headquarters, New York,  
on Tuesday, 3 October 1989, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. GARBA (Nigeria)

later: Mr. AL-ANBARI (Iraq)  
(Vice-President)

- Address by Mr. Oscar Arias Sanchez, President of the Republic of Costa Rica
- General debate [9] (continued)

Statements made by

Mr. Barrios Tassano (Uruguay)  
Mr. Al-Shara (Syrian Arab Republic)  
Mr. Mladenov (Bulgaria)  
Mr. Escheikh (Tunisia)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

ADDRESS BY MR. OSCAR ARIAS SANCHEZ, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF COSTA RICA

The PRESIDENT: The Assembly will first hear an address by the President of the Republic of Costa Rica.

Mr. Oscar Arias Sanchez, President of the Republic of Costa Rica, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations the President of the Republic of Costa Rica, His Excellency Mr. Oscar Arias Sanchez, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President ARIAS SANCHEZ (interpretation from Spanish): I salute you, Sir, on behalf of the Costa Rican people and wish you all success as President of the General Assembly. I salute also a tireless friend in the efforts for peace in Central America and the world, Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar.

As President of Costa Rica I came here for the first time in 1986. I said then that Central America was on the brink of war. I have returned today for the last time during my term of office to tell the Assembly that we are on the verge of peace. Yesterday I came to ask for your help and today I come to thank you. Then, we had to stop a war; now we must build peace. How quickly the world has changed in these few years. Brother has stopped killing brother in many places on this Earth. I ask myself: Where are the winners of those wars? Where are the vanquished? Let us not be afraid to say it: the only winners were those who had the courage to a peace accord; the only winners were those who had the courage to change history. Wherever violence continues, everyone is the loser.

The line between war and peace is a difficult and treacherous path. It also bears witness to resentments that persist for many years. At times the decisions of the few, immersed in ideological dogmatism of religious fanaticism, are enough

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to tip the scale towards destruction and death. On other occasions, men in faraway places encourage armed conflicts, disregarding the pain of those who are dying. It takes very little to turn peace one day into violence the next. It is also true that individuals and peoples can make a difference in favour of peace. The strength of forgiveness and dialogue can silence the guns and put everyone to work towards finding real solutions. Our destiny is not carved in stone and it is our responsibility to fashion a different future.

There are many who are unsure whether to commit themselves to the path of dialogue and reconciliation for fear of being called naive. It is easier to say that wars will always exist and wash one's hands of it, as did the great traitors in the history of humankind who could have prevented murder but chose to remain silent, who could have stopped war but encouraged it, who could have fought poverty but chose to ignore it. I am not afraid to say that the war which threatened to spread in so many directions has turned into an opportunity to build peace. My people are proud of having contributed to that change. We will not be prisoners of our past, not even for the sake of caution, when perpetuating that past violates the rights of men and women, limits their freedom, allows poverty and leads to war. The solutions to the problems that have been besetting us for so many years require imagination and courage. Let there be change. Let everything change so that hope can bring peoples together on one unified path.

Even though hunger is increasing in the world and inequalities between rich and poor countries are widening, the scale between war and peace has tipped towards peace. The direction of history in the struggle between dictatorship and the people has tipped in favour of freedom and democracy. Violence has not lessened pain, but severely increased it. It has not resolved problems, but has created other, bigger ones. The risks involved in forging a different future are less than

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the pain and evil that will result if we persist in following the past blindly. to begin by ending war is the right way, but if we cannot build peace immediately we will have lost everything before we wake up to reality.

The Central American Peace Plan continues to move forward. The presidential summit meetings in El Salvador and Honduras have strengthened our commitment to fight to end the violence and improve democracy. The armed struggle in Nicaragua has stopped and thousands upon thousands of young people in that country owe their lives to that courageous agreement. An electoral process has begun, and in February 1990 the people of Nicaragua will elect a new president and parliament. With the help of many and with international supervision, elections in our sister country will be fair and equal guarantees will be given to all alike. We must continue to foster the reconciliation of the people of Nicaragua; the return of those who are in exile; the silencing of the guns that are still being fired; the end to violence demanded by reason, mercy and the peace plan.

The next presidential summit will be held in December in Nicaragua. That will be an opportunity for us all to verify the progress made towards the free and democratic elections that the entire world hopes to see. Nothing at that meeting could contribute to peace more greatly than an agreement to reduce the Sandinista armed forces substantially. This demilitarization is an indispensable prerequisite if we want to achieve peace in our region. Because I have these hopes and will work for them, I was not afraid to come here in the past and say that Sandino had been murdered anew, for his struggle for freedom had been betrayed. I say today that I believe there is hope for the people of Nicaragua to become reconciled in democracy and freedom so that Sandino will rise again for all of them and so that together they can continue to pursue the revolution for freedom in freedom.

This month in Costa Rica, representatives of the Government of El Salvador will meet with leaders of the guerrilla forces of the Farabundo Marti National

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Liberation Front. The purpose of the meeting is to negotiate an end to the hostilities. With God's help they will be able to reach an agreement similar to that obtained by the people of Nicaragua in Sapoá for the sake of peace. All the brutality in El Salvador has not led to any solution. Let anyone in this room rise and say without hesitation, in the presence of the nations of the world, what problems were solved by encouraging and supporting violence in our tortured Central America. I ask all those who can help to contribute to putting an end to the senseless killing and destruction in El Salvador. We demand an end to a decade of pain that has yielded no gains and provided no future.

Once more, as we come closer to the cease-fire negotiations, the conflicts and acts of war which torment that sister country have increased. Those who think that by demonstrating greater destructive power they will gain an advantage in the dialogue are badly mistaken. An increase in violence reveals desperation and confirms weakness. There is no longer any sympathy in the world for heroic acts that turn into cowardice, for honour where blood is spilled.

Honduras rightly asks that the Nicaraguan Contras established in its territory immediately put down their weapons and return home. In Guatemala a few lunatics have escalated their acts of violence. They too will find no sympathy in a world that will not again confuse courage with terrorism nor fanaticism with the struggle for freedom. The doors of democracy have been opened for Guatemala, and we can all contribute to widening them. To abandon this path is to miss the call of history for democracy in that beloved sister nation.

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In the past few years the balance in Central America has tipped in favour of freedom, democracy and peace. Much remains to be done. We are very far from achieving the political coexistence we seek for every country and for the region, but we are moving in the right direction.

Everyone from His Holiness Pope John Paul II to the United Nations agrees that development and peace are inseparable. In the lands surrounding my country they are proceeding on dangerously separate paths. All the countries of the region, apart from Costa Rica, have become poorer. It is urgent to reverse that trend.

We are not unaware that many wish to help us. Nor can we fail to mention that only very slowly and in very few instances have good intentions materialized into facts. We shall maintain confidence in the United Nations special plan of economic assistance for Central America adopted by the Assembly, in the San José accords, which reflect the co-operation of the European Economic Community, in the Sanford Commission, which promotes development programmes that rise above political differences, and in the Caribbean Basin initiative, which gives preferential treatment to our exports. We shall never give up hope, because without development our peace will not last. In a few years we have to reverse more than 100 years of injustice and oppression.

The anguish of war, the hopes we share for a true peace and our dreams of sustainable development do not remove us from the challenges facing all mankind. We have not distanced ourselves from the political, technological and economic changes of our times. We are not unaware of the fact that imminent ecological disasters have become as serious a threat as war and are a harbinger of death, suffering and hunger. We are neither an economic nor a military Power. Nor are we merely part of a problem. We are part of a solution; we are defenders of ideas; we aspire to be a moral force.

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This year we shall celebrate 100 years of democracy in Costa Rica, and we have already celebrated more than 40 years as a people without weapons. We see a world weary of violence, tired of poverty. We see a world desperately seeking change. In the division between those who take refuge in the past and those who assume the risks of constructing a different future, my people is on the road of the future.

In this scenario, in which ideological walls are tumbling down and what was the iron curtain is opening up, and in which the wire fences that imprisoned nations are being cut, we can look without fear at the promise of freedom. Confrontation has not helped us solve our most basic differences. On the contrary, it contributed to spreading selfishness, to permitting dogmatic and fanatical men to govern in respectability. We mistook arrogance for courage. We made heroes of those who merely spoke against the powerful and promised to see justice done with arms. We forgot to work towards solutions, to make a commitment with respect to the suffering of our peoples, to accept the primary responsibility for taking up the challenges facing us. No one can be unaware that we have an opportunity to make a different world, to surmount through co-operation an agenda common to all, nations rich and poor, nations old and young.

