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PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE TWENTY-SIXTH MEETING

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

Mr. GARBA

(Nigeria)

later:

Mr. SALLAH
(Vice-President)

(Gambia)

- Address by His Majesty King Moshoeshoe II, Head of State of the Kingdom of Lesotho
- General debate [9] (continued)

Statements made by

Mr. King (Barbados)
Mr. Bayih (Ethiopia)
Mr. Gurinovich (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic)

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

ADDRESS BY HIS MAJESTY KING MOSHOESHOE II, HEAD OF STATE OF THE KINGDOM OF LESOTHO

The PRESIDENT: This morning the Assembly will hear an address by the Head of State of the Kingdom of Lesotho.

His Majesty King Moshoeshoe II, Head of State of the Kingdom of Lesotho, 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 His Majesty King Moshoeshoe II, Head of State of the Kingdom of Lesotho, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

King MOSHOESHOE II: On behalf of the people and the Government of the Kingdom of Lesotho, and on my own behalf, I have the pleasure and the honour to extend to you personally, Sir, and to the members of the Assembly, our fraternal greetings. In so doing, we take the opportunity to offer our warm congratulations upon your most befitting and deserving assumption of the presidency of the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly.

We are in no doubt that the General Assembly will benefit enormously from your prowess and demonstrated diplomatic skills, your wisdom, and your experience, in the course of your duty to guide the deliberations of the General Assembly - a brilliant manifestation of the oneness of the wide world community of sovereign States bound together by the principles of freedom, equality, and mutual respect. You have distinguished yourself, Sir, not only by your dynamic representation of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, but also as a champion of the course of freedom and justice everywhere, more especially in the duties you discharged as Chairman of the United Nations Special Committee against Apartheid.

Also, we cannot but pay a special tribute to your predecessor, Mr. Dante Caputo, former Foreign Minister of the Argentine Republic, for the able

(King Moshoeshoe II)

and effective manner in which he conducted the proceedings of the forty-third session.

As we meet in this forty-fourth year of the existence of the United Nations, we should once more feel duty-bound to express our gratitude to the founding fathers of the Organization for their vision in having left, for humanity, the legacy of the Organization, which has become the guarantee for humanity's own continued survival.

This occasion therefore provides us with an opportunity to renew our solemn faith in the lofty ideals and historic mission of the United Nations Charter. It is a lesson we have learned collectively that only a deep-rooted sense of commitment to the principles of the Charter will extricate our planet from the current global insecurity and mistrust, and lead us all to a happier, common future.

There is, increasingly, a notable realization among nations that the settlement of disputes by peaceful means, whenever possible, is both an imperative and a pre-condition for mutual trust, confidence and security - in fact, for our very survival. It is a manifest reality of human history that true peace, not subservience, and justice, not domination, are the positive conditions for real progress and genuine development. To us smaller nations, it is, further, a guarantee against the hegemonic tendencies of the bigger and stronger nations, which have so often fallen into the temptation of using their military and economic superiority to advance their designs not only for undue influence but, worse still, for domination. We should go through the remaining decade of the twentieth century strengthened in our resolve to make the next century a century of hope, peace and co-operation among all the nations of our planet.

We are pleased to register our appreciation of the increased effectiveness of the United Nations and the ever-expanding role that it continues to play in the

(King Moshoeshoe II)

promotion of the peaceful settlement of disputes, sound co-operation among nations, and continuous adherence to, and observance of, the cardinal principles of the United Nations Charter.

As we stand on the threshold of the twenty-first century, the clarion call of the United Nations is for all countries to marshal their collective strength in forging a common destiny for mankind, in which the worth and dignity of the human person shall take centre stage.

For far too long, the world has failed to muster sufficient political will to embark on an effective strategy to reverse the ever-rising tide of inequalities among and within nations, of the alarming deterioration of our environment, and of debilitating confrontations, all of which are a threat to our common future and security.

(King Moshoeshoe II)

It is a sad reality of, and indeed a bad reflection on, the moral conscience of our age to see, in peace-time, conditions of extreme human suffering and deprivation which would generally be associated with the ravages of armed conflict. The economic hardships which have plagued some of our countries still persist despite the general improvement in the performance of the world economy as shown in the 1989 World Economic Survey.

While there are obvious signs of economic recovery in some of the developing countries, other countries are still experiencing a continuous decline in their per capita incomes, thus making it necessary to call for a major review of the world economic order. The developing nations have always been concerned about commodity prices, about the imbalances caused by the outward flow of capital through debt payments and the demands of the developed economies, on one side, and caused by very low investments, in real terms, by developed nations in the developing countries, on the other. Therefore, economic recovery and rehabilitation in our countries are being seriously hampered by the hostile economic environment, characterized by massive external debt which has now reached crisis proportions, by the decline in commodity prices, by the deterioration in the terms of trade, and increasing protectionist tendencies in the developed countries.

Official development assistance is not only stagnating at less than half of the internationally accepted target, but is, in real terms, declining. Monetary conditions have shown a tendency towards instability, with misaligned exchange rates. All these factors have resulted in a process of unfavourable transfer of resources from developing to developed countries, with disastrous economic consequences in the former.

The external debt crisis, which has now reached serious political and economic dimensions, has emerged as one of the main obstacles to growth and development in

(King Moshoeshoe II)

our countries. We therefore call on the international community, particularly the creditor countries, to resolve this crisis in a spirit of shared responsibility. While calling for a substantial and timely reduction of the stock and services of the external debt, the developing countries would welcome a significant flow of new financial resources and real investments commensurate with their economic needs.

However, the response of the international community to the debt issue, has, so far, been encouraging. A variety of remedial actions have been initiated; these include the World Bank's special programme of assistance, the International Monetary Fund's enhanced structural adjustment facility, and the fifth replenishment of the African Development Bank.

At their ninth summit Conference in Belgrade this year, the Heads of State or Government of the Non-Aligned Countries made concrete and wide-ranging proposals regarding the areas in which the international community could increase its co-operation towards combating the menace of external indebtedness. These proposals deserve our serious consideration because, in the interdependent world economy, the negative trends referred to will in the long run have adverse effects on all our countries, developed and developing alike.

The African countries, on their part, have decided to adopt a regional approach to the debt issue through the holding of an international conference on African debt. It is hoped the outcome of this conference will be a decisive strategy to resolve this problem and bring much needed relief to our burdened economies.

In a resolute determination to implement the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development for the period 1986 to 1990 designed to pull our countries out of the economic slump, our Governments have spared no effort and wasted no time in vigorously embarking on structural adjustment programmes, blended with initiatives and alternatives arising out of

(King Moshoeshoe II)

peculiar country situations, which have been suggested by our partners in development and supported by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, as one decisive step towards economic rehabilitation. But let us be quite frank with each other: these adjustment programmes will succeed only if our partners in development are aware and realize that they, too, have to make commensurate adjustments.

While declaring our belief in structural adjustment measures, we are, however, of the opinion that to serve best the needs of our countries these externally conceived prescriptions should have been tailored in full cognizance of the peculiar circumstances prevailing in each of our different countries. Only in this way could the measures effectively cover the whole spectrum of development concerns in our countries.

Referring to these orthodox structural adjustment programmes now recommended for Africa and the developing world, the Caracas Ministerial Declaration stipulates that they should be reviewed and replaced by other more viable alternatives which would take into account the social, political and economic conditions and realities of Africa. During the mid-term review and appraisal of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development, the General Assembly at its forty-third session, bearing in mind that African Governments have the central role to play in the design and implementation of their adjustment programmes, stipulated, inter alia, that these Governments should increase their efforts in the search for a viable conceptual and practical framework for economic structural adjustment programmes, in keeping with the long-term development objectives and strategies at the national, sub-regional and regional levels.

The Economic Commission for Africa acted very swiftly to embark on a search for an African alternative framework to structural adjustment programmes. The alternative framework that has now been worked out and generally accepted by

(King Moshoeshoe II)

African Governments ensures that, while adjustment programmes will be aimed at the fundamental transformation of the African economies, they will take due account of the specific economic situations and national development priorities of each country. Most of all, these programmes will be designed so as to incorporate a human dimension, with no adverse effect on vulnerable groups of our societies.

The African countries are really determined to take charge of their own development destinies. All they need is the necessary and appropriate back-up and support from their international partners in development.

The question of the environment and the need to preserve the global ecological balance has become one of the major issues before the world community. The problem of the environment is a complex one, with political, economic, social and cultural ramifications.

In the developing countries, the environment crisis is acute. In fact, for close to a billion people living in these countries it is a matter of survival; and yet they have so far had the least say, given their economic situation. Effective protection of the environment cannot, realistically, take place in situations of human deprivation because the already limited financial and other resources can only be channelled towards economic and social development.

There is, therefore, a need for international co-operation in order to co-ordinate all our efforts and arrest the degradation of our common heritage: the environment. Success in this urgent international effort can be realized only if the developed industrialized countries extend all the necessary assistance - financial and technical - to the developing countries, as these countries still lack the necessary means.

At the same time, we urge that these environmental problems, urgent and serious as they are, not be compounded by the imposition of unfavourable conditions in the lending and other economic co-operation policies of the developed

(King Moshoeshoe II)

countries. Environmental problems, it must be acknowledged, are the result not only of neglect and lack of know-how in the developing countries but also of careless development and pollution generated by the industrialized countries. These countries, therefore, have a primary responsibility towards solving the problem.

Dumping of hazardous wastes originating from the industrialized countries in our so-called third world countries is another issue of grave concern and an outrage which has been deplored by virtually all Governments in the developing world.

