



**General Assembly**

PROVISIONAL

A/44/PV.27  
16 October 1989

ENGLISH

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Forty-fourth session

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE TWENTY-SEVENTH MEETING

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

President: Mr. NAVAJAS MOGRO (Bolivia)  
(Vice-President)

later: Mr. GARBA (Nigeria)  
(President)

- General debate [9] (continued)

Statements made by

Mr. Bizimunqu (Rwanda)  
Mr. Jones (Grenada)  
Mr. Cenac (Saint Lucia)  
Mr. Sani Bako (Niger)

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In the absence of the President, Mr. Navajas Mogro (Bolivia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 9 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. BIZIMUNGU (Rwanda) (interpretation from French): On behalf of the Rwandese Republic, allow me first to convey our warmest congratulations to Mr. Garba of Nigeria, as well as to the officers of the Bureau, who have been elected to guide the work of this session of the General Assembly. Mr. Garba's unanimous election as President of the General Assembly at its forty-fourth session is a tribute both to his outstanding diplomatic qualities and to his country, Nigeria, and all of Africa.

Our congratulations go equally to the President of the General Assembly at its forty-third session and his associates for the competence with which they guided the work of that session.

I should also like to pay a warm tribute to the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, for the skill, determination, maturity, understanding and wisdom he has shown in carrying out his complex tasks, as a result of which our Organization has recorded many successes and enhanced its prestige.

The Rwandese Republic is proud to join the great family of the United Nations within the prestigious and solemn framework of the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly.

(Mr. Bizimunqu, Rwanda)

The annual sessions of the General Assembly unquestionably provide the best opportunity to celebrate peace and the brotherhood of the nations of the world and to take stock forthrightly and constructively of the world's economic, political and social health.

The twin pillars of our work continue to be the safeguarding of international peace and security and the building of permanent relations of friendship and co-operation between nations. Our work is part of the long march of the peoples towards the realization of the highest aspirations of all mankind - the development of international harmony and freedom and progress for all peoples.

Rwanda reiterates its solemn commitment to the cause of peace and pays a heartfelt tribute to the United Nations for the great successes it has recorded since its creation. We take this opportunity to express the hope that the bonds of fraternity and solidarity between peoples will be made even stronger, in order to put an end to the economic and political crisis that is persisting in the world, particularly in the southern hemisphere, including Africa.

Despite efforts at various levels to achieve agreement and integration, despite the internal adjustments that have been made, often at the cost of great sacrifices, and despite the goodwill shown both bilaterally and multilaterally at the international level, the crisis continues, the debt increases and the gulf of recession grows deeper year by year, to the detriment of the world's weakest economies.

The Rwandese Republic is convinced that the sombre picture of the world economy will not be improved without the establishment of a true balance, with fairer payments for raw materials and basic commodities. Therefore, there must be a fundamental reform of the mechanisms and structures of international trade, to the benefit of the still underdeveloped peoples of the South, who provide the raw materials for the prosperous industries of the North.

(Mr. Bizimunqu, Rwanda)

The continuing economic stagnation afflicting the least developed countries is rooted in the long-standing injustice in the world market. There has already been much discussion of that unfortunate situation. We are amazed by the silence and unwillingness to act of the majority of wealthy countries as they see our societies inexorably trapped in a vicious circle of poverty and debt.

The pernicious, exponential growth of Africa's indebtedness has often been criticized here, and there is a risk of the phenomenon's becoming a tired refrain in diplomatic rhetoric as the years pass. The tragedy has become a sad reality that worsens day by day, aggravated by climatic hazards and other natural disasters, which in several regions of our continent have been particularly severe this year.

Rwanda, which has suffered as much as have other African countries, once more appeals to the international community for more effective solidarity and mutual understanding with regard to Africa's external debt. My country takes this solemn opportunity sincerely to praise the various generous initiatives of some friendly countries - such as the Federal Republic of Germany, Canada, France, Belgium and Japan - to lighten the debt burden. Those initiatives range from the forgiveness of interest on the debt to the cancellation of accumulated debts.

The Rwandese Republic appeals to all other wealthy countries to join in those initiatives. Above all, we plead for the working out and implementation of a lasting global strategy that will make it possible for all the debtor countries to liquidate once and for all their public debt, both commercial and private. Rwanda reaffirms its total support for the common African position on the subject. We support the appeal for the holding of an ad hoc international conference, and believe that the elimination of the crisis would be a vital step on the road towards improving the international economic environment.

(Mr. Bizimungu, Rwanda)

We must make the most of the desire to be realistic which has become manifest in recent months at the bilateral level. It must be extended to include all the least developed countries, but we must also implement international strategies and action to bring about the economic recovery of the poor countries, to which solemn commitments have been made.

Rwanda contends that, faced with the persistence of the crisis, we must see that the strategies and plans of action go beyond mere words and become a reality, with on the one hand North-South co-operation and on the other hand vigorous efforts to bring about economic integration based on genuine South-South, regional and subregional co-operation.

The economic situation of Africa and the developing countries in general is today more worrying than ever before. Here I should like to stress the fears and hopes that we the African countries in the category of the least developed feel faced with the gloomy prospects for the world economy that recent events have revealed.

The Group of 77, which provides both the ideal forum for South-South co-operation and an appropriate framework for negotiations with the developed countries in the context of the North-South dialogue, has just celebrated a quarter of a century of existence. Despite differences of opinion, it has reason for at least partial satisfaction at some achievements, notably the maintenance of relative unity and cohesion and the launching in 1974 of a world-wide appeal for a new economic order, an appeal which, unfortunately, when it came up against reality, did not get beyond the stage of a slogan, but which is now more relevant than ever. I should also mention here the adoption in 1981 of the Caracas Programme of Action on Economic Co-operation among Developing Countries, which, despite being buffeted by events, also remains relevant.

(Mr. Bizimungu, Rwanda)

However, although there is now a keener awareness of the problems, this silver jubilee comes at the end of a wasted decade. Nevertheless, perhaps some good can come out of it; we must all learn from the failures of the past, as we approach the last decade of the twentieth century, and make the 1990s a decade of economic recovery. All the necessary resources must be mobilized in support of the universal implementation of a more realistic and more efficient international development strategy.

We once again call upon the most industrialized countries and the international financial institutions to show goodwill and realism in their policy on the debt and to help free the South permanently from economic stagnation.

We ask that suitable, fair measures be taken to support the effort, that our countries are making, which involve considerable sacrifices, and that better integrated and better adapted solutions be devised with the full co-operation of all parties to guarantee mankind a balanced, harmonious future.

We strongly urge that all the necessary intellectual and moral resources be mobilized in the search for solutions to the economic crisis of the third world in general and of Africa in particular. Those solutions should take into account all the dimensions of the problem, without forgetting or overlooking the social aspects, for the peoples rather than States must be the main beneficiaries of recovery measures. A stifled third world would undoubtedly be a latent threat to the prosperity of the industrialized societies.

(Mr. Bizimunqu, Rwanda)

The economic situation of Africa and the third world is indeed disastrous. Rwanda refuses, however, to yield to despair; it earnestly appeals to all nations of goodwill in the Assembly to work with renewed determination and vigour in all sectors, in order to overcome poverty and desolation.

We appeal for unstinting support from the international institutions, programmes and plans of action already in place and from those yet to be agreed. I refer in particular to the new international development strategy for the fourth United Nations development decade for the period 1991 to 2000, in connection with which the ad hoc preparatory committee is actively pursuing its work. I refer also to the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, scheduled for September 1990 in Paris, and to the April 1990 special session of the General Assembly devoted to international economic co-operation in particular to the revitalization of economic growth and development in the developing countries. In the area of international co-operation in which the stakes and challenges are enormous, the Rwandese Republic favours negotiations as the best way to promote a just and balanced world economic order.

Rwanda firmly supports the appeal made in Caracas at the commemoration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Group of 77, and at the time of the celebration of the bicentenary of the French Revolution by a group of Heads of State from the countries of the third world, for a decisive resumption of the North-South dialogue and for the promotion of international economic co-operation for development. In this connection, we are convinced that there must be major structural changes in the world economy and we believe that all countries, rich and poor, much commit themselves to international co-operation within the framework of interdependence which is inevitable.

(Mr. Bizimunqu, Rwanda)

Might makes right has been a feature of international economic relations, but it must no longer be accepted. We believe that the current crisis, regardless of responsibility, must be viewed in a new light and that the continuing transfer of resources from the South to the North must yield to a more balanced system from which any form of exploitation will be excluded.

The United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990, which was adopted by the General Assembly in June 1986, is rapidly coming to an end and might well have little impact on the economic picture of the continent, which was true also of the United Nations international development strategy for the last three decades.

A basic problem of crucial importance is still before us, and the Rwandese Republic fully supports the ad hoc resolution of the 25th Summit Conference of the Heads of State or Governments of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), held in Addis Ababa in July 1989. In that resolution the Heads of State or Governments of the OAU appealed to the international community substantially to increase the resources of the Programme, in particular within the framework of the International Development Association (IDA); to extend the Programme beyond 1990; to create additional facilities for financial assistance to intermediary-income African countries non-beneficiaries of the IDA; and to intensify efforts to mobilize resources of the North in support of the economic and social recovery of Africa.

Rwanda is convinced that such recovery requires joint efforts by both the South and the North: the South, by making the appropriate comprehensive structural reforms and improving the macro-economic management of its growth, while endeavouring to stabilize its balance of payments; and the North, by committing itself to supporting these actions through fostering measures of assistance

(Mr. Bizimungu, Rwanda)

by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, and through specific initiatives ranging from the reduction of interest rates to the cancellation of debts, within the framework of a global strategy.

We believe that to be truly helpful the structural adjustment of our economies must also be balanced by readjustments in the North; otherwise it runs the risk of amounting to a sterile process of contraction with disastrous political and social consequences.

In our opinion, without it the deterioration of the economic and social conditions in African countries will continue, notwithstanding the efforts made by Governments through policies and programmes to bring about stabilization and structural adjustment.

In the spirit of General Assembly resolution 43/27, urging our countries to increase their efforts to produce a viable and practical conceptual framework for an economic programme of structural adjustment, and in keeping with the objectives and strategies based on the Plan of Action and the Final Act of Lagos and on the United Nations Programme of Action for Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990, the latest Summit Meeting of the OAU has just adopted the African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Programmes (AAF SAP) for socio-economic recovery and transformation.

Rwanda believes that this is a vital, pragmatic instrument for integration, and we hope that it will make it possible for African countries to continue to adjust their economies while ensuring that this adjustment will bring sustained growth and real development in its train.