The struggle for human rights must now and forever be without boundaries - without boundaries, the task of promoting peace in order to banish violence in the solution of our problems; without boundaries, the condemnation of terrorist acts; without boundaries, the determination to strengthen and buttress democracies, for never in history have democratic Governments made war upon one another; without boundaries, the obligation to take account of environmental concerns in our development plans; without boundaries, the commitment to free our children from the drugs that are killing and destroying them; without boundaries, our efforts to ensure that no nuclear weapon will ever be launched again, so that gradually, by replacing fear with understanding, we can destroy those weapons; without

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boundaries, the commitment to control and reduce conventional weapons, and the disarmament that has become possible in this new era must guarantee resources for development and not only for the conquest of space; without boundaries, our hope for markets free from protectionism, for fair prices for commodities and for equitable opportunities for the growth of all peoples. Let us make this closing decade of the twentieth century one of peace and bread for all the world.

Much remains to be done before we finish tearing down the walls that reflect the dogmatism and hatred of the past. Much remains to be done before we can commit ourselves to a common agenda. Beyond those two concerns, the greatest risk is that we will raise even higher walls separating the rich nations from the poor, separating the North from the South. Today, when a farmer who works in the lands and villages south of the Rio Grande crosses the border or the sea to enter a developed country, he gains 100 years of development for himself and 200 years for his children. In the past, millions came from Europe to the Americas in search of an opportunity to win the race against hunger, to open up horizons of freedom. Today we must ensure opportunities for balanced development for all nations and see to it that the walls that are torn down do not consolidate new alliances based on economic selfishness. If that happens, not only will the world's poor be the losers, but the rich too will find the ozone layer full of holes and their souls full of drugs. We must view the common agenda as a joint responsibility and share burdens and benefits without fear.

Certain countries and many people in various parts of the world refuse to co-operate in strengthening a new world. Matters remain that have not been settled, which causes an uncertainty that turns even the brave into cowards. It is of vital importance for us in Central America that the strict separation between East and West grow less rigid. If war is to end, it is crucial to abandon spheres



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of hegemony and make a commitment to work for freedom and democracy. For those who used to think that the only road to justice was the road of weaponry, the time has come to come down from the mountain and join the democratic process.

I wrote the following to the leader of the Soviet Union:

"I urge you once again, Mr. Gorbachev, to lay down arms in Central America. The young Russians who are dying today in Afghanistan have been punishment enough for a mistaken policy. Their troops will return to the Soviet Union along the honourable path of courageously correcting one's mistakes. Correct also your policy towards Central America. Let us also hold talks on eliminating conventional weapons, which today are killing our children and the children of the third world."

The answer, although slow in coming compared with the speed with which our young people were dying daily in Central America, was positive. The Soviet Government agreed to work for peaceful understanding and to suspend all military aid.

It saddens me to report that shipments of weapons to the region continue. In Cuba, the leaders seem to have decided to remain in the Sierra Maestra and turn their back on the new world that is being born. I reiterate here my impassioned plea to all nations of the world to halt military assistance to the Central American region. As Cuba withdrew its soldiers from Angola, it must withdraw its support for armed opposition in the lands of Central America.

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The problems that hinder our struggle for peace have been compounded by the threats and evil deeds of drug traffickers and by fears arising from the setbacks suffered by democracy in Panama. In Costa Rica, we approved, with the unanimous vote of our legislative assembly one of the strictest laws ever enacted to fight drug trafficking and all commerce related to it. We are fighting and we will fight on, without faltering, for that objective, because our homeland will never provide refuge or respite for these criminals. It must be part of our commitment to peace and to a common world agenda, that Central America become drug-free. Our countries must not be tainted by drug production and trafficking.

We have given our total support to President Virgilio Barco Vargas of Colombia, to whom, in a letter written on behalf of the people of Costa Rica I have said:

"When one is faced with such a difficult and crucial challenge, one cannot compromise. There can be no agreement with those who threaten everyone and everything with savage violence and disrespect our most sacred values.

International solidarity is a categorical imperative. We cannot become accomplices, with a minute of silence or a minute of fear. You must triumph - for the greatness of your people and the dignity of the Americas."

I repeat here that in the noble struggle of President Barco Vargas, each and every one of us is a foot soldier.

I shall never tire of repeating that the alliance for freedom and democracy in the Americas, for which I called on the day I took office as President of Costa Rica, is our only hope for a lasting peace and strengthening of the foundations of economic development. There are still authoritarian Governments in Latin America, however, and that threatens our coexistence.

In Panama, our neighbor and sister nation, the path of oppression has also become the road of impoverishment. The sooner the Panamanians themselves can solve

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their problems through free elections, the lesser will be the tragedy that people endures. In Panama, principles of the supranational courses of the new world agenda have been violated - principles that protect human rights and support democracy, that combat corruption and circumscribe freedoms.

The mandate of my people is to support the moral force of which the people of Costa Rica are proud in international affairs also. We therefore denounce violence and work for peace. We denounce dictatorship and work for democracy. We denounce corruption and work for honesty. At the beginning of my presidency, I broke diplomatic relations with the Government of South Africa because we cannot sustain a dialogue with those who are capable of segregating their brothers because of the colour of their skin. We have withdrawn our Ambassador to Panama for as long as the path of liberty and democracy for all Panamanians is not respected.

International politics must not fall prey to cynicism. To state publicly the intention to pursue a certain course of action and then privately to push in the opposite direction is often the destructive practice of strong and respected Governments as well as of small nations. This behaviour undermines the trust we wish to build and we must fight it, forcing international political forums to be accountable to the people.

The will of the majority is beginning to prevail. Dialogue has regained its strength as a way to find solutions to the most difficult conflicts that confront us. The best proof of this is the United Nations, which in recent years has again begun to shine as a centre of international diplomacy and whose voice increasingly has the authority of the majority who break the chains which bound it to the extremes of power. Politics cannot consist of manipulating our fears, nor of the art of exaggerating our differences: we can respect it only when its purpose is to achieve harmony.

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Nothing could be more advantageous for mankind than reading history together. Let us attain justice by sharing the errors of the past and by working with confidence towards solutions within the framework of a new agenda for peace and development. The time has come to pay with interest for yesterday's errors and failures so that the sincere co-operation we need may arise, so that a common agenda may become a reality. There is an ecological debt that the developed world has toward future generations. Perhaps we should offset it with the financial debt of the third world. There is a social debt that is reflected in the poverty of millions. Perhaps we should offset it by opening and freeing the markets.

Once world peace has been secured, a greater effort must be made to attain harmony in two respects: ecological balance and equitable development for nations and peoples. As with so many things in life, it is easier to share ideals than to reach them. We have different ways of determining how ecological imbalances and injustices have come about. Through dialogue, we can find agreement.

Acid rain damages relations among the industrialized countries, but the lack of drinking water for millions of men, women and children is perhaps an even greater challenge. We are justifiably concerned about the possible consequences of the gradual global warming of the Earth. We know that one answer is massive reforestation of the tropical countries. The destruction of the ozone layer creates new risks for new forms of life on the planet. The technologies needed to face these challenges are based on patents so expensive they are unaffordable in our countries. We know that the extinction of different biological species must be stopped, and therefore certain practices that exist in our countries must be changed. We must also penalize the improper use of certain products by the developed countries. It is necessary to stop the loss of the forests, but soil erosion must not be neglected either.

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Each time we are disrespectful of nature, we are pointing a deadly weapon at our children. No one must impose his solution on others, but together we can find a way that respects the goal that we pursue and is suited to what each of us can do. The economic crisis and the environmental threat are now part and parcel of the same problem. The economics of waste in the North and the economics of survival in the South are poor models for development. It is now time to construct a new harmony, to aim again at achieving well-being for every people and equitable development with justice and appropriate conservation of nature.

When I came here for the first time, which seems so long ago now because of all the things that have happened since, I enthusiastically said that I proposed to come back here within four years, when my presidential term of office had ended, to tell you that together we had brought peace to Central America and that shanty-towns had become a thing of the past. Today I am here to tell you that shanty-towns still exist in my country. We have built more housing than ever before, much more than I promised in my electoral campaign. We have launched a crusade that no Government will ever be able to reverse in the future. But the shanty-towns still exist, as does the child abandoned in the street. We have extended peace, but the threat of war persists, and brothers are still killing each other in the corners of my little America.

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There is no end to the struggle for justice and peace. It does not know a single day of rest. Some short-sighted people believe that the efforts to eliminate the slums in my country could have been more effective if we had not fought for peace. I thank God and Costa Rica that we never fell into that selfish way of thinking. My people can look back at the history of the last few years with their heads held high.