(King Moshoeshoe II)

It is disturbing that the industrialized countries with the technology and other means for properly treating and disposing of wastes should deem it convenient to transport these substances and wastes to the developing countries, where the immediate and long-term consequences to the environment and human health can be immeasurable. It is a gross injustice to impose health and other hazards on the inhabitants of our countries simply because as yet they do not have laws controlling and prohibiting disposal of such harmful wastes. It is very immoral for the industrialized countries to trample on the rights of the poor peoples in the developing countries simply because, in the latter, public resentment is not as vocal as it invariably is in the former. We call on the industrialized countries to respect the right of the developing countries to a clean and healthy environment.

The United Nations is the most appropriate forum for solving these environment problems effectively.

The adoption by the General Assembly at its forty-third session of the resolution entitled "Responsibility of States for the protection of the environment, prevention of the illegal international traffic in, and the dumping and resulting accumulation of toxic and dangerous products and wastes affecting the developing countries in particular" was an acknowledgement by this world body of its role of combating the serious problems posed by environmental degradation and protecting the disadvantaged inhabitants of our common planet.

The year 1992 will mark the twentieth anniversary of the Stockholm Conference on the environment. It is our fervent hope that the occasion will be marked appropriately by renewed international commitment to make this world a safe place for all.

We meet today against the background of an emerging global atmosphere of a serious search for peace, disarmament and elimination of international tensions -

(King Moshoeshoe II)

a departure from the attitudes of rivalry and East-West confrontations that have characterized international relationships during the past 40 years.

The bipolar doctrines of the twentieth century are being replaced by restraint, mutual accommodation and consolidation of efforts towards universal peace and security for all nations, large and small.

The rapprochement reached by the two super-Powers and, in particular, the progress achieved in disarmament negotiations, and the influences they have brought to bear in the resolution of regional conflicts have greatly improved the international political climate.

Much as we welcome the breeze of global relaxation of tensions, we remain uneasy and sceptical about the ever-present threat to the security and survival of small nations. We would wish to see increased United Nations interest in the legitimate concerns of small States and the ultimate fruition of an international régime backed up by appropriate instruments guaranteeing the rights and sovereignty of these States.

The disadvantaged situation of small States and their characteristic constraints, compounded, as in the case of Lesotho, by unfavourable geographic location and possible isolation by a powerful neighbour, merit the special attention of this body. We call upon the international community to rally to our support and assistance in our endeavours to build viable, self-reliant and sustainable national economies. It is in this Assembly that the independence and sovereignty of small States can be guaranteed; it is here that they are able to communicate with the bigger nations on the basis of equality, freedom and mutual respect.

In southern Africa there is a growing prospect for improvement in the general political situation from the crucible of a long and bloody struggle for self-determination. The light of freedom is at long last dawning upon Namibia.

(King Moshoeshoe II)

Notwithstanding the tragic events of last April, when the international community, through the United Nations, set in motion the independence plan for Namibia, there is fortunately a renewed recognition that Security Council resolution 435 (1978) is the only road to Namibia's independence.

It is therefore absolutely necessary that there be full compliance with the provisions of the settlement plan and that all the relevant parties honour their commitments so that the people of Namibia may be able to determine their future without hindrance.

Our optimism for the success of the United Nations independence plan for Namibia has been fortified by the selfless devotion to duty and the professional integrity and impartiality with which the United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) is conducting itself in pursuit of our common endeavour to bring Namibia to independence through free and fair elections in the not-too-distant future.

It is our firm belief that, because of the sheer size of the territory of Namibia and the complexity of the situation on the ground, the originally conceived UNTAG force level of 7,500 remains a viable and realistic proposition.

The recent incidents of violence in Namibia have demonstrated clearly that the task of maintaining peace and impartiality during the transition period, particularly during the election itself, will indeed be a difficult one. It is therefore a matter of great importance that the resources put at the disposal of the Secretary-General for the implementation of the United Nations plan for the independence of Namibia be commensurate with the enormity of the task as well as with the importance attached by the international community to the independence of that country. We accordingly appeal to the Security Council to reach unanimity on this issue to ensure the strengthening and necessary increase of the UNTAG force.

(King Moshoeshoe II)

We extend our hearty congratulations to all the countries whose initiatives have directly or indirectly facilitated the launching of the settlement process. We cannot but include in this tribute the Secretary-General, whose unflagging determination to see Namibia attain independence under the United Nations plan has been a source of strength and sustenance to the settlement plan.

In accordance with our long-standing policy of principled opposition to apartheid, the Kingdom of Lesotho continues to call for the urgent and total dismantling of that system and the creation of a just and democratic South Africa, with equal rights and opportunities for all its citizens. Let this Assembly take note that the people of the Kingdom of Lesotho and their Government feel apartheid cannot be reformed; it must be dismantled and uprooted. We owe it to our founding fathers to continue to say that there should be no discrimination between our respective citizens; we owe it, as a Government, to all the black peoples, Basotho included, to join in this common cause with everything we have at our disposal.

Encouraging developments in South Africa are taking place: the growth of the internal mass democratic movement and the growing consensus, even among the white population, that apartheid is both irrelevant and detrimental to the general economy and to the development of both South Africa and southern Africa are indicators that ought to receive due support and attention. To give credence to these hopeful signs it is our fervent hope that the South African authorities will take decisive and urgent steps to restore to all South Africans their inalienable right to full participation in the social and political life of their country. In this regard the release of political prisoners and detainees and the lifting of the ban on political organizations, as well as allowing the return of exiles to their homeland, remain key prerequisites.

For far too long, South African authorities have failed to heed legitimate calls for democratic change in that country. Among other things, this failure has

(King Moshoeshoe II)

brought in its wake not only severe hardships and irreparable loss of life but the imposition by the international community of punitive sanctions.

We wish to urge, however, that the rationale and moral justification for economic and other sanctions against South Africa notwithstanding, due cognizance be given to Lesotho's unique geopolitical position and the consequential adverse effects of those measures on our economy.

In this context we cannot but plead for a sympathetic appreciation by the community of nations of the peculiarities of our position and the urgent need to cushion us and all other southern African neighbours against the stark hardships of the intensified campaign for sanctions.

(King Moshoeshoe II)

Lesotho subscribes fully to, and supports, all initiatives for a negotiated solution of the South African question, and pledges itself to continue to play a constructive role in that direction. Lesotho is not concerned only about the present situation, but also about the future. We wish to see emerge a different South Africa, one that will respect and honour the principles of good-neighbourliness, of healthy reciprocity in the treatment of all of our citizens, regardless of race or colour; we wish to see emerge a new South Africa that will respect our territorial sovereignty and national integrity.

In addressing the question of apartheid, we are reminded of the continuing plight of refugees and displaced persons in southern Africa. Our commitment to all the conventions of this body remains unshaken.

It is our sincere hope that the international community will continue to seek ways and means of giving practical effect to its undertaking on the plight of refugees and displaced persons in southern Africa, particularly on the issues of burden-sharing and assistance to all the countries of southern Africa.

The implementation of the United Nations settlement plan for Namibia has opened a new vista for the return of peace to Angola. We applaud the signature of the New York Agreements, which upheld the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of Angola. We equally welcome the Luanda and Gbadolite accords, which constitute a practical framework for reconciliation between the Government of the People's Republic of Angola and UNITA. We are hopeful that the difficulties that have emerged since those agreements were signed can be overcome with the exercise of political will, determination, flexibility and accommodation on both sides.

The same holds true for the People's Republic of Mozambique, which merits the full support of this body for its current efforts to bring normalcy to that country through peace and reconciliation.

(King Moshoeshoe II)

We recognize the continued quest by the people of Western Sahara for self-determination and independence. The Kingdom of Lesotho supports and encourages all peace moves conducted by the parties to the dispute aimed at the realization of this goal. We commend the efforts of the Chairman of the Organization of African Unity and the Secretary-General of the United Nations for their catalytic role towards accomplishment of the settlement plan.

Never before in contemporary history has peaceful settlement of disputes acquired such importance in international relations. It is indeed a matter of serious concern that the situation in the Middle East continues to run counter to these progressive trends.

Peace in that region will come about only when the parties to the conflict have mustered sufficient political will and flexibility to face up to the reality of the difficult decisions that will have to be made in the interest of peace and stability. Experience drawn from the Camp David Accords has demonstrably proved that peace in the Middle East is well within the realm of possibility.

We reaffirm our support for the convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East to look into all aspects of the problem of that region with the participation of all the parties concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organization. It is our firm belief that such a conference would make a major contribution to reconciling the people of the Middle East through a peaceful formula that would aim to achieve mutual recognition of each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity, as well as to uphold the principle of right to self-determination.

The Palestinian question, ever so central to the Middle East problem, has, with the advent of the intifadah and the declaration of the new State of Palestine, assumed a new sense of urgency. Like all the peoples of the Middle East, the Palestinians have a right to independence and a sovereign homeland. It is thus

(King Moshoeshoe II)

incumbent upon the United Nations to see to it that no effort is spared to ensure that the Palestinian nation takes up its rightful place as a full member of the community of nations.