In this connection, Rwanda supports the appeal of the OAU to the international community and the multilateral financial institutions, as well as the General Assembly, to give greater thought to the AAF SAP and to show greater understanding of the efforts and the realities of structural adjustment in Africa.

(Mr. Bizimungu, Rwanda)

Together with the efforts that have been made within the framework of North-South co-operation, which is indispensable, the Rwandese Republic believes strongly in the principles and objectives of economic integration as the basis for a self-sustained endogenous development in the context of States and within the subregional and regional frameworks, in keeping with the spirit of Lagos. From this perspective, we fully support the resolution adopted at the latest Summit Conference of the OAU on the Second Industrial Development Decade in Africa and the proclamation of 20 November as African Day of Industrialization.

Indeed, the importance of a Second Decade in this area is not justified only because the objectives of the First Decade have not been achieved, but above all because well-conceived industrialization is a major asset in creating structures within the framework of economic growth and in the search for lasting solutions to the economic crisis and indebtedness. Industrial investment is, moreover, a fruitful way for African countries to take their destiny in their own hands by way of playing a better, uninhibited role in the world economy.

While in this framework the style of development advocated by the North is now irreversible, it is still true that the indispensable transfer of technologies from the North to the South must take place in conditions which make these technologies accessible and acceptable.

Perhaps it would be naive to speak of industrialization without making specific reference to the traditional problems with regard to commodities and the harmful machinery of world trade.

(Mr. Bizimunqu, Rwanda)

Though the international community is pleased with the creation in July 1989 of the Common Fund for basic commodities, the serious concerns regarding the effectiveness of the Fund that have been created by the inequities in the world economy must not be disregarded.

The non-industrial countries that provide raw materials are caught up in inextricable difficulties ranging from insufficient production to lack of access to international markets and deterioration in the prices received for their raw materials. Internally, these countries are not able to be self-sufficient in food for their people.

At the same time industrialized countries are perfecting protectionist techniques and creating real regional empires.

Thus misunderstanding between the two groups is growing, creating suspicion and giving rise to meagre results in the commercial negotiations that have been taking place within the framework of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). Language unacceptable to both sides has been used, and completely different goals are being pursued.

Rwanda pleads for a better balance for Africa and third world countries and for poor countries to be given an opportunity to export, profitably, food, agricultural products and manufactured and semi-manufactured products. Regrettably, present methods of exchange encounter closed markets, and traditional networks of exploitation that have been particularly harmful to developing countries are continually encountered.

On this one-way street, which only increases the dependence and fragility of African economies and third-world economies in general, the African countries are continuing to witness, powerlessly the continuing deterioration of their sources of income that results from the mechanisms imposed by the great northern industrialized countries, which is the source of the vicious cycle that

(Mr. Bizimunqu, Rwanda)

characterizes the whole process of production and marketing. The most flagrant case is that of the difficulties being encountered in the present negotiations within the framework of the new international agreement on coffee, a product in a particularly perilous state though it is one of the pillars of many of our economies.

Rwanda, rather than yielding to pessimism, favours the emergence of a new style of co-operation that is more effective and takes the form of appropriate programmes of action that enable our countries to diversify their production and deal with the deficits we have always experienced, which have been a severe handicap.

In the spirit of such interdependent co-operation, from this rostrum Rwanda wishes to express its sincere thanks to all countries and international organizations that have, bilaterally and multilaterally, given us the support we need to promote our development. Rwanda is also very grateful to those countries and organizations for their goodwill and friendship, and we solemnly renew our commitment always to manage our economic assets wisely. In these difficult times we intend to be a reliable, business-like partner on whom the international community can rely as it endeavours to bring about greater well-being for the peoples of the world.

In the same spirit Rwanda pays a solemn tribute to all States, peoples and international institutions of good will, governmental or non-governmental, who are voluntarily investing their energies in the economic development and social progress of the poor regions of the world for the greater benefit of mankind as a whole.

(Mr. Bizimungu, Rwanda)

The misfortunes of the world cannot be summed up solely in terms of economic imbalances between the North and the South. There is a major crisis that will seriously burden the future of mankind and could even endanger life on Earth. It is the crisis arising from the heedless management of the ecological wealth of the world, which has been so disrupted by the industrial development of contemporary civilization.

An ecological crisis has already been declared; certain vital parameters show the excesses of our civilization but in terms of the destruction of natural resources and the accumulation of industrial waste. There has been disastrous management of much wealth.

In this area Rwanda believes that the international community as a whole is involved and that a movement of international solidarity must come about if we are to mobilize all the resources we need to preserve a healthy, viable environment for human beings.

It is regrettable that at a time when there is general dismay following the sounding of the alarm with regard to the ozone layer, certain industrialized countries of the North are unscrupulously taking advantage of the present situation to dump their waste on African soil and poison our world.

Once more Africa is a victim of drought and creeping desertification. Paradoxically it is also subject to floods and is struck by plagues of locusts. Sadly, natural disasters have affected many areas of Africa as we try to fight against traditional scourges such as desertification. The Republic of Rwanda appeals to the international community to give increased support to our continent in this regard in an effort to preserve our natural resources and our environment. Special support of that kind is essential, and could be provided through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and be supplemented by bilateral programmes.

(Mr. Bizimungu, Rwanda)

The programmes of industrial development, which make massive use of natural resources, should, more than in the past, enjoy an environmental component at both the technical study stage and the stage of implementation so that they can be integrated into resource-use plans.

The Republic of Rwanda expresses the hope that in this vital area of the environment the international community will mobilize the necessary intellectual and technical resources to produce solutions that will guarantee the survival of our planet.

For our part, under the leadership of His Excellency the President of the Republic of Rwanda, Major-General Juvénal Habyarimana, who has made the preservation of the environment one of his top priorities in the programme of food self-sufficiency, Rwanda has undertaken significant actions in this area. By way of example I might mention the national programme for struggle against erosion, our reforestation campaign, the national environmental strategy and the environmental plan of action - the last two being in the course of preparation.

In addition we have adopted a number of political and administrative measures such as the installation of community and development works - (UMUGANDA). We have a national day of the tree, agricultural competitions and prizes, and annual themes devoted to agricultural production. These various actions are aimed at providing incentives to and mobilizing the Rwandese people, encouraging them to participate in food production and to create a balance between production and population, 95 per cent of which lives in rural areas and depends entirely on the income and resources produced by agriculture.

(Mr. Bizimungu, Rwanda)

With the population growing at the rate of 3.7 per cent, during the last two decades Rwanda has recorded significant achievements, notably the following: the production of potatoes rose from 109,621 tonnes in 1974 to 244,700 tonnes in 1983; 21 per cent of the land of the country has been reforested, and 83 per cent has been covered by anti-erosion ditches; from 1974 to 1986 the contribution of UMUGANDA community efforts to the national development efforts has been evaluated at 14,845,450,209 Rwanda francs.

(Mr. Bizimungu, Rwanda)

The people of Rwanda has been able to make such achievements thanks to the tireless efforts and initiatives of President Habyarimana.

Yet despite the results achieved with regard to protection of the environment and self-sufficiency in food, Rwanda, like other third-world countries, is facing many challenges that are hampering the improvement of its people's social and economic conditions.

Together with the serious economic concerns facing the international community - some of which I have just outlined - the entire world is torn politically by bloody tensions and fatal conflicts resulting from anachronistic situations of intolerance, colonialism, oppression, imperialism and racism. Violence reigns wherever those outmoded vices remain, wherever the sovereignty of peoples and the integrity of States are flouted, wherever an individual's dignity and human rights are trampled underfoot.

Open violence reigns and even grows in many parts of the world, despite nearly a half century of United Nations peace-making efforts. It reigns in the land of apartheid, where it propagates terror in southern Africa; it reigns in the Arab territories illegally occupied by Israel, in Lebanon and in parts of Latin America. The mission of the United Nations to ensure and promote international peace and security is all the more timely today, since one explosive situation gives way to another, and the sound of guns continues to echo in many parts of the world, destroying the energy necessary for the advancement of peoples and societies.

None the less, the Republic of Rwanda pays a resounding tribute to the United Nations and its specialized agencies for their tireless work in support of international understanding and harmony. Thanks to the United Nations and its noble role in promoting peace, the twentieth century is entering its final decade in a world-wide climate of détente, and there are genuine prospects for peace at

(Mr. Bizimunqu, Rwanda)

the international level. It is not excessively optimistic to envisage the resolution of the political and military tensions that have long existed in the wake of the Second World War.

This climate of détente is due in large part to the fact that reason seems to have triumphed in relations between the Powers of the East and the West with respect to disarmament, even though much remains to be done before the nuclear threat is totally eliminated. The beneficial effects of that détente on the rest of the world are obvious, and the road we have travelled should be carefully mapped in order to record for ever our achievements and to ensure that we continue to march forward in the search for peace and security. In that connection, the international community has welcomed the progress made in many conflicts where the great Powers had been in more or less direct conflict. In southern Africa the Brazzaville and New York agreements were able to break the deadlock on Namibia and begin a process of reconciliation in Angola.

At this very moment - despite set-backs attributable to the South African forces of colonialist aggression, which call for the greatest vigilance on the part of the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) - the plan for the independence of Namibia is irreversibly under way under United Nations auspices.

In that connection, the Conference of Heads of State or Government of the Organization of African Unity, which held its twenty-fifth regular session in July 1989, considered the status of the implementation of Security Council resolution 435 (1978) on the independence of Namibia. The Conference expressed its regret at the grave incidents of April 1989 and stressed that they were a predictable consequence of the reduction in personnel of the United Nations Transition Assistance Group. It stated its serious concern at the activities of

(Mr. Bizimungu, Rwanda)

South African terrorists operating before our very eyes with the intention of compromising and derailing the November elections. It is incomprehensible that South Africa should openly and with impunity defy international conventions on Namibia as defined by the relevant resolutions of the Security Council.

Rwanda firmly supports the position of the OAU and calls on the General Assembly to take the decisions that can rectify the situation and guarantee truly democratic elections for our Namibian brothers, so that at the Assembly's forty-fifth session Namibia, under the leadership of the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO), can come to this rostrum as the one hundred sixtieth Member of the United Nations.

Regrettably, the international community seems to have grown used to the internal and external demands of the racist Pretoria régime and to the genocidal acts that have long been perpetrated by a handful of criminals against the black majority of that country. That indifference does not conceal the commercial interests of certain countries, for the sake of whose profits millions of people have been sacrificed and democracy hobbled. The Republic of Rwanda appeals to the free world to strengthen pressure of all kinds on the criminal Pretoria régime to make it normalize political and economic life in conformity with the universal principles of democracy and human dignity.