As I said to you at the beginning of my statement, I came to thank you because the successes we have attained would not have been possible without your help. You are giving a human face to a world that until recently had no face and knew no mercy. I leave with the joy of knowing that peace is closer at hand and with the confidence of knowing that the slums which still darken the horizon in my country will disappear. I will always continue to be a Costa Rican at the service of these causes and your ally in these struggles the world over.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Costa Rica for the important statement he has just made.

Mr. Oscar Arias Sanchez, President of the Republic of Costa Rica, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

AGENDA ITEM 9 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. BARRIOS TASSANO (Uruguay) (interpretation from Spanish): During the debate at the fortieth session of the General Assembly four years ago, President Sanguinetti announced to the world community from this very rostrum that Uruguay had resumed its traditional path of political democracy, and was determined to respect and to enforce respect domestically for all human rights as guaranteed by the Constitution of the Republic, and further announced his firm resolve to

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resume active participation on the global stage of international relations in the pursuit of peace, universal respect for human rights and the equality of all nations, based on respect for national sovereignty and non-intervention in the internal affairs of other States.

Six months prior to the conclusion of President Sanguinetti's constitutional term, I have the honour to mount the same rostrum to announce to this international community that today those intentions have been fully realized.

Indeed, within a few weeks, elections will be held in Uruguay to elect all the authorities who will be responsible for the destiny of the country for the next five years. This fact, commonplace in the political tradition of a democratic country, is particularly significant in our case, since it represents the culmination of a period of democratic recovery during which full respect for the Constitution has been restored; all individual rights have been scrupulously observed, and national reconciliation has been achieved, inter alia by a general amnesty ratified by popular mandate. Law and justice have been restored, and the country has been rescued from a declining economic situation through the vigorous revitalization of the external sector and the application of stabilizing policies which have allowed reasonable product growth, a decrease in unemployment and an increase in real earnings.

On the international front, Uruguay has honoured all its commitments, including those of a financial nature which entailed - then and today - considerable sacrifices. It has actively contributed, at times beyond the power of its political weight and its material resources, to efforts aimed at reinforcing international peace, security and co-operation. It has embarked upon a firm policy of regional and subregional integration and participates actively with other democracies in the hemisphere to co-ordinate positions in order to satisfy our

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common interests. In short, the Government of Uruguay is acting on the international scene, secure in the moral and political authority it derives from the right to represent a free, democratic, stable and peace-loving society.

This task of democratic consolidation has been successful but also extremely difficult.

As President Sanguinetti said to this Assembly in 1985:

"Democracy is a fragile flower; ... it only grows and survives in the right soil and the right climate. A genuine democracy based on respect for the individual and on the periodical, free advice of the people can be preserved only within an economic context that allows its citizens to provide for their basic material and spiritual needs. ... When this condition is not fulfilled, and poverty and unemployment prevail, violence emerges and is unleashed, the sowers of disorder take advantage of the fertile soil, the fabric of society disintegrates and, in the international sphere, political loyalties become erratic." (A/40/PV.6, p. 12)

Indeed, democracy is never limited to a purely political dimension, nor is it a sufficient condition to ensure freedom for all the people.

The economic and social component of a democratic society is what ultimately determines its feasibility and stability. It is for this reason that the question posed by the Foreign Ministers of the Group of 8 when considering the problem of foreign debt is a valid one today: How much poverty can freedom withstand?



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Like democracy in other Latin American countries and other regions of the world, democracy in Uruguay has been constantly threatened by a severe economic crisis unprecedented in its history.

We are aware - and this is always worth repeating - of our share of responsibility in the task of overcoming the crisis and promoting development and economic growth. We know that that is possible only through our own efforts, through the formulation and application of our own policies and, particularly, through our own sacrifices. But we are also aware that, despite the social and political cost of these adjustment processes, the expected benefits will not be obtained without greater participation and commitment by the industrialized countries, particularly in the areas of international finance and trade.

The issue of underdevelopment, therefore, remains the major world problem faced by mankind. The growth achieved by a few Asian countries cannot hide the fact that there has been significant regression in the social indicators of many countries in Latin America and Africa. That bears eloquent testimony to the seriousness of the situation and the political risk to their governing institutions, and consequently to world peace.

The vast foreign debt which weighs so heavily on many of our countries has reversed the flow of financial resources, which now runs from South to North. The task of turning the tide cannot be delayed, since this debt is paralysing all our efforts to achieve economic development and democratic stability.

It is encouraging to note that creditor countries have now accepted the principle of shared responsibility in the foreign-debt problem, and have agreed that this problem is not simply financial but also political and social. It is also noteworthy and encouraging that creditor Governments appear willing to consider formulas to help the constrained economies of debtor nations.

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In this respect, the agreement between Mexico and its international bank creditors has set a precedent regarding the feasibility of the Brady philosophy and has aroused legitimate hopes and expectations in the rest of the debtor nations.

Without a pragmatic approach to the debt problem there will be no development and no economic growth; without these prerequisites it will be very difficult to continue to believe in democracy, and without democracy world stability and peace will be very hard to maintain.

What we need today is a revolutionary change in our ideas and policies with respect to international economics, ultimately leading to the formulation of a new development strategy. The starting point of that strategy should be recognition of the interdependence of all States, whatever their size or economic or military power; and the objective should be to ensure that this interdependence is viewed as guaranteeing greater predictability and stability in world trade and economic relations and a more just distribution of the benefits.

This new international strategy for development should be dynamic, flexible and, above all, concrete and precise in the formulation of measures designed to fight poverty, to eliminate protectionism and discrimination in international trade, and to facilitate access by all developing countries to technology and to the financial and economic markets of industrialized nations.

The environmental dimension should be an essential ingredient in the new international development strategy. The deterioration of the environment has become a matter of concern to the entire international community and there is no doubt it will continue to be a matter of concern in the years to come.

There can be no doubt that the environment must be protected and that each State must assume responsibility and take action in this respect for its own well-being and for that of other peoples of the world. But it is also true that

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the correct solution to the problem requires sincere and broad international co-operation to ensure that the cost of protecting the environment is not borne by only a few countries which are still struggling for full development of their unexploited natural resources. In no case - and this is more important still - should protection of the environment become a new form of conditionality to which the sovereign decisions of countries still requiring international co-operation for their development would be subordinated.

In summary, Uruguay is conscious of the urgent need to protect the environment; but we are also aware that this is a task requiring the participation and efforts of the entire international community and that it should be carried out in a way compatible with the national sovereignty of all nations.

However, the implementation of a development policy that guarantees both the protection of the environment and the rational use of natural resources requires the provision of financial resources and appropriate technologies not available to all the countries in the world.

As we stated last year and repeat today: the technological dependence of the developing countries is not only a factor inhibiting their economic development, but also as a serious threat to their political sovereignty as that posed by foreign aggression.

The cost of transferring financial and technological resources to developing countries represents barely a marginal fraction of the funds used by the super-Powers in the arms race, for which they invoke reasons of national security. They forget that reasons of national survival would make it mandatory for them to allocate more than a marginal fraction of that overall expenditure to the transfer of resources and technology to developing countries, thereby facilitating their

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participation in the common task of protecting both world peace and the quality of the environment.

In dealing with the question of the environment, the international community must resort to the basic mechanism of co-operation between nations because we are faced with a common danger, affecting us all, and there is no political system or degree of development or military Power than can give any State the slightest immunity against it.

Unfortunately, it is not only dangers to the environment that indiscriminately affect all nations and peoples. There are other reasons forcing us to resort to and develop the mechanisms of global solidarity and co-operation. Terrorism and drug trafficking, which at times appear to be complementary phenomena, continue to wreak destruction and havoc, despite the universal revulsion they arouse.

Uruguay unequivocally condemns terrorism. For us, any terrorist act is inhuman and cruel, violates the most sacred human rights and reveals the basest and most destructive feelings of man. There is no purpose, no cause, no issue, however noble, that can justify the commission of a terrorist act. For that reason, Uruguay will contribute, without qualifications based on motives or purposes, to efforts directed at establishing new legal measures and at strengthening existing ones providing for the eradication of this scourge from the face of the earth.

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With respect to drug trafficking, we are concerned at the rate at which it has expanded and at the vast power behind it, but at the same time we are encouraged to see that the governments of consumer nations have become aware of their responsibilities and that producer nations have shouldered the risks involved in an open war against drug traffickers. In this connection, it is my duty, and my pleasure, to express to the Government of President Virgilio Barco Vargas and to the people of Colombia the solidarity of the Government of Uruguay in respect of recent events in our sister Republic, and our admiration for the courage with which Colombians are tackling this problem.