Another dimension of the Middle East problem we are constantly reminded of is the tragic situation arising from the fratricidal war in Lebanon. It should by now be very clear to the warring parties that there can be no military solution to that conflict in which we are daily witnessing the loss of precious life and the destruction of property. We support the peace initiatives currently in progress to bring a halt to the hostilities there and to work towards a negotiated settlement and true reconciliation. In this regard, we wish particularly to applaud the efforts of the Arab League and the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

We cannot but express our great satisfaction at the completion of the withdrawal of the Soviet military forces from Afghanistan on 15 February this year, pursuant to the Agreements reached in Geneva in April 1988. By agreeing to pull its forces out of Afghanistan, the Soviet Union has demonstrated its political will and determination to contribute positively to a comprehensive solution to the Afghan problem and to promote conditions of peace and security in the region. Is it not, however, a travesty that, even in the wake of the withdrawal of the Soviet military forces from Afghanistan, the country continues to bleed from a fratricidal war? It is our considered view that the cause of restoring peace to Afghanistan can best be advanced, not by a continued inflow of armaments from outside, which help only to fuel the conflict, but by intra-Afghan dialogue leading to the cessation of hostilities and negotiation of a common future of hope and fraternity for the people of Afghanistan.

The Kingdom of Lesotho continues to add its support to the regional and international initiatives aimed at achieving a durable and peaceful solution to the

(King Moshoeshoe II)

Kampuchean question, particularly the first and second Jakarta Informal Meetings held during July 1988 and February 1989 respectively, and the subsequent meetings between the parties concerned.

We equally welcome the decision of the non-aligned countries to establish a committee on Kampuchea consisting of 13 countries and, not least, the commendable efforts of the 19 countries, including the five permanent members of the Security Council, which assembled in Paris at the end of July this year with the purpose of finding a solution to the problem of Kampuchea. The stalling of the Paris negotiations, while regrettable, should strengthen the resolve of the international community to intensify efforts towards the ultimate achievement of a peaceful settlement. We view those efforts and initiatives as complementary and mutually reinforcing, and as significant contributions towards a comprehensive solution to that problem.

The undertaking by the Vietnamese Government in April 1989 unconditionally to withdraw the rest of its troops from Kampuchea by the end of September this year, should, if buttressed by internationally acceptable verification measures, remove one of the major obstacles and offer enhanced prospects for the realization of peace in that country.

It is the moral responsibility of the international community, not only to stop the war, but to give support and sustenance to the achievement of a satisfactory internal political settlement that will ensure that Kampuchea fully recovers from the wounds of the Indo-China war, the genocidal practices of the recent past and the untenable circumstances of foreign occupation.

The international community must not relax its efforts for the promotion of peace, reconciliation and dialogue in the Korean peninsula.

In calling for the speedy reunification of Korea, we urge the two sides to do everything possible to promote mutual trust and adopt confidence-building

(King Moshoeshoe II)

measures. The prerequisite for the attainment of peaceful reunification will always be the easing of tension and military confrontation, and this demands political will and determination on both sides. We are indeed heartened by the efforts being made by the Korean people to achieve the reunification of their fatherland through dialogue and mutual consultation.

The people of Korea should not, however, in the interim, be denied their right to full membership of the United Nations, even as a divided nation. The Government of Lesotho, guided by the principle of universality of the United Nations, would readily support assumption of United Nations membership by both Koreas, should they choose to do so.

Over 25 years ago, this Organization established the United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) in order to create the best conditions under which peaceful solutions to the Cyprus problem could be achieved. We regret that in all that time it has not been possible to achieve a negotiated settlement of all aspects of the Cyprus problem.

(King Moshoeshoe II)

The Kingdom of Lesotho continues to welcome, and to reaffirm its support for, the efforts of the Secretary-General in pursuing the mission of good offices entrusted to him by the Security Council. We particularly welcome the direct talks launched, in August 1988 under the auspices of the Secretary-General, between the President of the Republic of Cyprus and the leader of the Turkish Cypriot community. It is our sincere hope that both parties will co-operate fully with the Secretary-General in his latest endeavour, by showing the necessary flexibility and goodwill.

We urge the two parties to consider taking further steps, in co-operation with United Nations personnel, aimed at reducing the recurrence of violent incidents and at creating an atmosphere conducive to peaceful and result-oriented dialogue. Lesotho supports the proposals for the demilitarization of Cyprus and for the convening of an international conference, under the auspices of the United Nations, on the international aspects of the Cyprus problem. We are convinced that the immediate withdrawal of all foreign forces from Cyprus remains an essential basis for an early and just solution to the problem and for the restoration of the country's unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity.

We witness the important developments taking place in Central America, which are characterized by processes of democratization, political harmonization and a genuine search for peace, aimed at strengthening security and development in that region. The Kingdom of Lesotho is convinced that strict respect for the self-determination of peoples, non-interference in the internal affairs of States, and cessation of all pressures, threats and hostile acts against sovereign States constitute the essential basis for peace, development and democracy in Central America.

(King Moshoeshoe II)

The peace agreements recently concluded by the Central American Presidents in Honduras constitute a major contribution to the attainment of durable and lasting peace in the region. We appeal to all Governments to respect the will of the Central American people to implement the joint plan for the restoration of peace in Central America and to desist from any action that might jeopardize the completion of this process.

So far as the Falklands/Malvinas question is concerned, it is our fervent hope that Argentina and the United Kingdom will eventually arrive at a mutually acceptable solution on the basis of the General Assembly resolution on that Territory. They should be accorded all support in their current endeavours and initiatives in the search for a peaceful solution to their differences.

As the world steers off the paths of confrontation and extricates itself from regional conflicts, it behoves all of us to consolidate and accelerate the process of the relaxation of international tension by lending fresh impetus to the positive efforts being made to turn swords into ploughshares. Despite the positive developments we have witnessed in the field of disarmament in recent years, the world is still threatened by the massive nuclear arsenals that are still in place on our planet and are being further refined, increased and even modernized.

The Kingdom of Lesotho is heartened by the progress achieved in the negotiations between the major Powers of the East and the West that resulted in the Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Elimination of Their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles - the INF Treaty - and in agreement, in principle, to reduce their strategic arsenals by 50 per cent. It is our hope that these agreements are only a precursor of the eventual total elimination of these weapons and that all other

(King Moshoeshoe II)

States possessing nuclear weapons will also be involved in these positive efforts. We are under no illusion that negotiations leading to the total elimination of nuclear weapons will be easy.

The recent agreement between the United States of America and the Soviet Union to resume negotiations on a nuclear-test ban and the initiative taken by Indonesia, Peru, Sri Lanka, Mexico and Yugoslavia in calling for an amendment conference of States parties to the 1963 Partial Test Ban Treaty, with a view to transforming that Treaty into a comprehensive test-ban treaty, constitute important contributions to the advancement of international security and the process of disarmament. It is our hope that the Conference on Disarmament will complete these efforts by embarking urgently upon negotiations for a comprehensive nuclear-test ban treaty that is binding on all States, in order to de-escalate the nuclear-arms race and reduce the threat of nuclear war.

Lesotho continues to register its support for the individual and regional initiatives that envisage the establishment of nuclear-free zones in various parts of the globe, and views these as a valid strategy for the prevention of the proliferation of nuclear weapons and the preservation of international peace and security.

Mankind is eager to forgo the weapons of mass destruction, whether these be nuclear, chemical or biological. The overwhelming attendance at, and the successful conclusion of, the international Conference on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, bringing together, in Paris in January this year, the States parties to the Geneva Protocol of 1925 and other interested parties, was testimony to humanity's rejection of these arsenals of death and mass destruction.

(King Moshoeshoe II)

As we exert ourselves to create a world free from nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, we should not, however, overlook the need to adopt measures for the limitation and gradual reduction of conventional weapons, within the framework of progress towards general and complete disarmament.

The international community should equally remain vigilant against the projection of the arms race into outer space. Outer space is the common heritage of mankind and should be used only for peaceful purposes and for the benefit of mankind. Scientific and technological development should be directed towards the benefit, and not the detriment, of mankind.

We have observed huge amounts of financial and other resources being devoted to the production and development of the means of war, while a large part of humanity continues to live in a world riddled with poverty, hunger, ignorance and disease. This misallocation of resources for the production and procurement of deadly weapons is not in the best interests of humanity. We see great value in the action programme adopted by the International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development, which calls for the release, through disarmament measures, of resources for developing countries.

As we witness the world transformation, leaving the spectre of the cold war to history, let us resolutely step up our joint efforts for the very survival of current and succeeding generations. Let us rekindle the hopes and aspirations of mankind by inculcating the spirit of interdependence and common destinies. These noble aims can be achieved only when there is respect for the sovereign right of every nation, small or large, to determine and decide freely its own social and political system. Let us truly live up to the lofty ideals of the United Nations.

(King Moshoeshoe II)

It would be remiss on my part if I ended this address without paying a special tribute to the indefatigable Secretary-General, Mr. Perez de Cuellar. As is typical of him, he continues to discharge his calling with honour and dignity. His untiring, noble efforts in the pursuit of peace, sometimes against heavy and demanding challenges, to find solutions that would eliminate the conflicts in our once-turbulent world, dictate to all peoples of conscience that they accord him the essential elements of co-operation and support.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank His Majesty the King of Lesotho for the important statement he has just made.

His Majesty King Moshoeshoe II of Lesotho was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

AGENDA ITEM 9 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. KING (Barbados): Mr. President, I am very pleased to see such a distinguished son of Africa receive the honour of presiding over the forty-fourth session of the United Nations General Assembly. The bonds between our two countries, Nigeria and Barbados, are of long standing, rooted in a common past, enriched by a common drive to uplift our peoples and unweakened by the distance that separates us. We know intimately of your personal skill and flair in diplomacy. I unhesitatingly pledge the full co-operation of my delegation during your tenure.