Apartheid is the height of institutionalized racism; it is an odious and inhuman political, social and economic régime; it is the utter denial of human dignity. It is a criminal, reactionary and degrading system which is doomed to disappear. In the OAU, in the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and from this rostrum we have often condemned unreservedly Pretoria's terrorist, abject policy. The forty-fourth session gives us another opportunity to express our disgust and grave concern at the unspeakable crimes committed by the racist minority in South

(Mr. Bizimungu, Rwanda)

Africa, and the physical, moral, social and economic harm it has been causing for more than 200 years. We vigorously deplore the notorious indifference of the murderous racist régime's economic, political and military partners with respect to comprehensive mandatory sanctions - those partners who would like to be viewed as the champions of democracy and the defenders of human dignity and human rights. Despite our disappointment, we appeal to the international community to increase its support for the liberation movements in that country, and we strongly support the convening in December next of a special session of the General Assembly on apartheid and its destructive consequences in southern Africa.

With respect to the situation in Angola, Rwanda firmly supports current peace initiatives. That was why the President of the Republic of Rwanda personally participated in the talks held in Gbadolite in June 1989 on the commendable initiative of President Mobutu of Zaire. Rwanda appeals to all political leaders to support those peace initiatives so that the fraternal country of Angola may see the end of the civil war that has sundered it for more than 15 years and may finally devote its energy to healing its wounds and to achieving social and economic progress.

My country also reaffirms its support for the fraternal people of Mozambique, which for many years has been the victim of criminal attacks by RENAMO, which is supported by the racist Government of South Africa. We renew our support for the Sahraoui people, which continues to be deprived of its right to self-determination and independence; we welcome efforts by the OAU and the United Nations to formulate suitable modalities for the implementation of the peace plan for Western Sahara.

(Mr. Bizimunqu, Rwanda)

Elsewhere in Africa tension and civil war persist, blocking the social and economic development of the peoples concerned. Rwanda deeply believes in the irrefutable virtues of dialogue and the peaceful settlement of disputes, and in the principle of the non-use of force, and we vigorously condemn terrorism and aggression, in keeping with international ethics and the spirit of non-alignment. The Republic of Rwanda welcomes the peace initiatives that have been taken in the extremely difficult context of these conflicts. We urge the parties concerned to use direct and fraternal dialogue, which is the only way to promote the dynamic of peace and security between peoples.

Rwanda has repeatedly expressed in international forums its support for peace and dialogue. This is a policy which we are seeking to turn into concrete fact at the subregional, regional and international levels.

The state of war which has been tearing the Middle East apart for decades, leading to the martyrdom of the Palestinian people, and the devastation of Lebanon, which not so very long ago was prosperous but today has been ravaged, are distressing situations whose persistence brings shame on all mankind.

Having officially recognized the independent State of Palestine, proclaimed in Algiers in December 1988, Rwanda once again expresses its solidarity with the Palestinian people's cause and its dedication to peaceful and direct negotiations between the parties concerned. The only legitimate force, which we believe in, is the force of law and reason, for that is the only one that is compatible with peace and the dignity of men and peoples.

Although Rwanda, like other peace-loving countries, heaved a deep sigh of relief following the cease-fire between Iran and Iraq and the beginning of negotiations between the two parties, we are still concerned by the continuation of armed conflict in Afghanistan, after the much-lauded withdrawal of Soviet troops.

(Mr. Bizimunqu, Rwanda)

The United Nations, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, and all the forces of mediation must do their utmost to put an end to this source of tension and fratricidal hatred. But if that is to be done, the belligerents must show good-will and reasonableness and must agree to sit down at the negotiating table.

In connection with the situation in Cambodia, we express our complete support for the process of mediation currently under way. We hope that the negotiations being conducted within the framework of the Paris Conference and at the level of the United Nations will continue and will lead very soon to balanced and lasting solutions.

On the same lines, we hope that the problems that are afflicting some countries in Latin America and making it an unstable region will soon be resolved. It is high time that all the forces there opted for peaceful negotiations and democracy, and that the forces of interference recognized that the States concerned have a legitimate, inalienable right to national sovereignty. In this context, Rwanda supports all the peace initiatives and efforts at reconciliation in Latin America, particularly within the framework of the Contadora Group.

Mankind's recent history has left certain peoples with open wounds, and now the international community must devote itself to healing them. We of course have in mind past conflicts, from the ruins of which certain countries must work to rise and the spectre of which must be exorcised. But we have in mind also - and specifically - the continuing tragedy of the divisions that are tearing fraternal peoples apart. Iron curtains and other walls of hatred, shame and pain persist at various levels, pitting brothers of the same nation, the same people, against one another, for ideological reasons.

(Mr. Bizimungu, Rwanda)

Rwanda constantly strongly encourages all efforts to ensure the peaceful reunification and independence of the Korean nation and the praiseworthy initiatives to bring about the lawful restoration of the unity of the German people.

In that respect, Rwanda has been following with optimism the negotiations on the question of Cyprus that have been conducted under the auspices of the United Nations, and we hope that they will continue to be guided wholly by the principles of the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of States. We join other non-aligned countries in welcoming the Secretary-General's diligent efforts to promote constructive dialogue, the demilitarization of Cyprus, and the immediate withdrawal of the forces of occupation and exploitation.

The wind of détente, which is blowing in the sky of international relations, and the prospects for world peace which it raises, will be described in the history books of mankind as the fulfilment of a long-cherished dream of all the peoples. The international community must take this unprecedented opportunity to strengthen peace and solidarity among men and must make full use of the provisions that exist and the actions that have been taken to support disarmament, nuclear demilitarization, the reconversion of the oceans into zones of peace, the non-militarization of outer space, and the reduction of tensions wherever they exist.

In this vital area of disarmament, the many facets of which will once again - and more than ever before - be the focus of the General Assembly's attention at the present session, Rwanda wishes to express here unequivocally its unswerving support for negotiations aimed at the maximum, decisive mobilization of minds so that there will be the determination to put into effect all the stages of general and complete disarmament. In particular, we strongly urge the United States and the Soviet Union to preserve what has been accomplished by the dialogue that is under way in

(Mr. Bizimunqu, Rwanda)

this sphere, to the great joy of the entire United Nations family, and to continue to the end to deserve the confidence they have aroused in the international community.

We are optimistic about the noble initiatives to ensure détente that have been undertaken between East and West. We welcome not only the general relaxation of tension which is gradually becoming evident in the world political climate, in respect of regional and local conflicts, but also the ushering in of a new era of democracy and freedom in the world, in particular in the Eastern countries.

In addition, it is imperative, in our view, that this process of détente be extended to the solution of the economic and social problems in the world - in particular the plight of the poorer countries. The North must become more keenly aware of the dangers posed by the iniquities in the world economic situation, which in their way are just as dangerous as the arms race or the deterioration of the environment.

A world dominated by a new ethic of peace; a world in which everyone stands together and from which the noise of guns and the nuclear threat as well as all forms of violence, terrorism and discrimination will be banished; a world that will be freed once and for all from the consequences of colonialism and racism and will be characterized by understanding, dialogue and co-operation: that world is within the reach of peoples of good will and is in our view the most natural aspiration of all men.

Rwanda earnestly hopes for the flourishing of détente and the ushering in of a new era of peace and equity and social and economic progress. We express again here our determination to work unreservedly for those goals in our internal policies and in our relations with the States that cherish the noble ideals of the great family of the United Nations and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

(Mr. Bizimunqu, Rwanda)

Rwanda has deep faith in the United Nations, which represents the most appropriate international body for the maintenance of the movement towards peace in the world and for the peaceful settlement of disputes. More than any other organization, the United Nations is empowered to lead the oppressed peoples to freedom and self-determination.

(Mr. Bizimunqu, Rwanda)

More than ever before, the United Nations must promote more just international co-operation in every area in accordance with the sovereign equality of States. It has recorded an impressive range of successes, particularly in the area of the maintenance of peace, for which it won the 1988 Nobel Peace Prize, which reflects great honour on us all.

Rwanda supports the noble ideals of the United Nations and sincerely hopes that in order to ensure greater efficiency and success, the Organization will always be scrupulous in working on the basis of realistic and realizable objectives. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the United Nations bodies devoted to the economic and social development of the world. Special thanks go to those who are working tirelessly for the well-being of the most vulnerable groups - children and mother. That is why continuing efforts must be made to provide the necessary resources.

The Republic of Rwanda expects the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly to make great strides forward, and appeals to all Member States to further strengthen their cohesiveness and solidarity so that we may progress towards the realization of the ideals of our Charter, which are based more clearly than ever before on the vital need to establish a new, better balanced and more just international economic order that is fair to the traditionally disadvantaged countries of the third world. We believe that that is the most realistic and safest way to guarantee for all mankind a future of peace, security and full development.

Mr. JONES (Grenada): I bring greetings from the Government and people of Grenada.

My delegation joins in the many eloquent expressions of confidence and trust reposed in the President's great diplomatic and interpersonal skills as he presides

(Mr. Jones, Grenada)

with unparalleled confidence and competence over the deliberations of the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly. Additionally, my delegation places on record our admiration and esteem for the former Foreign Minister of Argentina, Mr. Dante Caputo, for his outstanding conduct of the forty-third session of the United Nations General Assembly.

The ray of light that burst forth on the international scene during the closing days of the forty-third session of the General Assembly gives hope that, as the curtain continues to rise on the Assembly's forty-fourth session, international peace and goodwill can be sustained, to the end that nations will increase their trust in one another and feel safer and more secure in their deliberations and interactions.

The Secretary-General of the United Nations, an ardent advocate of peace, has, during his extensive travels to many geographical regions, advanced the peace process by his quiet, effective and skilful diplomacy. It is now left to the national leaders and those who walk the corridors of power to sail with the favourable wind that is blowing and the favourable tide that is flowing in the direction of international peace and security. To quote the Secretary-General in his recent address to the summit of the Non-Aligned Movement in Belgrade:

"Never before in the history of the Non-Aligned Movement was there the fluidity in international affairs that we see today."

That fluidity in international affairs so eloquently described by Mr. Perez de Cuellar gives hope for the peaceful resolution of erstwhile conflicts in many areas of the world where, lately, signs of peace have emerged for the greater good.