The political climate that now prevails is perhaps the most propitious in four decades for the successful initiation and implementation of undertakings necessitating the willingness of Governments to co-operate with each other. Ideological dogmatism and political inflexibility appear to be losing ground in the face of realism and common sense. Over the last few months, we have embarked on a new era of dialogue and collaboration, which has translated into a cessation of hostilities, the reaching of agreements, and the establishment of contacts and channels of communication. All of this has led to the solution, or imminent solution, of several regional conflicts.

The cessation of hostilities between Iran and Iraq; the withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan that has already taken place; the recent efforts to normalize the situation in Kampuchea; the December 1988 agreements on southern Africa and the beginning of the self-determination process in Namibia; the agreements on New Caledonia; the contacts concerning Western Sahara; the new surge in the Central American peace process following the regional presidential summit last August; and the promising resumption of dialogue between Argentina and the

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United Kingdom with a view to settling their differences directly - these are manifestations of this desire for peace, and proof of the sterility and futility of confrontation, intolerance and misguided nationalism.

This new spirit is evident also in the changes introduced by numerous countries in the principles and objectives of their domestic policies, which have led them to greater openness, both internally and externally, thereby strengthening the prospects for international peace and co-operation. I am referring to political evolution on the domestic front in the Soviet Union and other Eastern European countries, as well as to the steps taken towards democracy by the last authoritarian régimes in South America, which are evidence of a less dogmatic political vision that, fortunately, appears to be spreading in almost all regions of the world.

However, there remain areas in which the voices of peace go unheeded. First, the human-rights situation in the world is still far from satisfactory. The international community knows that the important progress made in the political field will remain precarious while vast sectors of the world's peoples are unable fully to enjoy their human rights.

There can be no doubt whatsoever that no progress - whether economic, social, political or moral - will have a firm foundation so long as any vestiges of racism and racial discrimination remain, and in particular while practices such as apartheid continue. South Africa's persistence in disregarding the resolutions of the United Nations will not stifle the persistence of the rest of the world in reclaiming for that country the full force of the equality and dignity of the human race.

The work of the United Nations in developing human rights and establishing the means of guaranteeing respect for them must continue, with the support of the

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international community. A very important step has been taken with the drafting of the convention on the rights of the child, which we trust will soon become, for every State, the appropriate ethical and legal framework for improving the status of children.

The Middle East conflict continues to threaten world peace and to cost the parties involved a high price in human life and in moral and material damage. Nevertheless, signals are beginning to come from both sides - signals that are helping to generate the climate necessary for a negotiated solution. For Israel, this would mean lasting peace within safe borders, and, for the Palestinians, the possibility of exercising freely their right to self-determination.

In this region, we are also particularly concerned about the tragic situation in Lebanon - a country with which we have many links, and whose long-suffering people are the victims of an unjust and senseless war, with the resulting death and devastation with which we are all too familiar.

Uruguay has raised its voice in the past, and does so again, to call on all the parties involved to intensify their efforts to achieve a final solution to the conflict. This implies the withdrawal of foreign troops from Lebanese territory and the harmonization, by democratic means, of domestic differences. In this regard, we wish every success for the mediation undertaken by several heads of State of the League of Arab States. We trust that the pursuit of peace in Lebanon will succeed and that this country will once again be as prosperous and peaceful as it once was.

These problems, as well as other situations that threaten peace, are this year, as in previous years, difficult challenges to which the General Assembly should respond by trying to reconcile the specific interests of each nation with

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the general interests of the international community. We are aware that this is a task fraught with difficulties, but at the same time we are encouraged because we know, Mr. President, that under your enlightened and expert direction, we shall achieve the desired results.

I should like to conclude by expressing our sincere congratulations to Mr. Dante Caputo on his intelligent and effective presidency of the General Assembly at its forty-third session, and also to the Secretary-General, whose dynamism, tact and commitment have strengthened the role of his office within the Organization and have been an essential factor in enhancing its prestige through his successful intervention in the peaceful solution of a number of regional conflicts.



Mr. AL-SHARA (Syrian Arab Republic) (interpretation from Arabic):

Mr. President, it gives me great pleasure to congratulate you on your election to the presidency of this forty-fourth session of the General Assembly, particularly, as your country, Nigeria, and mine, Syria, enjoy long-standing relations of friendship, and both are members of the Non-Aligned Countries, in which our two countries are united in the common struggle against colonialism and all forms of racism.

I should also like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation for the success achieved by your predecessor, Mr. Dante Caputo, in guiding the work of the forty-third session of the General Assembly. I wish his country, Argentina, progress and prosperity in the future.

It is natural for feelings of optimism to prevail in most of the statements delivered so far in this historic forum as a reflection of the improvement in the international climate, and of the move the world has taken, following years of confrontation, tension and cold war, to a new phase of détente, dialogue and co-operation.

There is no doubt that this change in the climate of international relations would not have taken place without the significant Soviet-United States dialogue and the agreements and initiatives that dialogue has led to in the field of disarmament, particularly with regard to nuclear and chemical weapons. These are indeed important steps on a long road, and the peoples of the world hope that this will not be a dead-end road. The gravest danger is essentially the actual presence of weapons of mass destruction, not merely their numbers. The maintenance of any arsenals of these destructive weapons, however limited, will always be a terrifying nightmare for humanity as a whole.

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The peoples of the world further expect that this process will not be selective and limited only to one type of weapons of mass destruction, because no one can claim that there are clean weapons of mass destruction and dirty weapons of mass destruction. All nuclear and chemical weapons are undoubtedly both destructive and dirty. Indeed, those weapons had been used by man against man in the past, causing incalculable suffering. What then would be the consequences of the use of such weapons of mass destruction in the future, with their more sophisticated developments?

Proceeding from our firm conviction that all States of the world should participate in the process of eliminating and prohibiting all kinds of weapons of mass destruction, the Syrian Arab Republic calls for the establishment of a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction, whether nuclear, chemical or biological, in the Middle East region. We believe that the United Nations provides the appropriate framework for the achievement of such an objective.

Although some years have elapsed since the beginning of the improvement in the atmosphere of international relations, a development which has had a positive effect on regional disputes throughout the world, the Arab-Israeli conflict is continuing to take a different course. It is a conflict developing in an atmosphere of tension and confrontation. The reason is clear and does not require lengthy explanation. The rulers of Israel, with their Zionist doctrine, which is unmatched in fanaticism and fundamentalism, continue to live in another age, although they possess the most advanced means, the latest equipment, particularly in the field of armaments.

Those rulers continue to rely on myths and illusions to justify the realization of their final objective of establishing the greater Israel from the

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Nile to the Euphrates. This is an objective which they do not, and, indeed, cannot conceal. We all recall how furious the Israeli rulers were with their American friends when they advised them to renounce their dream of a Greater Israel.

When they fail to convince their closest allies of their false claims, the rulers of Israel resort - as Moshe Arens did in his statement to the General Assembly last week - to documents and promises that go back to colonial times, to records kept in the archives of the League of Nations to justify their continued occupation of the West Bank and Gaza. At the same time they flagrantly ignore the Charter of the United Nations and the resolutions of the United Nations which call upon Israel to withdraw from the occupied Arab territories and call for the recognition of the inalienable national rights of the Arab Palestinian people.

The problem facing the peace process in the Middle East is not merely the dilemma of the dreams of Israel, it is a problem of Israeli practices also. The rulers of Israel keep on reminding the world every day of the Nazi crimes against the Jews, although those crimes came to an end when the Second World War was over, 45 years ago. Yet, at the same time, they continue to perpetrate crimes against the Arabs, crimes which have gone on to this very day, and to which we do not see an end in the near future.

The rulers of Israel are attempting to maintain the so-called purity of the Jewish State and yet at the same time they persist in continuing their occupation of Arab lands. This has placed them in a state of continuous confrontation in their attempt to clear the land of its people, and has led them to carry out practices even more heinous than the racist practices of apartheid South Africa. It is a contradiction in terms for the Israelis to protest against the General

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assembly resolution which equated zionism with racism while the rulers of Israel themselves confirm the validity and credibility of this resolution by their repressive measures against the Arab population in the occupied territories.

The Israelis do not want peace because they want both peace and the land. This they cannot achieve. Any initiative within this framework of Israeli concepts cannot succeed. The heroic Palestinian intifadah, the brave resistance in southern Lebanon, the steadfastness of our people in the occupied Syrian Golan, were all, first and foremost, a revolt against these very concepts.

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Peace cannot be achieved without a full Israeli withdrawal from all the occupied Arab territories and without the safeguarding of the inalienable national rights of the Arab Palestinian people, including its right to self-determination and to establish its own State in Palestine, in accordance with United Nations resolutions.