May I also take this opportunity to thank your predecessor, Mr. Dante Caputo, for his skilful chairmanship and guidance throughout the forty-third session.

Since the birth of the Organization some 45 years ago the world has made considerable progress. The age of high technology is with us. Many countries of the industrialized world have achieved high standards of living and substantial material advancement for their people. After more than three almost-uninterrupted decades of direct and indirect confrontation, the leading nuclear Powers have begun to beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning-hooks. With that development has followed an apparent weariness with conflict-by-proxy across the far reaches of the globe. There seems to be a genuine universal desire to participate in the search for peace.

It is, however, incumbent upon the super-Powers to ensure that this new dimension in their relations is no passing phenomenon, no short respite while arsenals are refurbished and economies restructured. It is our hope that the developments of the past two years are the basis for lasting global peace.

For the peoples of the non-industrialized countries these trends present a unique opportunity for us to pursue our development free from the encumbrances of

(Mr. King, Barbados)

ideological conflict. We must remain vigilant, however, and be determined that we never again become unwitting pawns in the deadly games of the not-too-distant past should there be a retreat into the old ways of super-Power rivalry. We must be ever vigilant, because many of the major problems that confront us today have no ideological solutions in the interdependent world in which we live.

And yet, in spite of the considerable progress the world has made, there remains a stubborn residue of problems that are as intractable today as they were half a century ago. For a large number of the world's population so little has changed in past decades that their development objectives, however modified, remain basically the same. For them, their economic and social problems are still their most urgent problems, and none of us can possibly say they are within sight of solution. There is still far too much degrading poverty on the face of the Earth. There are large inequalities in wealth within nations and between rich and poor nations. There are glaring gaps and disparities in the provision of housing, health and education for a substantial part of the world's population. There is the soul-destroying sickness of apartheid in South Africa and the lingering disease of racial intolerance and prejudice in many countries of the world. There are discord and conflict in the Middle East and smouldering embers of strife in South East Asia.

There ought to be no question that the struggle for economic advancement and social development of the non-industrialized nations of the world should be one of the urgent and consuming priorities of international life today.

The current international problems of debt, protectionism, the net reverse flow of financial resources, global warming, threats to the Earth's ozone layer, creeping deserts, pollution and other forms of environmental degradation, destruction wrought by hurricanes and other natural disasters, AIDS, drug abuse and

(Mr. King, Barbados)

the illegal traffic in drugs - all compound the plight of the peoples of the developing world.

I take this opportunity to express Barbados' sympathy with the countries that were recently ravaged by hurricane Hugo, particularly our sister countries in the Caribbean, and to urge the international community to co-ordinate and provide material support to the countries in need as a matter of urgency. I trust that these experiences will serve as an impetus to the international community to give its full support to the proclamation of the international decade for natural disasters.

Our responses to the challenges presented by the countless problems I have mentioned will be a test of the resilience of the multilateral system. Just as national development demands nothing less than the transformation of a society and its economy, so too in an interdependent world will economic and social development necessitate the transformation of attitudes in the international community and the transformation of the international economy. It is clear that the prescription calls for joint, co-operative and consensual action and responsibility if lasting solutions are to be found, solutions that do not themselves create more critical problems.

The foremost lesson to be learned in adherence to the principle of multilateralism is the danger of believing that any single country or group of countries can alone command the way forward or has exclusive insights into the way our relations on this planet should be shaped. Our history is replete with examples that reveal that that attitude of mind has prevailed in the past, needless to say with disastrous consequences. In the final analysis everyone is searching for the way forward; from the smallest to the biggest, from the weakest to the strongest, everyone has a contribution to make in this process.

(Mr. King, Barbados)

For small developing countries like Barbados there is really no alternative to the multilateral process. We have no capacity to project military might beyond our shores. We command no great influence in the total scheme of international economic relations. But we have one means of making our voice heard at the global level: that is through our contribution to the multilateral process and our appeal to fairness and equity in international relations.

We therefore urge the nations of the world to return to true multilateralism as the only effective way to meet the challenges of promoting and ensuring what has been described as self-sustaining, international economic growth and development and a restructured economic system of co-operation.

(Mr. King, Barbados)

In relation to international debt, the record of action so far emphasizes the need for a global conference to look at the question of debt in all its dimensions. The ad hoc and piecemeal measures which have been put forward so far are clearly not addressing the problem in the timely and comprehensive manner that is necessary. Failure to involve all parties, including particularly the private commercial banks, has produced obstacles to the full implementation of the various proposals, resulting in half-hearted efforts at implementation and less than full coverage of those affected.

In addition, the emergence of new centres of economic power and the prospect of new patterns of trade and investment make such a conference even more vital. Any further delay in convening the conference will only increase the already intolerable social costs being borne by indebted countries as they strive to repay their debts. It is certain that the terrible effects in terms of social upheaval and dislocation will be felt far beyond the confines of the national borders within which they occur.

In relation to the environment, it is heartening that there has been a fairly quick decision on a global approach to the problem. The General Assembly will have to work hard at this session to ensure that the preparations for the 1992 conference on environment and development are placed on a sure foundation. Even at this stage, however, some comments can be offered about what Barbados would like to see emerge at, and from, the conference.

Barbados hopes that, as a minimum, some concrete measures will be agreed upon to enable developing countries to contribute more fully to the efforts to protect the global environment. We recognize that sacrifices will have to be made by all countries, but it is only equitable that the developed countries, which are in a better position to do so and which have contributed significantly to the present

(Mr. King, Barbados)

environmental problems, bear proportionately a larger portion of the burden. Above all, arrangements to protect and preserve the environment must ensure that the legitimate aspirations of the developing countries to create a better life for their people are secured.

I am happy to report that Barbados and its sister States members of the Caribbean Community have recently taken steps to create mechanisms at the regional level for ongoing consultation and co-operation on environmental matters which are of paramount interest to us all.

In relation to illegal narcotic drugs, it is clear that efforts to eliminate this menace will be doomed to failure unless they reflect the will of producer, consumer and transit States alike. So far, activity has been concentrated on efforts to stem the flow of illegal drugs to consuming countries.

Efforts, however, to reduce and eliminate the demand for illegal drugs have been not nearly as concerted and, as a result, not as effective. It has become evident that catchy slogans, although they serve to focus attention on the issue, are not sufficient. It will be necessary to direct much more effort and resources towards education to spread the message of the dangers of narcotic drugs; for it is only when the demand of consumers is reduced that the core of the problem will have been reached. Equal emphasis will need to be placed on rehabilitation programmes to reclaim those who have become the victims of drug abuse. These measures are essential if the long-term dimensions of the drug problem are to be addressed.

Barbados' concern with the dangers of illegal drugs has been all the more heightened because our principal resource is our people. Barbados lacks large deposits of minerals, vast rivers and forests. It has been through the ingenuity of our people that some measure of progress may be seen in our development efforts.

(Mr. King, Barbados)

Our women in particular have played a significant and leading role in these development efforts. Thus, any factor which reduces the capacity of our people to fulfil the tasks of development is an attack on the very foundations of our existence as a nation. My country is in the process of adopting comprehensive measures aimed at effectively combating and halting the illegal traffic in drugs in Barbados. However, the efforts of individual countries need to be buttressed, and we commend regional and multilateral efforts.

In this regard, I wish to pledge the support of Barbados for the courageous and resolute efforts of President Virgilio Barco and the Government and people of Colombia to free their country from the grip of narco-terror.

We support, too, the initiatives presented by the Governments of Trinidad and Tobago and Jamaica aimed at excising the cancer of illicit trade in drugs and we urge the international community to join in this support.

The scourge of AIDS, like drug abuse and drug trafficking, respects no borders. It is vital that in the fight against AIDS the international community deploy all the resources at its command. Above all, it is imperative that developments in science and technology be made available to all countries if the universal battle against AIDS is to be waged successfully. The choice is clear: we unite or perish.

Developing countries like Barbados are engaged in an interminable struggle to ensure that we are not left behind in the evolution of the global economy. There is an unfortunate trend for developed countries increasingly to co-ordinate their policies in key economic sectors without involving a range of the developing nations which will ultimately be affected by those policies. Barbados fully supports the efforts at consultation among those with the greatest capacity to effect change in the international economy. We feel, however, that such

(Mr. King, Barbados)

co-ordination should more fully take into account and reflect the views and concerns of those with the greatest needs.

Certain factors should govern the transformation of the global economy. Foremost among these is the unequal capacities of developing and developed countries to make the necessary adaptations. The developed countries are better able by far to adjust to the new realities; indeed they are helping to create the momentum for change. It is vital, therefore, that the developing countries be helped to make the necessary adjustments; for it is only if the transformation of the developing countries corresponds to that of the developed world that a true balance can be attained which favours the majority over minority interests.

This year we witness the celebration of the emergence and triumph of democracy in at least three countries. The Republic of Costa Rica will shortly mark the 100th anniversary of its democracy. The Republic of France has celebrated the 200th anniversary of the French Revolution. We congratulate those countries. My own country, Barbados, is commemorating 350 years of Parliament. Our experience of 350 years of parliamentary government has taught us the power which resides in the hands of the people. From a narrowly constituted body reflecting the interests of a minority of colonists, the Barbados Parliament has been transformed into a truly representative institution in which the concerns of all Barbadians may be pursued. It is against this background that Barbadians can empathize with the aspirations of people throughout the world to become masters of their destiny, through freely and democratically elected representatives.