The three-dimensional aspect of the conflict in the region of southern Africa - namely, the question of Namibia, the destabilization of the front-line

(Mr. Jones, Grenada)

States, and the vicious, diabolical and institutionalized practice of racism, apartheid - is beginning to show signs of that fluidity to which the Secretary-General referred.

Namibia is the best example. This last African colony, please God, will soon throw off the shackles of colonialism and take its place in the community of independent nations, where it rightfully belongs. The prospect of independence for Namibia came closer in December 1988 here at the United Nations when, in impressive ceremonies, a bilateral agreement was signed by Cuba and Angola to allow for the phased withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola. Similarly, a tripartite agreement was signed by Cuba, Angola and South Africa by which South Africa undertook to withdraw its forces from Namibia in like manner. This enabled the Secretary-General of the United Nations to establish and dispatch the United Nations Transition Assistance Group and the United Nations Angola Verification Mission to the region, in accordance with Security Council resolution 626 (1988), of 20 December 1988, thereby implementing the Security Council's overall plan for Namibia enclosed in its resolution 435 (1978).

The initial difficulties and frustrations encountered since 1 April, when the United Nations team arrived in Namibia, should be worked out in a spirit of determination and goodwill on all sides to ensure Namibia's independence at the appointed time. We cannot afford to defer this to another time. To paraphrase the immortal William Shakespeare, there is a tide flowing in the direction of independence; if missed, it will cause misery in the lives of a gallant and determined people. Now is the accepted time. Now is the time for Namibia's deliverance from oppressive forces. Now is the time to bring glad tidings to the poor, to proclaim liberty for captives and to give release to prisoners.

(Mr. Jones, Grenada)

If Namibia succeeds, it will create a psychological climate that will hasten the pulling-down of the odious, wicked and outdated practice of apartheid and its attendant pressures on the front-line States. The attention of the entire international community is focused on South Africa to see whether its new President is capable of ushering in the new society he has promised, or whether his so-called new approach is a mere tactical manoeuvre to consolidate his hold on power. The Government and people of Grenada, and history, will judge President De Klerk by his conduct rather than by his words. In any event, the writing is on the wall for all to see, even the architects and proponents of that barbarous practice.

(Mr. Jones, Grenada)

An integral and significant dimension of the situation in South Africa is the continued detention of Nelson Mandela, the undisputed leader of the majority of the people of that country. It is immoral and a display of cowardice on the part of the South African Government to attempt to pursue negotiations with Mandela at this time with a view to resolving the problems which beset the country. The bargaining power is clearly unequal.

We therefore call on the South African Government to release him unconditionally now to facilitate meaningful dialogue between the parties in dispute. Mandela must be capable of forming an entirely free and unfettered judgement, totally independent of any measure of control.

The recently concluded Paris Conference on Cambodia, while not removing all the obstacles to peace, nevertheless gives hope that peace is possible in that region. That is borne out by the fact that the Cambodian parties accepted the Secretary-General's idea of organizing a preliminary fact-finding mission to gather on-site technical data to facilitate further substantive discussion in the pursuit of peace.

The problem in the Korean peninsula, a legacy of the Second World War and its aftermath, is a perfect example of how rivalry between great Powers, away from their borders but on the borders of far-away neighbours, can divide a once closely knit and industrious people, linked by consanguinity, affinity and cultural relationship.

The recent proposal made by President Roh Tae Woo of the Republic of Korea to the National Assembly that North and South Korea adopt the national community charter in order to form a Korean commonwealth between the two Koreas offers much hope as an interim association in preparation for national unification.

It is hoped that, with continued dialogue and constant contact between North and South Korea, the way will be cleared for the adoption of the charter by

(Mr. Jones, Grenada)

15 August 1990 - the forty-fifth anniversary of the unnatural Korean division or dichotomy - thereby creating once again one nation, one people of remarkable talent and industry. If this proposal does not gain acceptance, there should be no impediment to admission to membership in the community of nations of the Republic of Korea and North Korea.

In Western Sahara, the peace plan submitted by the Secretary-General and the head of the Organization of African Unity, followed by the Secretary-General's proposal for the establishment of a technical commission to implement the proposal, has been well received by Morocco and the POLISARIO Front. High-level meetings between the two parties have been taking place through the good offices of the Secretary-General, and it is hoped that with goodwill on all sides the settlement that has long eluded us will finally be cornered and achieved.

In much the same way, the communal talks in Cyprus, though at a crucial stage, offer hope for peaceful settlement with the help of the Secretary-General and his Representatives. In the interim, the United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus deserves the full support of the international community as it strives to provide a buffer and maintain the peace between the Greek and Turkish communities.

The Geneva Agreement of 14 April 1988 which paved the way for the withdrawal of foreign forces from Afghanistan was a promising step towards a peaceful settlement, and while intermittent attacks still continue the level of conflict is considerably diminished and there is reduced human suffering. This is therefore an opportune time for the international community to seize upon that initiative and to do everything necessary to ensure a permanent end to the fighting and the commencement of a level of dialogue that could pave the way to a negotiated political solution. In that connection, my delegation wishes to congratulate the Prime Minister of Pakistan for the contribution contained in her recent statement on the Afghan question.

(Mr. Jones, Grenada)

In the Middle East, the cease-fire in the Iran-Iraq war which took effect slightly more than a year ago is still holding, despite occasional charges and counter-charges on both sides. There is therefore more promise for the full implementation of Security Council resolution 598 (1987) for the restoration of stability and security in the region.

I wish, however, to remind the Assembly of the unending plight of the members of the Bahai faith in Iran and the continuing deprivation of their sacred right of freedom of worship. I am informed that since the end of the forty-third session there has been a small measure of improvement in the attitude of the Iranian Government. But Bahais are still being denied the freedom to profess their religion; they are not permitted to meet as a community or to have a place of worship; their administrative institutions are banned; their properties are still being confiscated; and their holy places, sacred to the entire world-wide Bahai community, are still sequestered or are being destroyed.

This continuing religious and social persecution cries out for redress and threatens the fragile peace secured by the cease-fire. The United Nations must therefore address the problem seriously and urgently if we are to avoid a return to the recent instability in that country.

The Arab-Israeli conflict over the future of the Palestinians continues to be one of the major stumbling blocks in our efforts to find acceptable solutions to international disputes and to secure peace universally. But the Palestine National Council, meeting in Algiers, and the historical Geneva meeting of the United Nations General Assembly that followed it, brought new hope for a breakthrough, and it was with great expectation that we looked to 1989 for some positive movement towards a real and lasting settlement. It is therefore with some measure of disappointment that my delegation notes that there has been no appreciable movement of the peace process and that at best the present position can only be described as

(Mr. Jones, Grenada)

being one of cautious optimism. But we must continue our search for an acceptable solution; we must not tire or falter. The stakes are too high and the consequences of failure too dangerous. We must therefore persevere to the very end.

The situation in Lebanon, too, continues to be a cause for great concern. The sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of that State Member of the United Nations continues to be trampled upon by an array of military forces - some foreign, some local, and the senseless destruction of human lives and property continues unabated. The United Nations has a duty, through this body and the Security Council, to give serious and immediate consideration to the matter with a view to finding an urgent solution to the problem and restoring peace and stability to that troubled land.

In Central America, the five Presidents are tirelessly seeking to find a peaceful solution for a decade of conflict in the region. We commend them for their efforts to achieve their own negotiated settlement of the conflict, thereby fulfilling their aspirations to command respect and to exercise their independence, sovereignty and self-determination.

(Mr. Jones, Grenada)

In Panama, however, the situation has deteriorated and the people continue to be denied their God-given right to elect a Government of their choice. The strong-arm tactics of one man called the tune, to the prejudice of the vast majority of the population. The United Nations has a duty to speak out forcefully against that system and to do all that it can to help correct that situation.

My delegation subscribes to the view that the implementation of the Esquipulas II Agreement offers the best hope for peace in the region. The Agreement can be buttressed by the United Nations reconnaissance mission, now on the spot in the region, for the purpose of verification and monitoring of the electoral process, to be followed by repatriation and resettlement by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees of the displaced persons and families.

Central to the peace process in Central America is the humanitarian request which the five Presidents made and the General Assembly approved as the special plan of economic co-operation for Central America.

Additionally, the recent International Conference on Central American Refugees, held in Guatemala City in May, signalled the good intentions in the region and in the international community for peace and national reconciliation.

The social, economic and political situation in Central America and in many developing countries is aggravated by the external debt problem, which has become a millstone around the necks of brave and valiant people who are experiencing economic strangulation as a way of life.

The situation in Haiti is of particular concern to my country, as it should be to all our neighbours in the hemisphere. Haiti is the oldest black republic on the face of the earth and, except for the United States of America, it is the oldest sovereign State in this hemisphere, having attained the status in 1804. Grenada has a special affinity with Haiti because the revolutionary leader and king of Haiti, Henri Christophe, was born in Grenada.

(Mr. Jones, Grenada)

The Government and people of Grenada are pleased to see the high-level delegation of Caribbean Foreign Ministers visit Haiti for the purpose of ascertaining first-hand information, which will aid Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Heads of State to offer help if so requested. My delegation hopes that there will be prompt issuance of an electoral calendar, as promised, that concrete steps will be taken to ensure free and fair elections, that there will be a smooth and easy transition to democracy, and that there will be successful co-operative management of the affairs of Haiti, which illuminated the hemisphere with revolutionary light and fervour.

On every occasion for the past four years, that my delegation has addressed the subject of external debt we have advanced the idea that a more practical course must be found to bring relief to debtor countries. While the repayment of debt is the legal and moral responsibility of the debtor, debt relief, in view of the prevailing third-world economic situation, should be given humane and moral consideration by the creditors.

My delegation commends those creditor nations which are beginning to exercise this consideration by either forgiving or reducing the debt obligation. Such a positive step will reduce the social and economic frustrations and hardships that threaten the very stability and security of many debtor countries. In the case of my region, the narrow base of our economies and the specific character of our external debt, primarily to multilateral institutions, emphasize the need for programmed debt reduction. This is the only way to ensure that the necessary financial means are available for investing in our generation's future and for putting in place the necessary infrastructure upon which that future is to be built.

At the forty-third session of the General Assembly I had occasion to invoke the peculiar plight of small island developing countries. It would be remiss of me not to reiterate, at this forty-fourth session, the concerns then expressed,

(Mr. Jones, Grenada)

especially in the light of the devastation that hurricane Hugo recently wrought on three sister Caribbean States, namely, Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica and St. Kitts and Nevis, as well as Montserrat and other territories in the region.