The Syrian Arab Republic believes that the appropriate framework in which to achieve a just and comprehensive settlement in the Middle East is an international conference, convened under United Nations auspices, with the participation of all the parties concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organization.

In the period between September 1988 and September this year Lebanon witnessed the worst chapter in the history of its civil war. Today, as the artillery has fallen silent, as the Lebanese are emerging from their shelters, as the evacuees are returning home, as dialogue has started between the Lebanese members of Parliament, and as genuine stands can be distinguished from false ones, it may not seem as pressing as it once was to talk about Lebanon in detail.

However, events during that period in the brotherly country of Lebanon - the killing, destruction and homelessness, accompanied by a most misleading mass media campaign - are not simple matters that can be ignored or forgotten. That is particularly so since the plot was not directed only at Lebanon and the unity of its people and territory: it was also aimed at putting pressure on Syria and all that Syria represents, but Syria stood staunch and steadfast in the face of the greedy Israeli designs. The plot was also aimed at drawing a thick veil over the Palestinian intifadah and the aspirations for liberation and independence that it represents.

Thus the plot was not as small as its instrument in East Beirut, nor was it such as was deliberately portrayed to many people all over the world. Rather, we

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can say without any hesitation that what that distorted picture was intended to establish was only part of a larger scenario for the plot, whose major perpetrators, both regionally and internationally, tried not to appear openly on the stage where the events were played out.

Certain countries devoted themselves to guiding those events. Many capitals were mobilized to escalate them; huge amounts of weapons and ammunition were shipped to keep the fires blazing; secret contacts were made to follow up the events; warships and fleets were moved and manoeuvred; prayer meetings were held; and the Security Council was convened more than once to contain the events.

Those who designed the events tried to turn the facts upside down, in an attempt to achieve their goals. In that they were abetted by organized campaigns of misinformation on the international level. Hence, from their distorted perspective, the chief of a minority military Government in East Beirut was made to be seen as if he had become the President of the whole of Lebanon. Thus they totally ignored the Lebanese Parliament and the Prime Minister of the national Government in West Beirut, which represents the overwhelming majority of the Lebanese people, Muslims and Christians alike.

Then they invoked that false claim in order to portray the problem as if it were a problem between Syria and Lebanon, and not, as it really is, between a minority of Lebanese, who had maintained a monopoly over power under the constitution laid down by the French Mandate authorities in 1926, and the majority of Lebanese, who are demanding political and constitutional reforms in order to guarantee the equality of all Lebanese citizens.

On the basis of those fallacies the perpetrators of the events then made another desperate attempt to claim that the Syrian presence in Lebanon was illegal. By so doing, they aimed to attain three goals at the same time: first,

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to cover up the illegality of the minority military Government; secondly, to avoid meeting the just demands of the Lebanese majority for reforms and equality; and, thirdly, to justify the continuation of the Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon.

At any rate, the recent statement by the Tripartite Committee of the Arab Heads of State was a positive turning point in the dangerous course of events that Lebanon has witnessed since September last year. That statement called for a cease-fire, the lifting of the blockades and the formation of a Lebanese security committee to monitor the cease-fire and to inspect ships in order to prevent shipments of arms and supplies to any party. That is exactly what Syria has been calling on all the Lebanese parties to accept ever since the outbreak of the bloody events in Lebanon, because we believe that those elements constitute the only right way to begin dialogue between the Lebanese parties and to bring about a political solution to the Lebanese crisis.

Syria promptly endorsed the Committee's statement. It also stressed its support for the Committee's efforts to implement the resolution on Lebanon adopted by the Arab summit at Casablanca and affirmed its commitment to help the Lebanese government eventually formed at the outcome of national reconciliation to extend its authority over the whole of the Lebanese territory. In so doing it was motivated by the distinct Syrian-Lebanese relationship, which draws its strength from the roots of kinship, history and common strategic interests.

Syria welcomes the beginning of implementation of the United Nations plan for Namibia's independence. We hope that the plan will be fully implemented and that elections will take place next month, as scheduled, without intimidation, threats or interference, so that the people of Namibia will be enabled to achieve independence and sovereignty over the whole of its territory, and to become masters

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of their destiny under the leadership of the South West Africa People's Organization.

However, we must not forget the disgraceful racist régime, which the international community has condemned and whose practices it has deemed a crime against humanity. There should be an intensification of international efforts to isolate the Pretoria régime and to support the black majority, so that it may be enabled to eradicate the racist régime and realize the national aspirations of the people of South Africa, for freedom and equality.



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With regard to the situation in Afghanistan we believe that there is a need to adhere faithfully and accurately to the terms of the Geneva Agreements without any interference or intervention in the internal affairs of Afghanistan, to preserve of its territorial integrity and non-aligned status, and to establish a government of national reconciliation which would represent all segments of the Afghan people.

Syria, which enjoys historic relations of friendship with Cyprus, expresses its hope that the ongoing contacts between the Greek and Turkish communities will lead to a comprehensive settlement of the question of Cyprus based on relevant United Nations resolutions. In this respect, Syria supports the efforts of the United Nations Secretary-General aimed at finding a solution to this problem.

We wish once again to renew our support for the efforts made by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea peacefully to reunite the Korean peninsula through negotiations and for the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons in the Korean peninsula.

International economic relations continue to be based on unjust and unbalanced foundations and therefore these relations will need to be reshaped and restructured in order to create a new economic order that would help to achieve balanced social and economic growth in the world. The special session of the General Assembly to be convened in April 1990 and devoted to international economic co-operation takes on particular importance as regards the solutions to basic problems that stand in the way of growth in developing countries, foremost among which are problems of external debt, financial and monetary problems, international trade, the prices of raw materials in developing countries, problems of a scientific and technological order and problems of nutrition, agriculture and environment.

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In this respect it is worth mentioning that the political improvement in the international climate and in international relations does not necessarily constitute a parallel factor in improving international economic relations, particularly vis-à-vis the developing countries.

The policy of self-reliance and the encouragement of South-South co-operation are two basic prerequisites for the improvement of the economies of developing countries and encouraging industrial countries to start a serious dialogue on an equal footing between North and South because it is in the vital interests of all the peoples of the world.

Following the improvement in the international climate the peoples of the world look to this international forum as a place in which to find effective solutions to the complicated problems from which they suffer, whether those problems result from aggression and oppression or from poverty and environmental pollution. These aspirations are not easy to achieve although they remain legitimate and attainable provided good intentions and political will prevail among us all.

Mr. MIADENOV (Bulgaria) (interpretation from Russian): I have the honour to congratulate you, Sir, the representative of friendly Nigeria, upon your election as President of the General Assembly at its forty-fourth session and to wish you every success in your responsible task. I should also like to thank Mr. Dante Caputo, the President of the forty-third session, for his contribution to its successful work.

The world is entering a new stage of its development. The recognition of universal human interests has the effect of bringing closer together foreign policy

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criteria and values. I will permit myself the liberty of quoting from a statement by the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar:

"We will soon be entering a new decade. This, of course, means little by itself but not many decades can have opened at truly historic points. The present is such a point. There is a ubiquitous desire to turn over a new leaf, to try innovative approaches for the solution of old problems ... it is the combat against the causes of conflict, the struggle against economic inequities, and social evils and the degradation of the environment that must evoke all the courage and determination of battle." (A/44/1, p. 28)\*

In our changing world the sessions of the General Assembly of the United Nations are increasingly becoming key events in international affairs. The political pulse of our planet, the positive trends in the international arena, can truly be sensed in the broad spectrum of ideas put forward from this rostrum. The statements of President Bush and Foreign Minister Shevardnadze are striking proof of the consolidation of peaceful coexistence, of the fact that confrontation is going out of fashion, and of the fact that positive dialogue is becoming a real factor in politics. We warmly welcome the new initiatives and proposals of the two great Powers and the agreement reached to hold a new Soviet-American summit meeting.

The objective laws of social development are creating a new understanding of the dialectics of the national and the international in international affairs. Among the factors of decisive significance for the changes that have occurred or are expected to occur, I would like particularly to highlight the realization that violence and hostility are futile and the banishing of the stereotypes of rivalry and confrontation. Capitalism and socialism are no longer regarded as

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\* Mr. Al-Anbari (Iraq), Vice-President, took the Chair.

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irreconcilable opposites. The perestroika that is under way in the Soviet Union and other socialist countries is generating new political thinking in response to the new historical circumstances.

In fact, the search for new and innovative solutions to world problems is now taking place in all corners of the world and at all levels.

Bulgaria is a small country, not one of those which set the pace of world development. However, very profound transformations are taking place in our country in keeping with the new spirit in relations among States and peoples. I refer here to the changes designed to enhance the role of the individual in society, the radical changes in conditions of economic activity, the comprehensive strengthening of the legal foundations of the State and the democratization of all spheres of public life.