This aspiration has burned strong in the breasts of the oppressed people of southern Africa. Change is on the horizon for Namibia after years of domination by the apartheid régime of South Africa. Barbados's long-standing commitment to this

(Mr. King, Barbados)

process of change is underscored by the deployment of a contingent of 21 Barbadian police officers in Namibia within the framework of the United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG). But the international community must remain vigilant lest, at the eleventh hour, the evil régime of apartheid conspires to snatch the prize of freedom from the grasp of the Namibian people.

(Mr. King, Barbados)

Certain ominous developments in Namibia only serve to warn of that possibility. It is therefore vitally important that the apartheid régime be told in no uncertain terms, especially by those to whom it must listen, that the international community will not be satisfied with anything less than complete freedom for the Namibian people.

We must be conscious, however, that the achievement of political freedom is only the starting-point for Namibia's membership of the community of nations. Considerable financial and technical assistance will be necessary to place the country on the path to economic development. My country has in its small way tried to further this cause through regular contributions to the various funds for Namibia and the provision of educational scholarships for Namibians in Barbados. Barbados stands ready to continue and intensify the assistance which it has been giving to Namibians and urges all members of the international community to do likewise within their respective capabilities. We will have failed in our several responsibilities if we merely assist in Namibia's emergence as an independent nation under the shadow of apartheid's economic domination.

The international community equally cannot relax until the stain of apartheid is eradicated from South Africa and truly representative government is introduced in benighted land. We must not be fooled by the merely cosmetic changes which have been made in South Africa through the staging of totally undemocratic elections. That is merely an attempt to give apartheid a respectable face and prolong its existence as well as an attempt to lull the international community into inaction on the eradication of apartheid. But none of us, none of the nations which proclaim support for fundamental and inalienable human rights, the essential principles of justice and equality and the virtues of a democratic form of

(Mr. King, Barbados)

government can be satisfied until that odious system of apartheid is completely eliminated. For while the situation in South Africa lingers it remains an obstacle to world peace.

The hunger for peace is evident in the decision reached by the five Presidents of Central America at their meeting in August in Tela, Honduras. Barbados has long supported the principle of applying regional solutions to regional problems. We have on several occasions and in various forums reaffirmed our support for, and commitment to, the peace initiatives launched by the Contadora Group. We pledge our support for the peace process, which has now been given a renewed impetus, and call upon all States to do likewise.

It is unfortunate that while it may be considered that some progress towards peace has been realized in one dimension of the Central American problem, elsewhere on the isthmus tension and strife are steadily increasing. A series of unfortunate events has dealt a serious blow to the hopes of the democratic forces in Panama. Following the abrupt suspension of the democratic process in the presidential elections held in Panama in May this year, the Prime Minister of Barbados, the Right Honourable Erskine Sandiford, issued a statement voicing Barbados' concern that any deterioration of the situation in Panama could lead to an escalation of tensions in the region with the gravest consequences for the peace and security of the hemisphere. He expressed the view that the democratic nations of the hemisphere could help to resolve the crisis in Panama by insisting that any solution must be consistent with respect for human rights and authentic democracy on the basis of fair and free elections, with the sovereign right of the Panamanian people to determine their own destiny free from external intervention, with the integrity of the Panama Canal treaties, and achieved through peaceful negotiations.

(Mr. King, Barbados)

Once again we urge all States to work within these parameters for the rapid and peaceful resolution of the crisis in Panama.

The international community must also renew its efforts to bring peace to that long troubled region, the Middle East. Barbados believes that an international conference on the Middle East offers the best hope for a comprehensive and lasting settlement of the Middle East question. Peace will continue to be an elusive objective until the desire of the Palestinian people for a homeland and the right of all States in the region to live within secure boundaries are reconciled. We urge those in authority to fulfil the responsibilities which are theirs by virtue of their power and to move swiftly to the table of internationally sponsored negotiations and so end the deadly cycle of violence.

Barbados agrees with the view that the United Nations system represents man's loftiest hopes for a better future. As a mechanism for solving problems the United Nations system is without parallel. It provides opportunities for a cross-fertilization of ideas, and its Charter, notwithstanding the criticisms levelled against it, offers the most comprehensive guidelines for international action yet crafted by man.

For all its potential the United Nations system can do no more than the will of the Member States allows. It is therefore imperative that we fulfil our obligations to the Organization. No longer can its operations be held to ransom through non-compliance with legal obligations regarding payment of contributions. Solemn undertakings must not be cast aside in the pursuit of national objectives. The United Nations is not to be supported when it suits narrow national interests and simply shunted aside when it does not.

It is clear, however, that the reform of the United Nations system must be carried forward speedily if its operations are to be placed on a sound and secure

(Mr. King, Barbados)

footing for the future. Some streamlining of activities will be necessary. Even greater efforts must be made to reduce and eventually eliminate wastage and outright abuse of resources where these are identified.

In relation to United Nations peace-keeping activities it is clear that in the last two years demands on the Organization have increased considerably. As negotiated settlements are reached in one conflict area after the other, it is likely that the United Nations will be called upon to act as guarantor of the peace again and again. If the United Nations is to fulfil in the most efficient manner the demands being made upon it then some attention must be paid to enhancing its capacity in the area of peace supervision. Only in this way can we hope to avoid some of the difficulties which have been evident. In addition we must counter the forces which would see the United Nations as a mere shield, a cover for the pursuit of national interests as opposed to the interests of the world community as a whole.

I take this opportunity to pay tribute to all those who have given their lives in the service of the United Nations.

Humankind cannot afford to ignore the possibilities which have been afforded us for a brighter tomorrow. To do so would be to condemn ourselves to repeat the mistakes of past decades with perhaps even more severe consequences for life on this planet. Barbados is convinced that if these opportunities for peace and development are to be exploited to the fullest they must be brought fully within the ambit of the United Nations system; they must not be left to the vagaries of changing personalities and alliances, or continue to exist at the level of bilateral or only partially multilateral relations.

(Mr. King, Barbados)

Our future action must also more fully reflect a commitment to certain principles and objectives. Those that come quickly to mind include: a renewed commitment to the process of consultation, the broadening of co-ordination in the economic sector, the equitable sharing of burdens and responsibilities; the search for comprehensive, as opposed to partial, ad hoc and temporary solutions to problems; the intensification of support for the economic recovery of developing countries; greater attention to the human dimension of development; respect for basic human rights over narrow national concerns; and the fulfilment of the aspiration of all peoples to self-determination.

Those are not new ideas. I certainly claim no right of authorship over them. They have been around for a long time, unfortunately more often ignored than recognized. I believe the success of our efforts to bequeath a better world to succeeding generations will largely depend on our commitment to those principles.

As we look back on the developments that have taken place in the recent past, we have cause for hope. There is an atmosphere of optimism, albeit cautious at times, that great things are within the grasp of mankind if only we put our minds and energies to the task of achieving them. As we face the future we can draw sustenance from the belief that a new era of peace and development can be ushered in on this planet.

The peoples of the developing world aspire to far more than mere survival. They deserve a nobler destiny, a concept justified by the high moral obligation to recognize the inherent equality of all human beings and to acknowledge that there is dignity in the human person and that every living soul on the face of the Earth deserves an equal opportunity to strive, and to achieve, and to create a more just and humane world.

Mr. BAYIH (Ethiopia): It gives me great pleasure, Sir, to extend to you, on behalf of the Ethiopian delegation and on my own behalf, warm congratulations on your election as President of the General Assembly at its forty-fourth session. Your election was indeed a great tribute both to the significant role our sister country of Nigeria plays in world affairs and to you personally, as a widely experienced diplomat. As I state my delegation's conviction that you will steer our deliberations to a successful conclusion, I wish at the same time to assure you of our fullest co-operation as you discharge your heavy responsibilities.

I wish also to take this opportunity to express our appreciation to your predecessor, Mr. Dante Caputo, for the effective manner in which he presided over the forty-third session of the General Assembly.

Let me also put on record our sincere appreciation to the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, for the firm commitment he has always shown to multilateralism and for his unflinching dedication to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Since the last session of the General Assembly we have been expressing optimism about new trends in international relations and increased hope about the future of our planet. The relaxation of tension in world politics over the course of the past two years has to a large extent justified that outlook. Today more than ever before we have sufficient reason to be more confident about the possibility of erecting a structure of peace in our world. The improvement in relations between the two major Powers has contributed significantly to the reduction of tension and to a better climate in international relations. Confrontation has started gradually to give way to dialogue and co-operation.

Obviously, the past cannot be unmade. But lessons learned from past mistakes should prepare the international community to seize the new opportunities that are opening up.

(Mr. Davih, Ethiopia)

It is to be recalled that the confrontation between the power blocs that was the hallmark of the period after the Second World War gave rise to a mind-set which was oblivious to the common danger faced by the human race. The mutual hostility engendered and fueled by the cold war left no room for accommodation.

Vindictiveness prevailed. Tolerance and mutual understanding lost their place.

Reason has, however, always pointed to the fact that those differences, regardless of their significance, were never important enough for us to allow them to overshadow mankind's common interest in ensuring survival. Nevertheless, the establishment of durable peace became elusive. The wasting of material and human resources in the quest for military supremacy, a pursuit that has always been a chimera, drained off resources that could otherwise have been used to promote development and alleviate the sufferings of humanity.

The adverse implications of the cold war were especially notable for newly independent and developing countries. In a climate of intolerance for different ideas, efforts by independent nations to seek their own solutions to their problems were viewed with hostility.