Indeed, at the forty-third session, in its resolution 43/189, entitled "Specific measures in favour of island developing countries", the General Assembly acknowledged the specificity of Member States in that category. There must, however, be effective implementation of paragraphs 10 and 11 of resolution 43/189. In fact, meaningful follow-through in the matter of "specific measures" entails actively engaging the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), as well as various agencies of the United Nations system, at the level of financial measures, funding or operational activities. The results of the inter-agency framework to be identified by the Secretary-General must be translated into concrete action.

This session of the General Assembly is taking place on the threshold of the final decade of this century. It would appear that a sense of urgency has entered the debate regarding the development of the developing world. Thus, during the high level segment of the thirty-sixth session of the Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) the focus of attention was on the role of the United Nations Development Programme in the 1990s. There has been a call for a special session of the General Assembly in April 1990 devoted to international economic co-operation and in particular to the revitalization of the economic growth and development of the developing countries. In yet another forum we are in the throes of formulating what is intended to be an international development strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade, that is, the Decade of the 1990s.

My delegation sincerely hopes that the international community will face up to the challenge of addressing the issues which have been highlighted in the context

(Mr. Jones, Grenada)

of the comprehensive policy review of operational activities of the United Nations system, under item 36 of our agenda.

We in the Caribbean have been engaging in our own stock-taking so that we may be better equipped to answer to the demands and expectations of our peoples in the decade ahead. But our endogenous efforts in the area, inter alia, of human resource development, housing and human settlement, health care, agriculture and industrial development cannot be essayed in a vacuum.

I now wish to reaffirm Grenada's continuing commitment to the United Nations, the Organization of American States, the British Commonwealth, the Caribbean Community, the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States and all other national and international organizations which assist us in achieving our foreign policy objectives, the centrepiece of which is the promotion of peace and brotherhood among members of the global community. We are guided in the pursuit of this objective by the preposition that peace and democracy are inextricably linked, and so it comports with our policy to give moral support to the people who struggle for peace and democracy.

(Mr. Jones, Grenada)

Our penchant for democracy is informed by the recent traumatic episode in our history when we took democracy for granted. On the basis of that experience, we have elected to govern and be governed by a system which, inter alia, demands and guarantees respect for the rights of the human person, provides numerous safeguards under an independent judiciary, allows freedom of expression, affords people an opportunity to participate in the political decision-making process, imposes restraints on dictators of every persuasion and tendency, and yet is capable of accommodating our very many differences and diversities.

This brings me to the consideration of two issues that are potentially capable of mortgaging the future of our youth: protection of the environment and drug trafficking and drug abuse. Both of these questions were on the agenda of the recently concluded tenth meeting of the Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community - a meeting which my country had the honour of hosting last July.

Man's propensity to self-destruction has heretofore been the object of our concern within the ambit of international warfare. The modern-day scourges of man-propelled degradation of the environment and drug abuse and drug trafficking must be frontally attacked. We must build on the heightened consciousness of the transboundary nature of the problems and hammer out solutions in keeping with such a focus. In this vein, Grenada fully subscribes to the precepts embodied in the Basle Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movement of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal, adopted in March 1989.

It is to be noted that, at the meeting of Heads of Government alluded to earlier, we in the Caribbean endorsed proposals to combat drug trafficking submitted by Jamaica and by Trinidad and Tobago. The said proposals have now found expression in two draft resolutions to be considered at this forty-fourth session of the General Assembly. They clearly envisage an active role for the United Nations in this domain and could be viewed as furthering the objectives of the

(Mr. Jones, Grenada)

United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, adopted in Vienna in December 1988.

Last year my delegation congratulated President Reagan and President Gorbachev on their contributions to the lessening of international tensions and urged them to continue their dialogue so that the wind of change blowing over certain regions would increase in intensity and increase to encompass the whole world, bringing greater understanding and tolerance among its peoples. I now wish to congratulate President Bush for his contribution to the new spirit of détente and rapprochement and to ask him to maintain, with President Gorbachev, a level of dialogue that would enable them to achieve the trust and confidence so vital to the relaxation of international tensions. We note with satisfaction and with joy the new political climate in the Soviet Union, Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia and in certain parts of Central America and Africa. We note also the recent parliamentary elections in the Soviet Union and in Poland, and the emergence of a Solidarity-led Government in Poland. What a relief to see East Germans being able to cross over into West Germany without being exposed to the threat of death in the process.

There can be no doubt that over the last year, we have made appreciable progress in several fields and in several regions of the world, and that we have come a long way in abating the tensions and the dangers that have so often threatened us with destruction. We must not, however, lower our guard or relax our vigilance, lest we become complacent. Let us rather be ever mindful of the continuing threat posed to the world by three international problems, the drug menace, the debt burden, and the South Africa problem, any one of which could plunge the world into darkness and despair. We must intensify our efforts in the search for new ways of dealing with these problems so we may be able to neutralize and eventually remove the dangers to world peace inherent in their continued existence.

(Mr. Jones, Grenada)

It is my belief, however, that notwithstanding the progress we might make elsewhere in the world, the world will continue to be threatened as long as the South Africa problem remains unresolved. Civilized man must never allow himself to be perceived as having accepted or acquiesced in the continuance of the beastly system of government in South Africa. The time has come when, because of its influence and prestige, the United Nations must speak out more forcefully against apartheid and initiate the level of dialogue and the kind of action that could lead to an immediate dismantling of the system and the granting to the approximately 26 million black people of that country of the God-given right to choose their own form of government by the exercise of their franchise.

Five years ago, the people of Grenada traded their rifles for the ballot box in a bold attempt to fulfil their aspirations for freedom, an inalienable feature of democratic culture. Today Grenada is at peace with itself and at peace with democracy. The black majority of South Africa has the right to that same peace and that same democracy, and we have a duty to help them achieve them now.

If we could find the courage to accept the urgent need to act together and with the necessary resolve in seeking solutions to these seemingly intractable problems, then our world might, some day during our lifetime, come to experience and to enjoy the peace, stability and prosperity that have eluded us for so long.

May God continue to shower His blessings upon us and may He also continue to guide us as we plod our weary way in search of happiness and security.

Mr. CENAC (Saint Lucia): Let me express my delight at seeing Ambassador Garba of Nigeria in the Chair as President of the fourty-fourth session of the General Assembly. He is an experienced and distinguished son of Nigeria. I have no doubt that his well-recognized ability will greatly facilitate our work in the coming months. He may expect nothing less than total co-operation from my delegation.

We have come to the end of a historic political decade, in the affairs both of nation States and of the international community at large. In no other decade of this century have we witnessed such a rapid transformation of socio-economic and political philosophies and ideologies. At no other time in recent memory have so many men, once inveterate enemies, been so eager to step forward with pens rather than swords in their hands, anxious to drown past hostilities in ink. Truly in this decade many of us have come close to believing the maxim that the pen is mightier than the sword. It is indeed a time for reflection and stock-taking, and for setting new, greater goals for the future.

The decade of the 1980s dawned upon a world wherein dictators of the left and of the right had raised impermeable glass shields of sovereignty at their borders, and with impunity proceeded to violate every human and civil right of their people. We could look in, but could not enter. We listened to the screams but dared not speak. For what a man did in his own house was his own business.

But as the decade comes to a close I am happy to see the emergence of a greater sense of brotherhood in the world. "We the peoples of the United Nations", the first words of our Charter, are increasingly becoming "We the family of the United Nations". And indeed we are drawing closer to the full realization of our "faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small".

(Mr. Cenac, Saint Lucia)

In this decade we have seen signs of progress even in relation to many of our traditionally most intractable political problems, some as old as, or older than, the Organization itself.

Since the adoption by the General Assembly at its first session, in 1946, of resolution 65 (I), the question of Namibia has been on the agenda of every regular session and several special sessions of the General Assembly. And we began this decade with no more hope than we had had when we came to the end of the preceding four decades. But as we close the 1980s the United Nations Transition Assistance Group is in place, and it now seems certain that a free and independent Namibia, emerging out of free and fair elections, will soon take its rightful place, so long denied it, in the comity of nations. Regrettably, the new South African régime, amidst the sending of conflicting signals, continues to hold tenuously to the repulsive apartheid system.

All nations of men are made of one blood. And a régime that denies that this is so, and seeks to perpetuate a ridiculous notion of racial superiority by depriving the overwhelming majority of the people of South Africa of their fundamental human rights, deserves contempt. We cannot but therefore continue to apply and maintain such pressure as would put an end to their affront to humanity.

In the Middle East, too, we have seen policies of naked confrontation, which have bedeviled the Organization almost since its founding, give way to more reasonable, gentler approaches which stress dialogue more than confrontation. The Palestine National Council is to be commended for its decision of 15 November last to accept Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) fully, and consequently Israel's right to exist within secure and internationally recognized borders. The Government of Saint Lucia hopes that the Government of Israel will therefore begin to show greater flexibility in its approach to solving the problems in the Middle East.

(Mr. Cenac, Saint Lucia)

In this decade we have watched and applauded as General Secretary Gorbachev has tried to move the Soviet Union away from a Kafkaesque and Stalinist society to a country of glasnost and perestroika, as if saying "let there be light", and taking the accent away from forced collectivization and "groupthink" and placing it on individuality and openness - something only the most optimistic and utopian of us would have dreamed possible only 10 years ago.

In the 1980s we have watched the super-Powers, for decades armed to the teeth and glaring at each other, nod slightly and awake to find that they had concluded a intermediate-nuclear-force agreement and were actually destroying some nuclear weapons - one small step away from mutually assured destruction. The journey of 1,000 miles had begun.

In this decade we have watched the authoritarian Government of Poland - dragged reluctantly into expressing solidarity with the aims of Solidarity do a volte-face and agree to almost total economic and political liberalization. Lavish praise must be heaped upon that Government.

In the 1980s we have watched Afghanistan, though still greatly troubled, begin to move towards a final solution to its problems. So, too, have we witnessed the end of the fratricidal Iran-Iraq conflict. And in Central America, as Esquipulas II takes hold ballots seem ready to replace bullets in Nicaragua, as dialogue slowly moves to replace brutal confrontation in El Salvador.

And in my own sub-region, the Eastern Caribbean, we are trying to take the political gains we have made to what we believe are their logical extreme. Being of the view that the highest form of economic co-operation is political integration, some of us, members of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States, will be moving with all deliberate speed towards a federation of our territories. We shall be counting on the support of the international community as we take this bold step.