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We are aware that this is vital not only to the stability and well-being of the people, but also to our full-blooded interaction with the rest of the world, to Bulgaria's place in the community of States and peoples.

The Bulgarian Parliament recently adopted a number of significant amendments to legislation guaranteeing the right of every Bulgarian to travel freely, stay abroad and return to the country. A decision has also been taken requiring the respective administrative, economic and other institutions to continue, as in the past, to take the necessary measures for the strict observance of the Constitution and those laws of the land that guarantee the freedom of conscience and belief of all citizens and of their customs and rites, for enhancing the national role and functions of the Bulgarian language as the language of State and for tolerance and respect for the free use of various dialects and languages in everyday communications between people. A step in that direction is the measures adopted in respect to health care that facilitate the performance of the rites of the followers of Islam and Judaism. That fully corresponds to the generally accepted international norms, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the Vienna commitments.

The restructuring of international relations on the principles of common sense and universal human interests depends above all on the international community's ability to eliminate the threat to its own destruction.

The essence of the problem lies in the demilitarization of political thinking. We believe that the time has come to abandon the model of military-strategic deterrence and to adopt one based on a comprehensive approach to the problems of peace and security. I should like to emphasize that the prestige and mechanisms of the United Nations can play an invaluable part in the creation of that model.

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We are convinced of the need for the complete elimination of all nuclear armaments, as proposed by Mikhail Gorbachev in January 1986. We are also convinced of the need to reduce conventional weapons to the limits of reasonable sufficiency. All States must make a concerted effort to attain that goal. Aware of that necessity, Bulgaria, together with its allies, has undertaken unilateral reductions of its armed forces and military spending. We believe that this is a constructive contribution on our part.

We are pleased with the reports that progress has been made in the talks on an agreement to reduce arsenals of strategic offensive weapons by 50 per cent. It is becoming increasingly clear that restraint is required in order to achieve progress in disarmament. It is also becoming obvious that plans for the modernization, development and deployment of new systems and types of nuclear and space weapons need to be reassessed.

I should like to stress once again that the halting of the arms race and especially of the nuclear arms race should become the concern and responsibility of all mankind. That is why we should not regard bilateral negotiations as an alternative to multilateral efforts in that field.

The Charter of the United Nations encourages regional measures for strengthening peace and security. The discussion on the question of nuclear-weapon-free zones has been going on for quite some time. Bulgaria is working actively to that end. Together with other neighbouring States, it has put forward concrete initiatives concerning the implementation of that idea on the Balkan peninsula.

The world is closely approaching the completion of one of the top-priority tasks related to diminishing the threat of war. The Paris Conference of January 1989 demonstrated the existence of a broad international consensus on the

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prohibition and elimination of chemical weapons. We trust that the readiness expressed by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States of America to initiate substantial chemical weapons reductions will accelerate the Geneva multilateral negotiations.

Reducing conventional forces and limiting and eliminating tactical nuclear weapons in Europe would be a significant step towards security at a lower level of military confrontation. At the present Vienna negotiations, in contrast to the recent past, both the East and the West are listening carefully to each other, raising hopes for speedy progress.

Although it is too early to judge when the concrete results will come, we can safely say that things have already changed for the better. In Europe, where the competition between the two military alliances has left the most substantial traces, a new consciousness is now taking shape. The common European home is already regarded as an attainable goal. The Vienna Conference, the London Information Forum, and the Paris Conference on the Human Dimension are all important landmarks on the road to that goal. Bulgaria is determined to continue to make its own constructive contribution to the strengthening of the European process.

Positive changes can be seen at the regional level. The chain reaction of efforts to resolve conflict situations has encompassed nearly all hot-beds of tension. The preference given to peaceful approaches is to a large degree determined by the search for a balance of interests on the basis of realism and compromise. The Belgrade Conference of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries demonstrated the search for new and more efficient ways to achieve stabilization, peace and progress. There is a growing conviction that non-confrontational solutions can be found to even the most complex problems.

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We are on the eve of the proclamation of Namibia's independence. That is a most outstanding success in the decolonization process of recent years.

However, the peace-making process has not yet become irreversible. Civilian population centres in Afghanistan continue to come under missile attacks. The Palestinian people remains deprived of its right to its own State, and the occupation of Arab territories persists. There is no end to the fratricidal war in Lebanon. The spectres of genocide in Cambodia and of apartheid in southern Africa continue to stalk. The regional peace process in Central America is far from immune to foreign interference. For a decade and a half now the people of Cyprus has borne the burden of Turkish military occupation. The Korean people's dream of democratic reunification of its country, of demilitarizing and ridding the region of all nuclear weapons, has still not materialized.

Regrettably, we can extend that list of concerns much further. Still, in our view the most important thing is that the international community no longer views these conflicts in the narrow context of East-West confrontation, but rather as calamities for all mankind, calamities that must be overcome through joint efforts.

As a State located in the centre of the Balkan peninsula, the People's Republic of Bulgaria has been pursuing an active policy of good-neighbourliness and mutual understanding, of *détente* and the development of co-operation with all Balkan States in the spirit of the new political thinking and in line with what has been achieved so far in the European process.



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We note with satisfaction that Balkan co-operation is gathering momentum and having a positive impact on the situation in that part of the world. Results have been achieved in the political and economic spheres and steps are being taken to protect the environment. The first meeting on measures for strengthening confidence and security in the region has already been held.

At the same time, in the Balkans - as, indeed, everywhere else - there are problems that still need to be resolved. We are, however, against making those problems serve to the detriment of bilateral and multilateral co-operation in the region. Our country has repeatedly stated that there is no problem that cannot be resolved at the negotiating table through equal and mutually advantageous dialogue free from pre-conditions, a dialogue unburdened by threats, by attempts to exert pressure for propaganda purposes and by interference in the internal affairs of the other country.

That is also the view of the People's Republic of Bulgaria with regard to the problems of Bulgarian-Turkish relations, in which, regrettably, tensions have arisen. I take this opportunity to state once again that the Bulgarian side has always demonstrated its readiness to hold direct bilateral talks at any level to examine such current problems as the strengthening of confidence and security; the activation of bilateral economic relations; the resolution of humanitarian issues, including the reuniting of divided families; the adoption of organizational measures related to the travel of persons across the Bulgarian-Turkish border and so forth. At the same time, we shall continue to take into consideration the measures concerning the travel of people across the Bulgarian-Turkish border that Turkey, as a sovereign State, has enforced.

We believe that the Bulgarian-Turkish Protocol signed at Belgrade last year has laid a solid foundation for discussing and resolving all the issues between the

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two States. Our experience shows that the successful course of that dialogue can be facilitated by third countries if they adopt a favourable attitude. We are in favour of human and civilized relations between the People's Republic of Bulgaria and the Republic of Turkey, in keeping with contemporary trends in the development of international relations. In that connection I should like to quote from a statement made by the President of the State Council of the People's Republic of Bulgaria, Todor Zhikov, on 29 May 1989:

"Both the present and the future of the People's Republic of Bulgaria and the Republic of Turkey lie in normal good-neighbourly relations between them and in the Balkans, in understanding and co-operation between all countries in the world. The People's Republic of Bulgaria has always pursued this goal and will continue to do so in the future."

The global processes developing in our world confront States with problems whose solution requires joint decisions. Those decisions will to a large degree determine the survival and advancement of mankind. Their natural basis lies in the world economy and international economic relations. That is an obvious fact.

The economy is a pre-condition for the functioning of every society and system and for their well-being and security. That is why the problems of international economic development and co-operation are occupying an ever-more-prominent position in United Nations activities. Our experience of the 1930s has shown the need to unite the efforts of the international community in the search for new and more effective means of overcoming the critical condition of the economic growth and foreign indebtedness of the developing countries. The chronic problems in that area not only destabilize international co-operation but also endanger international peace and security.

The United Nations has sufficient intellectual potential and appropriate mechanisms for stimulating international economic interaction. It is in a position

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to make a significant contribution to the democratization of world economic co-operation and its optimization on the basis of mutual advantage. An especially important role in attaining that goal will be played by the releasing of enormous resources as a result of disarmament.

Bulgaria is pursuing a consistent policy designed to develop bilateral and multilateral economic co-operation. One of the aims of the reforms we are carrying out is to enable us to enter into international economic structures. One concrete manifestation of that policy is the steps we have taken to establish official, stable and equitable relations with the European Economic Community (EEC) and to join the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT).