In the meantime, it was becoming abundantly clear that, apart from the nuclear danger that has been a part of our life since the Second World War, the growing number of challenges directly impinging on our survival, the proper management of which required international co-operation, were reminding us of our interdependence and our common destiny. We are indeed gratified that in the past few years the first steps have been taken, albeit in very limited areas of international life, to address issues of vital importance on the basis of accommodation and compromise.

In the past few years we have had the opportunity to see how, given the necessary political will, an international political environment conducive to the removal of obstacles to the search for solutions to some of the most intractable political problems could be created.

(Mr. Bayih, Ethiopia)

The commencement of the implementation of the United Nations plan for the independence of Namibia is a testimony to the capacity of the United Nations to discharge such important responsibilities when there exists the appropriate international environment. At the same time, we recognize that the Organization is facing a major challenge in ensuring free and fair elections in Namibia under its supervision and control on the basis of Security Council resolution 435 (1978).

That South Africa is only going through a pretence of allowing free and fair elections in Namibia has been obvious all along. Its determination to steal the elections scheduled to take place next month has been made plain by events in Namibia in the course of the past few months. Not only is South Africa committed to seeing the elections conducted on the basis of rules that would allow it to get the elections to go its way, but it is also making every effort through intimidation and murder to prevent the South West Africa People's Organization from participating fully in a free and fair election.

Under the circumstances, the United Nations - and particularly the Security Council - must continue to be vigilant and take all necessary effective action with a view to ensuring that the November elections in Namibia are conducted in full compliance with the spirit and letter of Security Council resolution 435 (1978). Successful implementation of the United Nations plan for the independence of Namibia will no doubt constitute a significant step towards lasting peace and stability in the region, thus contributing to an improvement in international relations.

(Mr. Bayih, Ethiopia)

Although a conclusive settlement of the Iran-Iraq conflict is still awaited, the fact that the cease-fire continues to hold is a significant achievement.

Tranquillity is yet to be restored in Afghanistan, but the Geneva Agreements have demonstrated the values of compromise and the consequent reduction in international tension.

We are also hopeful that the efforts aimed at resolving the problem in Cambodia will pick up momentum once again. No doubt, the withdrawal by Viet Nam of its troops contributes towards expediting the achievement of a durable peace in Cambodia.

In Central America, the steps taken by the States in the region have paved the way for greater understanding. We extend to them our support in their continued efforts to implement their joint decisions. It is our earnest hope that Nicaragua will finally be given the opportunity to concentrate fully on national construction.

As we duly note the positive changes taking place in our world, we need at the same time to be realistic enough to acknowledge that much remains to be done in order to ensure peace and the survival of humanity, as well as to lay the foundation for a structure of international relations based on justice, equality and democracy.

Despite notable achievements made in the area of nuclear disarmament in the last few years, the momentum towards the complete elimination of these dangerous weapons of destruction has not been commensurate with the expectation of the international community. The threat posed by the stockpiles of nuclear weapons remains as grave as ever. Under the circumstances, a speedy conclusion of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty, measures to prevent the extension of the arms race into outer space, and an agreement on the prohibition of the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons continue to be priority issues. No less

(Mr. Bayih, Ethiopia)

importance, we feel, should be attached to the need to finalize and conclude, as soon as possible, the ongoing negotiation on a chemical weapons convention. The commitments expressed both by the Soviet Union and the United States at this session of the General Assembly to destroy the bulk of their chemical weapons will, no doubt, give impetus to the efforts under way at the Conference on Disarmament towards achieving an agreement on the long overdue convention.

It is also obvious that there are still a number of vital issues relating to international peace and security that have not yet been properly addressed or regarding which little progress has been made.

Indeed, it remains a source of major disappointment to us that, despite the changed international climate and the reform pronouncements of the racist régime, no significant move has been made towards the dismantlement of the evil system of apartheid. Conditions in South Africa continue essentially unaltered and no progress can be anticipated unless the international community takes effective measures to increase the pressure on Pretoria, including the imposition of comprehensive and mandatory sanctions under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter.

In this connection, my delegation wishes to emphasize the significance of the declaration adopted by the Ad Hoc Committee on Southern Africa of the Organization of African Unity on the question of South Africa at its 3rd meeting in Harare, Zimbabwe, on 21 August 1989. The implementation of the principles and ideas contained in that declaration could facilitate the peaceful resolution of the problems created by apartheid and the establishment in South Africa of a government based on equality, justice and democracy. At no time should it be forgotten, however, that this aim can succeed only if international pressure on the racist régime is vigorously continued.

In the Middle East, durable peace will always be beyond reach so long as the

(Mr. Bayih, Ethiopia)

Palestinian people are denied their rights as a people. In this connection, I wish once again to reiterate the repeated call made by the General Assembly for the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, under the auspices of the United Nations, with the participation of all parties to the conflict.

The prevailing increased level of international understanding is yet to have an impact also on the state of affairs in the Korean peninsula. The quest for peaceful reunification by the Korean people should be addressed without further delay. My delegation fully supports the desire and efforts of the people of Korea for the restoration of their national unity and looks forward to the day when it will assume its rightful place in this community of nations.

The search for global freedom and justice will remain incomplete so long as peoples continue to be subjected to the evils of colonialism and racism anywhere. In this regard, the year 1990 - during which we shall be commemorating the thirtieth anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, as well as ensuring the success of the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism - should afford us added opportunity to intensify our concerted efforts towards the total elimination of all manifestations of colonialism by the year 2000.

These are but some of the major indications that the task of making the current improvement in world affairs more complete and comprehensive is a challenge the international community has yet to address.

A new world order, radically different from the one we ought to leave behind us, requires, as its foundation, a full democratization of international relations. This should be a world in which principles relating to the sovereign equality of States, non-interference in internal affairs and the sanctity of the independence and territorial integrity of countries are fully respected.

(Mr. Bayih, Ethiopia)

The new world order we wish to see would of course not be devoid of major Powers. But it should be an order in which the greatness of nations is measured not by their relative military might or economic power but by the respect they command through their contribution to international co-operation and harmony, as well as to the development of human civilization.

We should go beyond the conception that international peace and security are jeopardized only by issues that are political and military in nature.

The framers of the Charter of the United Nations had the foresight to declare, in Article 1, the achievement of "international co-operation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character" as one of the purposes of the United Nations.

We have seen throughout the 1980s the gradual deterioration in the economic situation of the developing world. The overall condition in these countries, especially in the least developed among them, is becoming a source of great concern.

In order to reverse the deteriorating economic situation and ensure sustained development, developing countries have resorted to what we may refer as the orthodox structural adjustment programmes. But these have not helped arrest economic decline, largely because the economic problems of developing countries are deep-rooted and require more than playing around with monetary policies for their effective resolution.

This has been obvious from the experience of existing structural adjustment programmes. These programmes, relying on a combination of devaluation, trade liberalization and deflation, have often failed to give sufficient attention to the human dimension of development. After the Khartoum Conference there is now universal agreement that countries on the brink of economic disintegration cannot possibly undertake a further cut in their social welfare budgets.

(Mr. Bayih, Ethiopia)

In addition, the historically inherited and persistent structural constraints on developing countries, particularly the least developed countries, are only now being fully appreciated. Such constraints are numerous and span a wide spectrum ranging from a lack of physical infrastructure and market integration to steady environmental degradation, high and accelerating rates of population growth, pitifully low levels of technology, and exceptionally narrow domestic markets. These are exacerbated by the unfavourable external economic environment.

In the African region, the recognition of these problems and the continued exacerbation of economic conditions, even with the orthodox structural adjustment programmes, have led us to search for an alternative conceptual framework for the alleviation of our economic difficulties. This search has involved a long process of consultation, discussion and revision, which has finally resulted in the unanimous adoption of the African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Programmes (AAFSAP) by the joint meetings of Ministers of Planning and Finance of the countries members of the Economic Commission for Africa in Addis Ababa last April.

AAFSAP, taking its cue from the Lagos Plan of Action and the African Priority Programme for Economic Recovery, and the lessons to be learned from a review of current structural adjustment programmes, aims at evolving an alternative, human-centred framework for adjustment with transformation. It should be noted that the African alternative framework is above all a framework and not a blueprint for economic transformation, and will no doubt be enriched by greater dialogue, application and monitoring.

Of course, even before the finalization of AAFSAP many countries in Africa had already begun to think of appropriate development strategies for the 1990s. In my own country, despite the heavy burden on our meagre resources caused by a massive influx of refugees, now totalling nearly 1 million, we have initiated a number of

(Mr. Bayih, Ethiopia)

measures designed to ensure food self-sufficiency. These range from a detailed national food and nutrition strategy to the more recent disaster prevention and preparedness strategy intended to provide, inter alia, an effective early warning and food buffer-stocking capability. We have also been moving ahead with a national population policy to place development on a sounder footing. Various new economic programmes are also being implemented. The objective of the new economic policy initiatives and directions is to encourage the private sector to invest in agriculture, industry and services and the public sector to improve its management and thereby raise the level of its efficiency.

Currently, we are also engaged in the formulation of a national conservation strategy aimed at stemming the rapid erosion of forest cover and the consequent decline in soil fertility. In addition, during the last two years there have been institutional changes in planning and administrative structures geared towards greater decentralization of decision-making. By these means we hope to ensure that the great ecological and cultural diversity of the country is taken fully into account in the appropriate regional plans.

No doubt this search for new development strategies is under way in most countries in Africa. The adoption of adjustment with transformation as outlined in AAFSAP constitutes a further step towards the working-out of nationally led programmes of economic transformation in the coming decade.