(Mr. Cenac, Saint Lucia)

There are still areas where we have failed to make meaningful political progress in the 1980s. In fact, in some places we have seen political regression, as in the beleaguered Lebanon, which seems to be sinking deeper and deeper into a quagmire of political and religious violence. Saint Lucia hopes that the present cease-fire, facilitated by the Arab League, will usher in a new period of peace and reconciliation.

In the People's Republic of China, too, recent events have both shocked and disturbed the world community. Saint Lucia's view is best summed up by a statement issued last July by the Prime Minister of Saint Lucia, the Right Honourable John Compton, as follows:

"The Government of Saint Lucia is deeply shocked by the Chinese Army's deliberate gunning down, in Tiananmen Square in China, of more than 300 Chinese citizens, the majority of whom were students. The Government believes that this event, one of the most brutal in modern history, makes it imperative for all the nations of the international community, big and small, to unite as one voice to protest the manner in which the expression of human freedom in China has been punished. In this age of human rights and human dignity, it is regrettable that a nation should resort to the use of army tanks and machine-guns to destroy the human spirit in its peaceful quest for freedom and expression. But the human spirit cannot be destroyed; it always resurfaces, and will do so repeatedly in China, until the political system of that country gives way to genuine democracy."

While we have seen some signs of movement towards a constructive dialogue on the question of the reunification of the Korean peninsula, there have been no publicly announced breakthroughs which would lead my Government to believe that the problem will be settled in the very near future. Consequently, Saint Lucia believes that no constructive purpose can be served by any barriers that are kept

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in the path of either of the two Koreas wishing to become a full Member of the United Nations. Saint Lucia therefore unequivocally supports the desire of the Republic of Korea to become a member of the United Nations family, in the full confidence that it will make an outstanding contribution to the important work of this Organization.

Saint Lucia regrets the inability of the recent Paris International Conference on Cambodia to arrive at a comprehensive political settlement. Our position on the Kampuchean question is well known, as we have time and again enunciated it here. It is that the people of Kampuchea should be enabled to choose their own government without outside interference, subversion or coercion. Saint Lucia continues to maintain its position in support of all General Assembly resolutions on the matter.

The unsettled political situation in Panama is of great concern to us in Saint Lucia. We continue to support the initiatives of the Panamanian people themselves, and those of the Organization of American States, including the mission appointed by the twenty-first consultative meeting of foreign ministers.

In Haiti, too, after years of political oppression and economic denial, the people are struggling to create a genuine democracy as a prelude to meaningful and balanced economic progress. Saint Lucia supports them, and calls upon the entire international community to do likewise. In a statement I made to the press in Port-au-Prince in July I said:

"There are different views on whether international aid and the solution of Haiti's many social and economic problems should be a condition precedent for the holding of elections or should await such elections. My colleagues and I are convinced that there is no obvious reason why both sets of efforts,

(Mr. Cenac, Saint Lucia)

national and international development efforts, and the taking of concrete steps towards the holding of elections, should not be pursued simultaneously."

In the light of the announcement that local, parliamentary and presidential elections are all to be held next year, my delegation feels justified in urging the international community to renew its aid programme to Haiti, for man cannot live without bread.

Undeniably, the 1980s will be remembered for all time as a decade of great political progress on both the domestic and the international front. But, to be sustainable, political liberalization must be coupled with economic, social and scientific progress and prudence, in the South as well as the North. The developed countries cannot expect to succeed in crowning international political progress with North American bilateral trade pacts and European 1992 multilateral economic integration without a supportive reaction, or at the very least a pari passu or lock-step movement, in the developing world.

Last year the world economy grew by about 4.3 per cent and world trade increased by about 8.3 per cent, leading to an increase in world output per head of 2.6 per cent. That was beyond all expectations.

But in my own region, Latin America and the Caribbean, despite the debt concessions agreed to last year by the Group of Seven and the Paris Club, and despite the proposals made by the Governments of Japan and France and the United States Secretary of the Treasury, Nicholas Brady, all of which have made positive contributions, per capita gross national product has fallen precipitously as debt repayments have risen to more than a quarter of all export earnings. Our aggregate share of world trade has also fallen, as the productivity of labour has declined by

(Mr. Cenac, Saint Lucia)

about 2 per cent each year of the decade. In the Latin American and Caribbean region alone, it has been estimated, 250,000 young children died last year as a direct result of regressions in the development process.

Under conditions of extremely tight capital constraints, in 1988 the net transfer of resources from the developing countries exceeded \$30 billion. And, especially in Latin America, the crushing debt burden has destabilized some internal economies, affecting both the supply and the velocity of money, and leading to major social conflicts which threaten the political order.\*

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\* The President returned to the Chair.

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Commodity prices, which are essential to most of the developing countries, declined in real terms in this decade by as much as 50 per cent in terms of their purchasing power vis-à-vis manufactured goods.

The majority of the least developed countries continue to stagnate, with negative growth rates or growth rates that are too low to keep pace with population growth. Of the 41 least developed countries, only 12 have recorded positive per capita growth over the past few years, with some even experiencing negative gross domestic product growth. In sub-Saharan Africa real income per head has declined almost every year of the decade and is now 14 per cent lower than it was 10 years ago.

The continued use in the developed world of non-tariff trade barriers in such an unstable macro-economic environment further threatens the prospect for trade-led growth in the developing countries.

Amid a superfluity of indices of increasing growth and prosperity in the world, we are sobered by the fact that average per capita income in the industrialized countries is about 50 times that of the least developed countries. During this decade more than half of the least developed countries implemented structural adjustment programmes with the International Monetary Fund, and those programmes did not always have a human face.

In such an economic environment the fundamental principles of the New International Economic Order, the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States, and the North-South dialogue must remain as valid, important and pressing issues.

The wind bloweth where it listeth, but we in the Caribbean are more often than not the victims of its unslakable wrath. The destructive impact of hurricane Hugo, which left a wake of disaster as it cut its way across the Caribbean only last month, underscores the extreme physical vulnerability of the island developing

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countries. Always buffeted by the consequences of smallness, remoteness, lack of natural resources and heavy dependence on imports, we must annually undergo the dreadful ritual of keeping a wary eye on the horizon for hurricanes and cyclones which seek to blow away our small, hard-won economic gains.

These problems are especially acute for small island developing countries, which, because of severe geographic and demographic constraints, have developmental problems which are unique, and therefore different from those of developing countries in general. Hence, traditional criteria, such as per capital gross national product, which are used to determine the quantum of aid needs and graduation from concessionary financing, should not apply to small island developing countries without substantial use of supplemental criteria.

Saint Lucia therefore looks forward to the holding next year of the first United Nations conference on special problems and particular needs of island developing countries in the hope that it will give the international community a better understanding of the sui generis situation of the small island developing countries.

It cannot be said that the developing countries find themselves in these difficulties because they have not tried to help themselves. In fact, in our efforts towards sustainable growth and development we have looked not only to the North but also to collective self-reliance.

Last May, in Caracas, Venezuela, the developing countries celebrated the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Group of 77, and welcomed the eight years of the adoption of the Caracas Programme of Action on Economic Co-operation among Developing Countries. One month earlier, the global system of trade preferences, the developing world's own most-favoured-nation trading régime, had come into force. Only last month we celebrated the tenth anniversary of the Buenos Aires

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Programme of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries, and adopted measures to strengthen technical co-operation among developing countries. And we look forward to next year's special session of the General Assembly on international economic co-operation, particularly the reactivation of growth and development of developing countries, when we hope to adopt more concrete measures both in relation to the North and among ourselves. So, too, we prepare for the international development strategy for the fourth United Nations Development Decade, which we expect will contain commitments and propose specific policy actions aimed at resolving the serious problems of the developing countries.

In our haste to develop we must not be unaware of the potential environmental consequences of unregulated and irresponsible development.

We have all of late been slowly waking to the realization that we are taking a terrible toll on the ecological environment, with destructive consequences that seem almost deliberate. From the maniacal destruction of forests, to the dumping of toxic wastes in the ocean, to the release of fluorocarbons in the atmosphere, we have been destroying the land, sea and air at an astonishing speed, considerably raising carcinogenic dangers to ourselves.

In the anglophone Caribbean, despite the dictates of the 1973 International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution by Ships, we have become increasingly concerned by a series of nefarious attempts by foreign maritime operations to dump toxic substances in the Caribbean Sea in uncomfortable proximity to our shores.

Saint Lucia, therefore, supports all international attempts aimed at controlling these problems of runaway pollution, including the Vienna Convention on the Protection of the Ozone Layer, and the recent Basel Convention on the Control

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of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal, which was adopted last March.

In co-operation with our close neighbours, Saint Lucia plans hotly to pursue, capture and prosecute to the fullest extent of both our national law and international law anyone caught illegally dumping toxic and other dangerous substances in our waters.

Our adoption last December of the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances was timely and, it is hoped, prophetic. Not since the bubonic plague of the 1340s has mankind faced a social problem with such dire potential consequences for the youth of the global society. The traffickers in illegal narcotic drugs walk on cadavers and broken lives on their way to amassing huge, superfluous fortunes, giving credence to Erasmus's dictum that "Great abundance of riches cannot be gathered and kept by any man without sin". It cannot be allowed to continue.

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Though ours is not a producing country, we in Saint Lucia have become more aware of the propensities of international drug traffickers to use the Caribbean as a trans-shipment point on their way to the bigger markets of the north. In this vein Saint Lucia strongly supports the new agenda item proposed by Trinidad and Tobago concerning the establishment of an international criminal court which, inter alia, would have jurisdiction over the transboundary movement of illegal drugs and the idea of an international strike force as proposed by Jamaica.

The Government of Saint Lucia within the parameters of the law intends to deal swiftly and harshly with anyone caught distributing or trans-shipment illegal drugs within its jurisdiction, and to apply without reservation all the provisions of the Convention, including extradition, the granting of mutual legal assistance and, where necessary, transfer of proceedings.

This then has been our view of what lies behind us in the past decade and what lies ahead in the final decade of this century. Saint Lucia has pledged itself to reach new economic and social heights in the 1990s, so that we may enter the twenty-first century with confidence; proud of what we have accomplished, and eager to do what we can, however humble, in the years ahead for the global good.

Mr. SANI BAKO (Niger) (interpretation from French): Mr. President, it is a particular pleasure for me, on behalf of the delegation of Niger, to congratulate you most warmly on your brilliant election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its forty-fourth session. By unanimously entrusting you with the onerous task of guiding its work the Assembly has wished to testify to the active role played in the international arena by your great country, the Federal Republic of Nigeria, which is united by old, fruitful, strong and varied links with the Republic of Niger in promoting and defending the ideals of international peace, harmony and security and in striving for greater equity and justice in international economic relations.