A priority sphere for uniting the efforts and resources of mankind is the preservation of the natural environment; we are hearing warnings about its degradation from political leaders and scientists, and it is being discussed by virtually everyone with equal concern.

Bulgaria's ecological policy is being pursued in harmony with our strategy for the country's social and economic development. It is reflected in the National Programme on the Conservation and Reproduction of the Natural Environment.

Preparatory work on a Balkan ecological-protection treaty is being conducted on our initiative and in close co-operation with the other Balkan States. A session of the executive body of the Convention on Transboundary Air Pollution was held at Sofia last autumn under the auspices of the Economic Commission for Europe. An international meeting on the ecology will be held this month pursuant to a decision of the Vienna meeting of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE). We hope that the joint efforts of all States participating in that forum will encourage international co-operation in the field of ecology.

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Internationally, the principles upon which our position is founded are the free transfer of ecologically safe technologies, the abandonment of discriminatory restrictions in the implementation of projects for the protection of the environment, financial concessions to the developing countries in the trade in modern technologies, and broader technological assistance by developed States, including in the area of industrial co-operation and information.

To the list of issues of universal human significance there is every reason to add the excesses of social pathology that are threatening the very foundations of society and the physical life of the individual - such excesses as terrorism, drug abuse and organized crime.

Terrorism is of special danger to social and international stability in conditions of growing world interdependence. It is our view that that phenomenon is the result and outgrowth of those social conditions and types of thinking that for centuries have engendered militarism, hatred and the desire to eliminate those regarded as unsuitable. In all its forms modern terrorism is a crime and deeply reactionary. Our country's position with respect to terrorism is unequivocal and firm. There is no objective that can justify the murder of innocent civilians, the taking of hostages or the physical and moral humiliation of the human being.

The success of the new approaches to solving the problems of the modern world would be unthinkable without the primacy of law in international affairs. The security of our world should above all be built on the foundations of the stable and just rule of law. The primacy of law is the only true guarantee of the priority of universal human values over narrow and biased scheming of an ideological and nationalist character. The rule of force should give way to the rule of law in civilized legal processes in an atmosphere of peaceful and interdependent coexistence.

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This session of the General Assembly is being held at an exceptionally decisive moment. Today, more than ever before, nations of the world have strong expectations of seeing peaceful and equitable relations established, of a future world of security and development, and of the harmonious coexistence of man and nature.

Please allow me to express my country's hope that now, when the role of the United Nations in international affairs has grown perceptibly, this session will make a substantial contribution to the further broadening of dialogue between States for the sake of establishing a new world order based on sound reason, security and co-operation.

Mr. ESCHERIKH (Tunisia) (interpretation from Arabic): It is my great pleasure to convey to Ambassador Garba, on behalf of the Tunisian Republic delegation, my sincere congratulations on his election as President of the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly. Through this election the international community has expressed its deep appreciation and admiration for his brotherly country, Nigeria, and the African continent at large has acknowledged its prominent standing on the international scene. We are fully confident that his great diplomatic skills, wide experience in international matters, and deep knowledge of the functioning of the United Nations, where he has so ably represented his country for many years, guarantee the success of our work at this session. On this occasion I should like to state again our readiness to co-operate closely with him throughout his term at the helm of this session.

My warmest thanks go as well to his predecessor, Mr. Dante Caputo, former Minister for Foreign Affairs and Worship of the friendly Republic of Argentina, for the great wisdom and competence with which he conducted the work of the last session and for his positive contributions to the activities of the United Nations during his term as President of the General Assembly.

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It is also my pleasant duty to express our warm appreciation to the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Pérez de Cuellar, for the invaluable services he has rendered and continues to render in the efforts to attain the goals of our prestigious Organization, based on the principle of universality. In bringing its noble principles to bear on international relations he is serving the cause of freedom, justice and peace in the world. The success achieved by the United Nations in moving gradually towards peaceful solutions of most of the regional conflicts is to a large extent the result of the wisdom, patience and perseverance of the Secretary-General. His efforts deserve our praise and appreciation.

Tunisia, which has constantly benefited from the support of the United Nations and the Security Council, both in its struggle for independence and in its defence of its sovereignty and territorial integrity, once again affirms its deep attachment to the Organization and its firm commitment to the purposes and principles set out in the Charter. Tunisia confirms that it will dedicate itself whole-heartedly to work for the attainment of the ideals of the United Nations both in the area of its international relations and in the line of action it has set for itself after the historic change that took place in our country on 7 November 1987. At the national level, these ideals and principles have become a living fact of our everyday life, as is clear from the deeply rooted, comprehensive institutional and political changes we have made in order to consolidate individual and collective rights; promote freedom, democracy and tolerance; and build a society based on national harmony and social peace.

The National Pact drawn up and adopted by all political parties and currents in the country constitutes a remarkable achievement. Suitable conditions were established for the rapid holding of presidential and legislative elections, on the basis of democracy, pluralism and freedom of expression. These elections gave the Tunisian people, at all social levels, the opportunity of rallying round the

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architect of the event of 7 November 1987 - President Zine Al Abidine Ben Ali - and freely to elect a house of representatives truly reflecting its choices and its will.

Above all, the people chose to engage in a constant endeavour to reassert our Arab-Islamic identity and to consolidate our civilization and cultural heritage while remaining constantly open to other civilizations as a source of fruitful interaction and enrichment.

We are proud of the positive response by world public opinion to these achievements, as well as the growing support we have had for the democratic process to which Tunisia is committed in this new era.

In the same context, we have worked diligently with our brothers in the region to promote the establishment of the Arab Maghreb Union - a regional group designed to meet the historical aspirations of the peoples of our area to solidarity and complementarity. Vast prospects have thereby been opened for growing co-operation and integration in all fields of activity. That is an example of what South-South co-operation should be.

Tunisia has welcomed the growing climate of détente in international relations and has followed with optimism and satisfaction the efforts to achieve disarmament, as well as the progress made towards the long-hoped-for solutions to most international and regional conflicts. It is our most fervent hope that this process will be maintained and developed further, in view of its vital importance for all mankind and the powerful stimulus it provides by helping to eliminate tension, paving the way towards the solution of so-far-intractable issues, and channelling efforts towards mankind's development and well-being, everywhere in the world.

It cannot be denied, however, that détente - which we have long sought to restore to international life and whose early signs have, to our great

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satisfaction, begun to appear - has not had a positive effect on the most complex international issues. Consequently, it is incumbent upon the international community and all peace-loving nations to shoulder their responsibilities by exerting greater efforts and taking initiatives to help solve these issues, for the sake of preserving world peace and ensuring that the principles of justice, freedom and international concord prevail and endure among all peoples.

Foremost among those chronic conflicts is the Palestine issue and the ordeal of the Palestinian people, who for many decades have been subjected to campaigns of expulsion and oppression, under the yoke of Israeli occupation.

We hail the courageous stand of Palestinian leaders in calling for a just and peaceful solution and express our respect and admiration for the Palestinian people's valiant intifadah, which has confirmed to the world over the last two years its iron will and heroic determination to fight on in defence of its rights, dignity and very existence. At the same time, and with equal vehemence we condemn the various forms of violence and repression perpetrated by the Israeli occupation forces, as well as Israel's adamant determination to thwart all chances for peace.



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We believe that recognition of the Palestinian State by more than 100 Member nations of the General Assembly and other favourable responses from world public opinion are clear signs of the soundness of the clear-sighted and responsible course of action pursued by the Palestinian leadership. This is a good reason for the international community, in this period of growing détente, to redouble its efforts to hasten the convening of the International Peace Conference and thereby pave the way for a just, lasting and comprehensive solution to the Palestinian problem.

Tunisia has the honour of acting as host to the headquarters of the fraternal Palestinian leadership and has welcomed all positive developments in the question of Palestine, in particular the United States-Palestinian dialogue that is taking place on its soil. We wish to reiterate our hope that that dialogue will continue until its anticipated results are achieved.

The Middle East region is beset with another bloody tragedy: the brotherly people of Lebanon is paying a heavy daily toll in human and material losses amidst a complex political crisis that threatens to doom the country to utter devastation. I wish here to make a solemn appeal to all our brothers who are parties to the conflict to place the higher interests of their country above all other considerations and to marshal all their efforts to save Lebanon.

We do not believe that can be done without a resolute call to reason, by responding to the Arab Tripartite Committee's efforts towards peace and reconciliation - totally supported by us - so Lebanon may remain an Arab, united, independent and sovereign country on its own territory.

We were greatly relieved when a cease-fire was reached between Iraq and Iran in conformity with Security Council resolution 598 (1987). A long and bloody war that had exhausted the resources of the two neighbour countries was thus brought

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to an end, thanks in large part to the strenuous efforts exerted in an internationalist spirit by the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar.