It is clear that for their part developing countries need to do whatever is necessary and to exert maximum effort in order to remove the impediments to their economic development. In the final analysis, each country is indeed responsible for its own development. However, what we should not fail to appreciate is that a favourable external environment is needed to unleash the potential of the developing countries. Moreover, even in the best of circumstances, development

(Mr. Bayih, Ethiopia)

will always be a difficult goal to achieve unless States are given the opportunity to establish peace within their territories as well as within their respective regions.

In this regard, I am happy to note here that the situation in our region has improved markedly over the last year or so. As the normalization of relations between my country and Somalia pursuant to an agreement concluded between the two countries last year testifies, we have been exerting the maximum effort to create the necessary conditions for the prevalence of peace and stability in our region. We have also continued our effort with a view to establishing a firm basis for constructive and friendly relations based on mutual trust and confidence between my country and the Sudan.

Indeed, our commitment to peace has always been unreserved. There is no better testimony to this than the fundamental and decisive steps that the People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia continues to take in our own country. It would be remiss of me, in this connection, if I failed to express appreciation to the international community for the encouragement and support it has given to our efforts to restore peace in our region and remove the obstacles to our economic development.

It has become evident that issues requiring international co-operation have started to proliferate. The problems of the environment, if not properly managed, could seriously affect the survival and viability of our planet. The scourge of drug-trafficking has assumed dangerous proportions, thus calling for urgent and concerted international action. Hence, attaining the goal of strengthening the role and voice of the United Nations in international affairs is a matter to which the highest priority ought to be given. As a country very closely associated with the Organization since its very inception, we draw satisfaction from seeing the United Nations becoming more effective in the discharge of its responsibilities in

(Mr. Bayih, Ethiopia)

the maintenance of international peace and security. It is our earnest hope that the Organization will play an equally effective role in the quest for solutions to the problems that affect international economic relations.

In this connection, my delegation looks forward to the convening of the special session of the General Assembly devoted to international economic co-operation and in particular to the revitalization of economic growth and development in the developing countries, which is scheduled to take place in April next year. We are confident that the special session will provide the necessary impetus for removing the obstacles that have stalemated the North-South dialogue.

It goes without saying that as the tasks assigned to the United Nations expand so will its requirements for resources, if it is to be able to discharge its responsibilities effectively. Thus, the financial standing of the Organization should continue to be given the maximum attention it deserves.

In concluding, I wish to reaffirm Ethiopia's continued commitment to the United Nations and our determination to contribute our share to all endeavours designed to give the Organization a decisive voice in world affairs.

Mr. GURINOVICH (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) (interpretation from Russian): Please accept, Sir, the congratulations of the delegation of the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic on your election as President of the forty-fourth session of the United Nations General Assembly.

We are most appreciative of the activities of the Secretary-General and share the view he expressed in the report on the work of the Organization that:

"The United Nations needs to demonstrate its capacity to function as guardian of the world's security." (A/44/1, p. 11).

The United Nations emerged from the Second World War, which was unleashed by fascism and militarism, which took advantage of the lack of unity among peace-loving forces and of the negative response of the European nations to the Soviet proposals for collective action against the aggressor. Our people took up arms to defend the goals and principles of international relations which were later enshrined, with our participation, in the United Nations Charter. The members of the anti-Hitler coalition were fighting not only for their national interests, but also to bring freedom and independence to so many enslaved nations. We welcome the statements made during the general debate about the inviolability of post-war borders in Europe.*

Fundamental changes have taken place in the world represented in the United Nations. These changes are most profound and radical and signify the end of the cold war and the dawning of an era of peace and mutual trust, the renunciation of propagandist, polemics and the initiation of a quest for specific bilateral and multilateral action to resolve existing problems by political means, drawing upon the prestige and potential of the United Nations.

* Mr. Sallah (Gambia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Gurinovich, Byelorussian SSR)

Clearly, the most important feature of these multifaceted changes is the fact that they are not confined to narrow national interests of individual States. They are global in scale and thus call for a multilateral approach. Not only are these changes encouraging but they also call for a correct understanding of where they are leading the world. In conditions of freedom of choice and of pluralism of opinions based on the new political thinking, these changes also mean that we must further outline joint measures to achieve demilitarization, democratization and the humanization of international contacts and to establish the primacy of law in relations among States.

Over the past few years, we have all had a difficult path to tread. Gone are the days when people saw everything in terms of black and white; when everyone believed that he alone was right; when socialism was made out to be the enemy rather than a partner in world affairs; when suspicion and mistrust repelled mutual tolerance and the natural desire of nations to live in peace and friendship with one another; when some would put forward proposals to strengthen peace and develop co-operation while others would reject them; and without even attempting to understand them; when universal human values were not taken into account. Without wishing to continue this review of an unhappy past, for which there are still those who remain nostalgic even today, I would point out that in our detailed, often heated and at times disrespectful, discussions, we, after all, did succeed in restoring and enriching, in United Nations resolutions and recommendations, the meaning of such key notions as international peace and security, disarmament, economic development, co-operation, decolonization, social justice, human rights and so forth.

But it is too early to rest on our laurels. All this should be embodied in mandatory international legal instruments. In this context the next decade, which

(Mr. Gurinovich, Byelorussian SSR)

will mark the end of the twentieth century and of the second millennium, will be decisive in terms of whether mankind succeeds in coping with new challenges and whether it will emerge victorious in the struggle for peace and well-being for everyone on this planet.

We are preoccupied with the problems of eliminating the threat of war, bringing about disarmament, resolving regional conflicts, eliminating the vestiges of colonialism, ensuring development, social progress, observance of human rights, and the preservation of an ecological balance. It is being increasingly recognized that these problems have a direct bearing on the level of security and the quality of life of the peoples of the world.

It would appear that today everyone understands that the use of military force, particularly nuclear force, with all its devastating consequences, has run its course. It is also clear that there can be no just settlement of regional conflicts through the use of military force.

The new level of this understanding has led to important conceptual breakthroughs that have made it possible to conclude and implement the first ever agreement on the actual elimination of a portion of nuclear arsenals of Soviet and United States medium- and shorter-range missiles. It has also made possible the holding of substantive talks on a 50 per cent reduction in United States and Soviet strategic offensive weapons. The initiation of the Vienna Talks on reductions in armed forces and armaments in Europe is an important milestone in modern history. What is important in this regard is that these endeavours are being conducted in a multilateral regional context.

Today it is important to make the current positive developments irreversible. It is essential, not only strictly to comply with agreements reached or to conduct negotiations in a spirit of good will with regard for each other's interests, but

(Mr. Gurinovich, Byelorussian SSR)

also not to take steps in a spirit and direction contrary to those developments, not to try to circumvent existing agreements on the elimination of weapons on the pretext of "modernizing" or by building up arms in other categories, and not to erect new, artificial barriers when parties to an agreement have already removed earlier stumbling-blocks.

Steps must be taken to solve fundamental problems, namely, fundamental military concepts. The idea of nuclear deterrence is a blood clot in the artery of nuclear disarmament. Wanting to keep nuclear weapons is like being high on drugs. Like drugs that merely give the illusion of happiness while actually ruining one's health, nuclear weapons offer only the illusion of security while in actual fact they threaten universal annihilation.

Trust, predictability, multilateral agreement on the part of all nuclear powers on measures to reduce the risk of the outbreak of nuclear war, reduction of stockpiles of nuclear weapons and their verifiable elimination must replace the policy of nuclear intimidation and so-called deterrence. What the world needs is political and legal deterrence rather than nuclear deterrence.

Generally speaking, there are serious signs of mutual accommodation on the part of various groups of States in the field of disarmament. This is in large part a direct result of the new political thinking. We welcome the recent Soviet and United States agreements and the latest initiatives of the Soviet Union as set forth in the statement by Eduard Shevardnadze, member of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union. While a number of differences exist, definite progress towards a broad consensus on disarmament issues can be perceived in the United Nations also.

(Mr. Gurinovich, Byelorussian SSR)

In considering disarmament problems in the United Nations, it would clearly be helpful to focus on those areas in which the United Nations, as a unique multilateral forum, possesses appropriate practical capabilities. That could include measures to prevent nuclear war. In particular, it would be advisable to start work on the practical implementation of the proposals, including those of the Secretary-General, to establish a multilateral nuclear and military risk reduction centre and, ultimately, a system of centres that would include regional centres, and the setting up of hot lines between the capitals of all nuclear Powers.

(Mr. Gurinovich, Byelorussian SSR)

The United Nations has the unique potential in yet another important field, that of the non-proliferation of dangerous types of weapons, whether nuclear or chemical, or missile technology, as well as in the area of banning the development and production of new types and systems of weapons of mass destruction.

Work must soon begin at the multilateral level on defensive doctrines and the corresponding structures of armed forces, as well as on the principle of reasonable sufficiency for defence. This is really the right time for it. The imperative need for such doctrines, structures and principles is recognized today by virtually all, and, indeed, a number of socialist States have already taken major strides in that direction. Now it is important to negotiate uniform understanding of their essence, criteria and parameters. An appropriate means of starting such a discussion could be negotiated at the General Assembly.

Current and forthcoming disarmament processes, including efforts to prevent the extension of the arms race to outer space, as well as harsh economic realities have made a practical issue out of one that until recently might have appeared to be merely theoretical - namely, the issue of the conversion of military industries. In this connection, too, multilateral endeavours would be helpful, such as the preparation and presentation of national conversion plans and other related measures provided for in the Programme of Action of the Conference on Disarmament and Development, with an exchange of experience and theoretical studies designed to maximize the benefits and minimize the costs and inconveniences involved in the transition from an arms economy to a disarmament economy.