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Your election is thus a confirmation of your outstanding qualities: an eminent diplomat, you are an expert in your field, a man whose experience, talent and strong convictions compel admiration and promise a fruitful outcome to our work. Finally, it is a tribute paid to Africa as a whole. I wish to assure you of the complete availability and co-operation of my delegation in helping you to accomplish your task.

To your predecessor, Mr. Dante Caputo, we would like to express our full appreciation and gratitude for the wisdom, skill and efficiency with which he presided over the work of the forty-third session.

To the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, I should like to repeat the whole-hearted support and encouragement of General Ali Saibou, President of the Supreme Council of National Guidance, Head of State, for the tireless efforts he is making on behalf of peace. We commend the dynamic work the Secretary-General has carried out at the head of this Organization, which he has now rehabilitated and whose authority, prestige and credibility he has restored.

Finally, I welcome Mr. Ronald Spiers, the new Under-Secretary-General for Political and General Assembly Affairs, who succeeds Ambassador Reed. We wish him every success in the accomplishment of his new task.

The sessions of the General Assembly are opportunities for the international community to make further progress in the quest for peace, justice and harmony among peoples in accordance with the ideals and principles of the Charter. It is in this spirit that the delegation of Niger intends once again to make its contribution to the broad discussion of problems of concern to humanity.

Swift and profound changes are taking place in the international arena. We are seeing political, economic, social, cultural and even ideological changes which are shaping and foreshadowing international relations and the new stakes and

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challenges of the next century. These changes are sure to have a decisive influence on the future of nations and peoples.

The new dynamic in the feature of relations between the United States and the Soviet Union, particularly with the signature and entry into force of the Treaty on the Elimination of Their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles, is grounds for hope. That agreement and the thaw in relations between the two super-Powers has created a general climate of co-operation and détente and has helped to prepare the way for the settlement of several regional and local conflicts.

The treaties and agreements concluded between the Soviet Union and the United States are basic attainments; they testify to the political will of those two countries to curb the danger which the arms race represents for mankind. We must however note that the danger continues because the means of warfare are of necessity lethal, are still considerable and are increasingly sophisticated. For that reason the two super-Powers should intensify and pursue, with greater determination and will, their negotiations on the reduction of their stockpiles both nuclear and conventional.

In this respect we are pleased with the constructive proposals made a few days ago from this rostrum, by the President of the United States of America and the Soviet Minister for Foreign Affairs respectively, with regard to the elimination of chemical weapons and of conventional weapons. These proposals, if accepted by both parties, would, we believe, help to promote substantial progress towards general and complete disarmament.

The survival of mankind is our common responsibility and implies that we must avoid a nuclear disaster, which is still possible, by significantly reversing present trends. It is certainly frustrating to note the state of the world today and to see that today we have a striking if not repugnant paradox: on the one hand

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there is the exponential increase in military budgets and arsenals and on the other there is the chronic poverty and wretchedness of many in the world. We must give full weight to the Action Programme adopted by the International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development, which provides for the creation of institutional financial mechanisms to facilitate the transfer of resources saved through disarmament measures to economic and social development activities.

This session of the General Assembly is being held at a time when significant and encouraging progress has been noted in many regional conflicts, some of which have been controlled and virtually settled thanks to the merits of dialogue and negotiation, while others are on the right path with good chances of success. However, the persistence of stubborn hotbeds of tension or situations of injustice and the appearance or intensification of certain disputes still pose a dangerous threat to international peace and security in many regions of the world.

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We must work tirelessly, and persevere in the quest for and consolidation of peace. We must take advantage of this thaw in international relations to make significant advances towards the realization of our peoples' legitimate aspiration to peace, justice and human dignity.

In Africa, the situation in Namibia and South Africa continues to centre on the long-awaited outcome of the Namibian people's heroic struggle for independence and on the persistence of the despicable system of apartheid. The international community's tireless efforts are finally about to bear fruit: the implementation of the independence plan for Namibia has been under way since 1 April 1989. Yet it is more indispensable than ever before to show determination, vigilance and solidarity to prevent the Pretoria racist régime from crushing our efforts.

Unfortunately, I must condemn yet again the intimidation and harassment against the freedom-fighters of the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO), the reprisals perpetrated by the sinister Koevoet forces, the manipulation of electoral rolls, the assassination of Namibian patriots and SWAPO leaders, such as the 12 September murder of Anton Lubowski. All these acts testify to the disarray of the racist régime and remind us that there are still many real dangers that the process will be derailed, and that constant vigilance is required.

It is the duty of the Organization, the permanent members of the Security Council and the entire international community to ensure that the spirit and the letter of Security Council resolutions 435 (1978) and 632 (1989) are scrupulously respected by all parties and that the Namibian people has the opportunity and means to elect a Government of its choice next month freely, peacefully and without manoeuvres, intimidation or coercion.

In South Africa itself, apartheid persists. The new political leadership of the country is aiming to win time through various subterfuges. We must not be

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misled by recent declarations of purely superficial constitutional reforms or by the pseudo-elections of 6 September last. They leave untouched the real problem: the perpetuation of the apartheid system, which denies the black majority the right to participate fully in the political and democratic management of its country.

Mr. President, as Chairman of the Special Committee against Apartheid you are very well aware that apartheid cannot be reformed. It is a disgrace to humanity and an anachronism of world civilization; it must be dismantled, pure and simple.

But we note that the friends of the South African régime still hesitate to adopt bold sanctions against the apartheid régime. They must understand and weigh the danger to themselves of stubborn support - even passive support - for a system founded on inequality, exploitation and the denial of human rights.

For that reason, Niger appeals again to the international community to maintain and indeed increase its pressure on the South African régime, so the comprehensive mandatory sanctions ordered by the Security Council and the General Assembly in the relevant resolutions can be effectively imposed against South Africa. Only such sanctions will make it see reason and lift its policy of internal repression and destabilization of neighbouring States, lift the bars that hobble the anti-apartheid movement, and immediately and unconditionally free all political prisoners, including Nelson Mandela. Today more than ever before, this is a matter of a true social pact and a duty of genuine solidarity for the international community vis-à-vis the South African people and all the peoples of southern Africa.

We call on the international community to support fully the conclusions reached by the Ad Hoc Committee of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), which met at Harare on 21 August and adopted a declaration on the peace process in southern Africa. We call on it firmly to support the Gbadolite agreements of

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22 June last and all the efforts to restore peace in Angola, and to encourage similar initiatives for national reconciliation and the restoration of peace in Mozambique.

A local conflict that has just exploded on our continent is causing us great concern and sadness, for it concerns two fraternal countries that are dear to us: two countries that should stand united and cleave to one another; two countries members of the Organization for the Development of the Senegal River, the Permanent Inter-State Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel, the West African Economic Community, the Economic Community of West African States, the OAU, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

As a member of the ministerial mediation commission established by the Organization of African Unity, Niger is working with the other member countries towards the prompt and final settlement of this unfortunate affair. We therefore take this opportunity to renew our appeal to Senegal and Mauritania to refrain from any action that could increase tension, and to co-operate fully with the African mediation commission in its efforts to restore as soon as possible between the two peoples the understanding, harmony, fraternity, solidarity and common destiny to which geography, history and the Islamic faith destine - I was about to say doom - them.

I am pleased to note that between Chad and Libya - two other fraternal countries that are neighbours of Niger - dialogue is continuing and strengthening over time, thus promoting a comprehensive, final settlement of the dispute that has long set them against one another and that has cost their peoples so dearly. Niger welcomed the conclusion on 31 August of the Algiers Agreement, which consolidated the cease-fire and ushered in a new era of peace, mutual trust and fraternal

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co-operation for the two countries. We congratulate them and urge them to sustain this momentum in the interest of their peoples and the entire subregion.

In Western Sahara, the process begun by the Secretary-General's peace plan and conducted jointly with the current Chairman of the OAU is under way, and we support it. We urge the parties involved in this painful conflict to continue and indeed intensify their efforts to create conditions that would favour the organization under United Nations auspices of a referendum on self-determination.

In the Middle East, the Palestinian people is heroically continuing its resistance to illegal occupation and repression. The conditions, the framework and the means for a just and lasting peace in the Middle East are well known. They include the total and unconditional withdrawal of Israel from all the occupied Arab territories, including Jerusalem, the strict implementation in that connection of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), and the convening under United Nations auspices of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East with the participation of the permanent members of the Security Council and, on an equal footing, of all the parties concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). There is no possible alternative to those conditions and their complete implementation; otherwise there can be no fair and lasting solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Along with the rest of the international community, Niger welcomed the peace initiative announced on 13 December 1988 in Geneva, and the many peaceful overtures made by the PLO. We therefore regret the lack of a positive response from the Israeli Government to the Palestinian side's constructive position. None the less, we hope that both sides will show realism and responsibility by accepting the 10-point proposal put forward by the President of Egypt, Mr. Hosni Mubarak. We feel that proposal could create conditions for a constructive and satisfactory outcome.

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In the meantime, we urgently appeal for strict respect for the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 12 August 1949 on the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, in order to protect civilians in the occupied Palestinian territories against the repression practised by the Israeli forces trying - vainly - to stifle the intifadah.

We continue to be concerned by the tragedy the people of Lebanon has endured for the past 15 years. A State Member of this Organization is truly wasting away. Can we remain powerless and inactive in the face of that unacceptable situation?

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The international community must do everything in its power to preserve the identity, unity, territorial integrity and independence of Lebanon, and to achieve national reconciliation amongst all its sons. Niger is endeavouring to do this. We support fully the efforts made by the League of Arab States and the Tripartite Committee which it set up to find a solution to this tragedy.

We are pleased to note that there has been a real abatement in the conflict between Iran and Iraq over the last year. My country again declares its support for the clear-sighted efforts made by the Secretary-General and urges the two parties to co-operate fully with him, not only to consolidate the cease-fire but also to make progress towards a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement to the conflict on the basis of Security Council resolution 596 (1987).

Regarding Afghanistan, Niger is pleased at the conclusion of the Geneva Agreements, which made possible the withdrawal of foreign troops from that country. We reaffirm our support for the Secretary-General of the United Nations in his efforts to facilitate a comprehensive, political settlement in accordance with the provisions of the Geneva Agreements and General Assembly resolution 43/20. The return to real peace in Afghanistan requires strict respect for the right of the Afghan people to decide independently its own fate, and requires respect for its sovereignty, its territorial integrity and of its status as a non-aligned State.