Yet the situation of neither war nor peace now prevailing in the area, with all its potential threats, remains a matter of serious concern to all of us. Hence the urgent need for the international community to support United Nations efforts to ensure the full implementation of all the provisions of the Security Council resolution both in spirit and in letter. Only thus will it be possible to reach a true peace that will put an end to the war and restore security and stability to the Gulf region.

Colonialism in all its forms is now a thing of the irrevocable past, thanks to the awakening of peoples and their steady striving for emancipation and liberation. The progress of Namibia, the last bastion of colonialism in Africa, along the road to independence clearly shows that the national struggle for liberation, with due support and backing from the international community, is the surest way for oppressed peoples to fulfil their legitimate aspiration to live in freedom, security and dignity.

On behalf of Tunisia, I wish to reiterate our deepest appreciation of the efforts of the Secretary-General and all the other parties that took part in formulating the United Nations plan contained in Security Council resolution 435 (1978) and in working for the full implementation of all its provisions with as many guarantees as possible. In the case of the fraternal African country of Namibia and its national leadership, the South West Africa People's Organization, such guarantees are all the more imperative in view of the disinformation campaigns and other suspicious manoeuvres that the South African régime is capable of concocting.

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We reaffirm our active solidarity with the brotherly people of Namibia and our support for its struggle for freedom and independence, and we pay a tribute to the position of the front-line States, inspired by genuine African solidarity, in their support for the Namibian cause, despite the vengeful reprisals against them and the flagrant violations of their territorial integrity.

While the hour of deliverance seems near at hand for the people of Namibia, our brothers in South Africa are still exposed to the most hideous forms of racial discrimination and to campaigns of repression aimed at stifling the struggle for equality and for the establishment of a democratic system in which the rule of the majority would prevail. The plight of the people of South Africa remains a source of constant concern to us, and arouses our indignation and shame at this abominable behaviour which tramples under foot the most elementary human values and contravenes international conventions.

Tunisia, which has constantly and unfailingly stood by the people of South Africa in its noble struggle, once again vigorously condemns the policy of apartheid and the obstinacy with which the minority régime continues to pursue the same practices despite hollow promises of change.

Tunisia continues to follow with keen interest and great appreciation the efforts of the current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity and the Secretary-General of the United Nations to implement the United Nations peace plan for Western Sahara, which is of course a matter of concern to us. We firmly believe that these efforts will in the near future bring about the desired settlement, whereby peace and security in our region will be preserved so we can mobilize all our efforts in the service of development in an environment where co-operation, complementarity and harmony prevail.

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We are greatly satisfied at the success of the Geneva Agreements on Afghanistan in bringing about the total withdrawal of all foreign forces from that brotherly country. We applauded that withdrawal, and we hope that our Afghan brothers will reach national reconciliation that will stop the bloodshed and put an end to the suffering of a people which has had more than its share of the scourge of war and destruction.

Tunisia likewise followed with interest the work of the Paris Conference on Cambodia, in which all the parties concerned and their allies took part. Even though the Conference did not lead to the positive results that, perhaps a little too optimistically, had been hoped for, we hope that the future of the country will not be negatively affected by these results. We continue to hope that the parties to the conflict and other nations concerned will return to the negotiating table in another attempt to deliver the Cambodian people from its tragedy and enable it to exercise its natural right to freedom and sovereignty on its land, free from all foreign intervention.

In Central America, the conclusion of the Esquipulas Agreements is another sign of the general climate of détente and an expression of the desire of the peoples of the area to build a regional environment where peace and co-operation will prevail over tension and confrontation.

International concord, as illustrated by the various agreements and meetings on ways to reduce the arms race and eliminate the arsenals of mass extermination, has given rise to justifiable hopes that, at least in the long term, we shall achieve general and complete disarmament, especially in the nuclear field. The recent agreement reached by the two super-Powers on nuclear weapons is certainly a

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positive move in the direction of détente and is likely to reduce the level of international tension and reallocate the huge sums of money earmarked for the nuclear buildup to the financing of development projects to make the world a better place to live in.

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While insisting on the need for disarmament as a radical means to avert the dangers to human life resulting from the accumulation of destructive weaponry, we cannot forget another threat to the human race hanging over us, namely, the pollution of the natural environment and the deterioration of life-sustaining elements, with all the disasters this can entail, such as the decay of the ozone layer, which can have dire consequences - indeed some have already begun to appear. We look forward to the 1992 United Nations conference on the environment and development, a most important event that will open up prospects of strengthened international co-operation and the implementation of concerted and equitable joint endeavours aimed at protecting the environment and ensuring a safe future for generations to come. Similarly, attempts at dumping toxic waste and other industrial residue by various arbitrary means are a crime against nature, cause serious damage to the environment, and represent deliberate tampering with man's right to a safe and secure life.

Narcotic drugs constitute another crime that is taking on extremely grave proportions: they have a negative effect on human beings and society that is so terrifying that it hardly needs to be underlined. The international community as a whole must as a matter of urgency aim at eradicating this scourge through redoubled joint efforts. Obviously, putting an end to the production and use of drugs, and trading in them, is the first concern, but the deep roots which have given rise to this serious problem in certain societies must also be analysed. These causes appear to be mainly economic and social: poverty, misery, unemployment and ignorance.

We have all welcomed the growing spirit of détente and concord in international relations and the positive steps made towards resolving various crises. Yet, for all their worth, such achievements will remain fragile as long as

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fundamental and structural reforms are not introduced in world relations, which continue to be marked by imbalances and injustices detrimental to the least developed countries.

We in Tunisia believe that progress towards desirable solutions of these problems depends essentially on reviving the paralysed North-South dialogue by injecting into it the kind of real political will so necessary to attain positive results that would rekindle the hopes and aspirations of developing peoples and bring about a fairer distribution of the fruits of their endeavours and a better balance in world trade.

In point of fact, the deterioration of the terms of trade and the fall in raw-material prices, to say nothing of the volume of debt, excessive servicing charges and the ensuing transfer of wealth to creditor countries, constitute so many heavy burdens encumbering developing countries and crippling their development efforts.

As regards international monetary relations, it is worthwhile pointing to the negative trends that have recently emerged as a result of changes introduced in the system of financial aid transfers to developing countries and, in particular, the drying up of capital flows in the direction of medium-income countries - a phenomenon at once surprising and deplorable when we consider the efforts to ensure those countries' recovery and the bold measures they have taken, imposing enormous sacrifices upon their peoples, in order to emerge from underdevelopment by relying mainly on their own means and resources.

It goes without saying that the bold decisions recently taken by a number of industrialized nations to cancel the debts of some least-developed countries constitute a large and praiseworthy step towards alleviating the third-world debt

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burden. We can only hope that the advanced countries will also pay heed to the interests and concerns of the developing medium-income countries.

By way of contributing to the serious quest for adequate solutions to the debt problem, and aware of the need for a coherent strategy, which would meet with the support of all parties concerned, to handle this thorny issue, President Ben Ali submitted to the industrial summit of the group of seven at Toronto, last year, a set of practical proposals based on workable formulas likely to give an impetus to international co-operation and to stimulate development efforts in our country. In this regard we call upon the international community to consider in depth, through dialogue and concertation, ways and means of setting up an effective plan of action likely to lead to the achievement of those objectives. We consider that here the United Nations has a distinct determining role that it must play. We believe that the special session of the General Assembly - scheduled to be held in the near future - on international co-operation, and particularly on the revitalization of economic growth in the developing countries, will provide a valuable opportunity to activate this dialogue and intensify concerted efforts between North and South.

International life in recent years has witnessed various high-level activities and meetings. I shall mention in particular the extraordinary Arab summit session in Casablanca, the twenty-fifth summit meeting of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), at Addis Ababa, and the ninth summit meeting of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, at Belgrade. To us, these events constituted so many useful opportunities to exchange views on the situation now prevailing in the world and to arrive at a set of resolutions and recommendations essentially aimed at consolidating peace and détente and strengthening international co-operation.

Today, the eyes of the world are turned, with optimism and hope, to our organization as it assembles for the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly.



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The world is expectant of the conclusions we shall reach and our possible future efforts to achieve détente and strengthen world peace and security by creating conditions propitious to impartial, fruitful co-operation between nations based on mutual solidarity, concord and harmony, for the benefit of the entire human race.

Allow me in conclusion, on behalf of Tunisia, to convey to the President and to the Secretary-General our warmest regards and best wishes for the success of this session in attaining the noble goals of the Organization and in fulfilling the legitimate aspirations of our peoples to security, peace and progress.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.