The Byelorussian SSR has accumulated certain experience in this area. For a long time now our heavy industries, including our defence industries, have been turning out consumer goods with the idea of generating production equal in value to the sums paid in salaries and wages.

(Mr. Gurinovich, Byelorussian SSR)

Thus military might is gradually ceasing to be the guarantee of security in our diverse, changing and interdependent world. It is being replaced by the concept of a comprehensive approach to the problems of international peace and security in all areas of relations among States. In this connection, the United Nations should become a centre for a system of universal and equal security for all. To that end new approaches are needed to bring about and maintain peace. Most useful principles in this respect are contained in the Charter. They should be used to the full. To that end what is necessary is both a drastic overhaul and long-term fundamental work on improving certain existing machinery that is either idling or has become rusty from infrequent use.

The role of the United Nations in resolving regional crises is growing. This is a field in which United Nations machinery has recently achieved major success and made significant progress towards creating new confidence between States in the potential of multilateral diplomacy, which in turn has justified talk of a kind of United Nations renaissance. Although the ultimate goals have not yet been achieved, in this context one can cite Afghanistan, Iran and Iraq and Namibia; efforts on the problems of the Middle East, South-East Asia, Central America, Cyprus and Western Sahara; and the beginning of dialogue, initiated by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, on a settlement in the Korean peninsula.

The United Nations peace-making role should be further developed in the years to come. We should move from extinguishing fires to detecting and preventing them. In other words, we must gather and analyse information on regions of conflict, send missions to the field, set up observation posts, prepare recommendations to parties to conflicts, and where necessary conduct operations to prevent military, political, economic, ecological, humanitarian or other conflicts. All this means that we must make the work of the Security Council more productive. There must be meetings at the ministerial level, and the

(Mr. Gurinovich, Byelorussian SSR)

Secretary-General must be more persistent in raising questions. In other words, we are in favour of a transition from crisis diplomacy to preventive diplomacy that will make it clear to everyone that there is no need to jump into the fire to understand that it will be painful.

It is time to establish the true primacy of law in international relations. This means unconditional compliance with the Charter and obligations under other legal instruments. Furthermore, multilateral legal institutions, primarily the International Court of Justice, should start working to full capacity, and to that end all States in turn should assume new obligations vis-à-vis the decisions of such organs. In this connection, I should like to inform the General Assembly that this year the Byelorussian SSR has accepted the compulsory and binding jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice with regard to six human rights conventions and has ratified additional protocols to the Geneva conventions relating to the protection of victims of armed conflicts.

New developments and trends in national and world economies have recently been clearly taking shape. Major structural changes are under way. The unipolar pattern has given way to the multipolar system of economic centres. Greater integration of socialist States into the world economy is also changing the picture. The devastating debt burden of the developing countries, the chronic instability of raw-material prices and the poverty of millions all call for our closest attention. The issues of underdevelopment and migration are also growing from a humanitarian-assistance problem into something entirely different: they are becoming a category of universal security. The problems themselves are not new, but it is their magnitude today that gives them a new dimension, which calls for a fundamentally different response. It would appear that it is no longer acceptable to tolerate a situation where the rich grow richer at the expense of the poor, and

(Mr. Gurinovich, Byelorussian SSR)

where discrimination, or even diktat, continues to hold its position in international economic relations. Such a situation has become a threat to global security.

Finally, the gap between actual developments in the world economy and the legal regulation of that economy is becoming ever more striking. It has even been said that the economy is not subordinate to international law, and that, regrettably, can become the case if we all fail jointly to alleviate the situation in this field.

The Byelorussian SSR has an interest in this work since, from 1990, we shall be switching over to a new economic environment based on self-management and self-financing, in addition to developing and deepening our trade and economic ties with foreign States and firms. In this connection, I should like to stress that as a result of the years of socialist construction the Byelorussian SSR has become a highly developed and agrarian State that provides its people with modern material and other benefits.

(Mr. Gurinovich, Byelorussian SSR)

That has occurred in spite of the fact that during the Second World War we lost half of our national wealth and a quarter of our population, in spite of the mistakes and aberrations of the past. All this proves the enormous potential inherent in the socialist social system and the fraternal interaction of the peoples of the USSR.

Perestroika and democratization of all aspects of social life now under way in our country will make possible the actual utilization, for the benefit of peoples and individuals, of the enormous potential inherent in socialist production relations.

The problem of universal security is aggravated by new environmental threats: pollution of the atmosphere and water, the greenhouse effect, depletion of the ozone layer, deforestation and desertification. Today all this calls for an urgent review of many traditional views of the balance between the interests of individual States and those of the community of nations. What we need is international multilateral research into these problems. It would appear that the solution should be sought in the advent of energy-saving and resource-saving, environmentally clean technologies and production which generate no waste, and in switching over to renewable resources. In this connection, the pooling of our multilateral efforts is indispensable. The forthcoming conference on the environment provides us with an appropriate opportunity to do that.

To the Byelorussian SSR, environmental issues have a specific feature of their own, because of the need for clean-up operations following the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear-power station. Immediately following the disaster we had to resettle almost 25,000 people from the contaminated area to other parts of the Republic and build for them 10,000 apartments with the necessary infrastructure. Today the territory contaminated at various levels with radionuclides exceeds 18 per cent of all arable land. Costs and losses resulting from setting up "no-go"

(Mr. Gurinovich, Byelorussian SSR)

zones and from resettlement have already reached about 2 billion roubles. We are planning for further evacuation of local residents from contaminated areas. A comprehensive 16-billion-rouble programme is now being developed in our Republic for 1990 to 1995 to alleviate the consequences of the accident and provide for safe living conditions in the affected areas. Our own efforts to that end are being backed by the substantial assistance we are receiving from other fraternal peoples of the Soviet Union. A number of public organizations in our Republic have appealed for help to our fellow countrymen and all people of good will abroad. A translation of the text of that appeal is annexed to the text of my statement that has been distributed to members.

We support the United Nations efforts to protect the environment, and also the proposal for the establishment of a centre for urgent environmental assistance and the drawing up of a United Nations programme to mitigate natural disasters and prevent industrial accidents - that is to say, international co-operation in that field, making use among other things of environment-monitoring satellites. In our view, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) should be actively involved in this effort.

We must all give the highest priority to the analysis of problems and phenomena that are emerging in the world today - that is, we must recognize the fundamental nature of those changes, identify new global problems, and define new areas for working together and reaching agreement on ways to bring about urgently needed adjustments in our practical actions.

Taking into account existing differences of opinion on some global processes, we believe that it is not at all necessary immediately to adopt a single consensus view of the future in order to realize that ultimately it will be wise to prepare for imminent change well in advance.

(Mr. Gurinovich, Byelorussian SSR)

Obviously, the United Nations itself must change in response to new challenges and difficulties. It cannot serve merely as a repository of unrealized ideas. It should rather become a generator of new ideas and blaze the trail of change. It is particularly important now for organs of the United Nations system to fulfil their function as a genuine collective intellect and a centre for harmonizing the actions of States.

President Gorbachev made a tangible contribution to a better understanding of the new role of the United Nations in his speech to the General Assembly last December, by offering a philosophic rationale for the heightened importance of the internationalization of efforts by States to ensure their common future in a global home, regardless of their special features, ideologies or socio-political systems.

The United Nations has already proved capable of adapting to new conditions. In the current situation it is important not to fragment United Nations political, intellectual and financial resources, but to concentrate them on main problem areas, particularly those where this universal Organization has a particular vantage point, expertise and the ability to formulate global tasks and build consensus on the basis of a balance of interests and realism, so as to perform those tasks in the interests of universal security and co-operation.

At the same time, we must all embark on a course of scrupulous compliance with the binding decisions of the Security Council and, in our practical policies, take into account consensus recommendations, while constantly seeking to expand their scope. It would seem the time has come also to give thought to resolving a situation where one or two delegations obstruct general agreement. In this context, some important further steps could be taken, such as practical measures to endow the United Nations with a preventive function, establishing a crisis early warning system, conferring upon the Organization powers to verify compliance with

(Mr. Gurinovich, Byelorussian SSR)

multilateral agreements and enhancing the effectiveness of the United Nations principal organs, including the Secretariat.

The new role of the United Nations would be best served if we eliminated duplication of work and strengthened the co-ordination of activities of United Nations specialized agencies in accomplishing global, economic, scientific-technological and social tasks. It would also be useful to develop machinery for United Nations interaction with regional intergovernmental bodies and international non-governmental organizations that deal with problems of universal concern, and also with national public organizations.

The United Nations Association that has been created in the Byelorussian SSR intends to be actively involved in the efforts of the world community to translate into reality the noble purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter.

Attaching paramount importance to the activities within the United Nations framework and to the further development of the World Campaign for Disarmament, we intend to make a regular voluntary contribution to that Fund.

The general debate now drawing to a close and the documents adopted at the ninth Conference of Heads of State or Government of the non-aligned countries demonstrate that virtually all United Nations Member States recognize the need for new approaches to the problems of mankind. We are convinced that the United Nations has an important role to play in promoting that vision. The delegation of the Byelorussian SSR is prepared to make its own contribution to the discussion of relevant agenda items so that at this very session we may achieve good results which match the imperatives of our time.

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.