We are also watching closely the development of the situation in Kampuchea, particularly the decision on the withdrawal of foreign troops from that country. The International Conference held in Paris from 30 July to 3 August 1989, offers, in my delegation's view, a timely opportunity for all the parties involved and directly concerned to find, through dialogue and reflection, a comprehensive, honourable and definitive solution to the tragedy of Cambodia.

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Even if the results of that Conference did not measure up to the hopes we had placed in them, the Conference is certainly an important step towards a peaceful solution. The Cambodian people must be able to determine freely their own destiny without any foreign interference. Dialogue amongst all the sons of Cambodia must continue and must be intensified. In this respect Niger welcomes and encourages the commendable efforts made by the French and Indonesian Co-Chairmen.

The aspirations of the Korean people for peaceful reunification are yet to be realized. We strongly encourage the two parties to continue the contacts and the dialogue which they have begun with a view to the reunification of Korea without foreign interference.

In regard to Cyprus we are pleased with the efforts made by the Secretary-General through his Special Representative. The independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the island must be guaranteed and its national unity and non-aligned status must be respected.

Concerning Central America we are following and we welcome the praiseworthy efforts made by the Presidents of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua to eliminate the combined impact of tension and violence and to establish the basis for true peace and co-operation. From the Contadora Agreements to those of Tesoro Beach and Tela, together with the Esquipulas II Agreements, we can gauge the determination with which the heads of State of the region are seeking means to establish a true peace. All of their initiatives and their efforts deserve the full support of this Assembly.

They deserve it all the more since a terrible scourge which is afflicting all of humanity and jeopardizing the fabric of society, has over the last few months and in a brutal way, focused world attention on this region of the world. Indeed, the fight against drug trafficking in Latin America has become total war, the

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outcome of which will determine the capacity of the international community to display strength, determination and solidarity. This challenge involves, without any doubt, the fate and future of mankind as a whole.

Niger gives its support to Colombia and to all countries involved in this battle, world-wide, and urges the international community to set in motion a consistent strategy to win this struggle, which involves and challenges us all.

Another problem, indeed another scourge, which is equally disturbing and whose innocent victims are increasing in numbers throughout the world, is that of international terrorism. Last year, Pan Am flight 103, from London to New York, crashed in Scotland, with several hundreds of victims, including the United Nations High Commissioner for Namibia. On behalf of Niger, we pay a tribute once again to his memory. A few months ago Colonel Higgins, a man working for peace, was assassinated in cold blood. Recently, an aircraft of the UTA company, on a flight between Brazzaville and Paris, exploded in mid-air over territory of my country, killing 171 innocent victims. These are only a few examples, but unfortunately there are many others. On behalf of President Ali Saibou and the people of Niger, I express here to all the States whose nationals perished in the tragedy of this UTA flight our deep sympathy and our sincere condolences.

Terrorism is the evil of our century. It strikes out blindly and indiscriminately. We must launch a real, unified crusade, a sacred union even, to combat terrorism, which today transcends national borders and political and ideological differences. Niger and its government are determined to make their contribution, however modest, to the struggle, which affects us all.

The present climate of détente, which has prevailed for at least a year in international relations, should encourage the world to reflect further on the ways

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and means of restoring peace wherever it has been disturbed, to preserve it everywhere it is threatened, and to strengthen it wherever it has been established.

The period of calm in the political arena is contrasted, however, very sharply with the world economic situation characterized, unfortunately, by a profound structural imbalance. In fact, unequal development between North and South is the main contradiction in the world today. It is clear however that peace and security are directly linked with development. Thus the climate of détente which prevails at this time in the world would be vain and have no future if the developing countries continue to have to deal with difficulties which are constantly aggravated through imbalance, inequality and flagrant injustice in their economic relations with the industrialized countries.

The gap between developed countries and developing countries is widening day by day. Whereas in the North there is talk of growth and expansion, in the South the talk is still about food self-sufficiency and structural adjustment. Men, women and children of Africa, of Asia, and of Latin America and the Caribbean, are living through the tragedy of hunger, poverty, illiteracy, natural disasters such as drought, desertification, plagues of locusts, cyclones, and so on. Societies that are just surviving, societies that are overwhelmed: that is the harsh reality of developing countries, of which, sadly, Africa has the greatest number.

The causes of this trend are to be found essentially in the collapse in commodity prices, the deterioration in terms of trade and the crushing weight of external debt. These phenomena, which have led to a net transfer of resources from developing to developed countries, and the multilateral financial institutions, are stripping States in the South of every chance of development, thus making them incapable of creating the investments necessary for real and lasting growth.

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Given this situation, our Governments have undertaken profound economic reforms. These reforms, carried out at great social and political cost, have not enjoyed, as was hoped and promised, the full support of the international community. Less than two years from the time it was, theoretically, to come to an end, the five-year United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development has still not really started.

As the Secretary-General stressed in his annual report on the work of the Organization, failure to find a solution could lead to a collapse of the social and political structures in many developing countries.

Whatever the case, it is urgently necessary that particular attention be given to the most vulnerable countries: the least developed countries, countries affected by drought and desertification, countries suffering from natural scourges and countries suffering from being land-locked, for whom a revival of economic and social development is a necessity.

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First, new and lasting solutions to the problem of debt must be found through continuing consideration by and co-operation between creditor and debtor countries in all appropriate forums. In this regard, Niger welcomes the plans and initiatives so far put forward and supports the idea of an international conference on Africa's external debt, as advocated by the Organization of African Unity. We welcome the decisions first of Canada, in 1987, and then of France this year, followed by those of Belgium and Italy, to cancel all debt relating to development assistance. Niger hopes - and this is our interest in an international conference on the debt - that those unilateral actions will be followed by collective measures, the fruit of a general and formal agreement between debtor countries and their creditor partners, both bilateral and multilateral.

Secondly, we must make a methodical and determined search for a new, more just and balanced international economic order in which economic and social security is guaranteed to all peoples. That new international economic order can be sought and achieved only within the framework of the North-South dialogue, which must be resumed.

In the same context we welcome and firmly support the proposal made in July 1989 by the Presidents of Egypt, Senegal and Venezuela and the Prime Minister of India concerning the organization of regular summit consultations between North and South on problems of common interest to the two hemispheres.

In this connection, the special session of the General Assembly devoted to international economic co-operation, in particular the revitalization of economic growth and development in developing countries, to be held in April 1990, will constitute, we believe, a propitious occasion and an appropriate framework for the reinvigoration of the North-South dialogue. This applies also to the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, to be held in Paris in 1990.

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We cherish the hope that these conferences and initiatives will contribute to the effective resumption of the North-South dialogue by offering the possibility of achieving an agreement on the nature of the problems facing developing countries and the approach to be taken towards solving them. Niger intends to participate actively and to make its contribution through concrete proposals that could lead to the emergence of a new era of healthy co-operation between North and South.

Moreover, we are particularly interested in the current negotiations on the new Lomé convention, which in our view should serve as a model both as regards efforts to stabilize the export earnings of developing countries, assistance in the diversification of their exports and the opening of markets to their products, and as regards development assistance.

I should like to conclude this section by expressing a concern that is widely shared by the countries represented here. I refer to the problem of children.

The difficult economic situation in developing countries is the reason for the situation of children in those countries, and particularly in Africa being so worrying, despite the importance and priority which our Governments accord to the protection and well-being of children, since they represent the future.

The results of efforts made by members of the international community, with the assistance of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and other international organizations, to ensure the survival, protection and full development of the potential of children are encouraging. It is essential, however, to pursue and intensify our efforts collectively. That is why Niger firmly supports not only the idea of convening with urgency a world summit devoted to children, but also the conclusion and adoption as a top priority by the General Assembly at the present session of a draft convention on the rights of the child.

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The environment crisis, which is felt throughout the world and seriously threatens life on our planet, is a question to which the international community should pay urgent attention. Today, the degradation of the ozone layer, the heating of the atmosphere and climatic changes are as much a reality as deforestation, desertification, erosion of arable lands, pollution of water and the atmosphere, the disappearance of fauna and flora, toxic wastes, and the transfer of hazardous wastes to developing countries.

The means of avoiding ecological disaster exist. We must use the available technology, improve it, and share it. To this end, it is imperative that Member States draw up co-ordinated plans of action to resolve the environmental crisis. That is a joint responsibility that calls for solidarity and it must be said that it is the duty of the industrialized countries to prevent or limit the damage caused to the world environment and to help our developing countries to achieve healthy development.

The United Nations conference on environment and development proposed for 1992 will provide an excellent opportunity to work out agreed action at the world level and to define new principles of international law concerning the protection and conservation of the environment and, in particular, effective international measures to prohibit the transfer of hazardous wastes to the territories of other countries.

As everybody knows and as is true of many African countries, the economic and social situation is the main and constant source of concern for the Government of Niger. Nevertheless, I am happy to inform the Assembly that President Ali Saibou has undertaken action aimed at the political evolution of our country with the ultimate objective of a return to constitutional life. Following the adoption by referendum of the National Charter in July 1987, the process of setting up a

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political system as the basis for the Second Republic of Niger entered its final, decisive phase with the establishment, in May 1989, of the National Movement for the Society in Development and the adoption by referendum on 24 September of a new Constitution.

As the President, General Ali Saibou, said, the National Movement for the Society in Development will be the appropriate forum for political expression in which the women and men of Niger will strive to affirm and defend their political, economic and social rights. The goal is the realization of participatory democracy guaranteeing the free expression of ideological opinions and sentiments, in order to achieve a constructive political awareness and the consolidation of a stable and integrated régime involving all the components of our nation.

The Constitution reaffirms the lay character and republican nature of the State and makes Niger a State of law that respects the fundamental freedoms of individuals. It ensures the equality of all before the law and enshrines the principle of the sovereignty of the people.

In that Constitution the people of Niger reaffirms its will to co-operate in friendship with all peoples that cherish peace, justice and freedom. It reiterates its total and permanent readiness to seek, with all the nations of the world, solutions to the innumerable ills that afflict the international community and to construct a world of peace, justice and progress in accordance with the ideals and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

Legislative and presidential elections will take place on 10 December next, with direct universal suffrage, and will complete the process of a return to normal constitutional life in Niger.

That is my delegation's contribution to the general debate at the forty-fourth session, which we wish the most outstanding success. We hope that it will

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strengthen the unshakable faith of our Governments in the ideals and objectives of the United Nations. We hope that it will instil in each of our peoples a planetary patriotism thanks to which we shall be able to succeed in our undertaking and build slowly but surely a single, indivisible world of peace, happiness and human dignity.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.