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PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE TWENTY-NINTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Wednesday, 11 October 1989, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. FEYDER (Luxembourg)
(Vice-President)

later: Mr. GARBA (Nigeria)
(President)

later: Mr. FEYDER (Luxembourg)
(Vice-President)

- General debate [9] (continued)

Statements made by

Mr. Olhaye (Djibouti)
Mr. Bwanali (Malawi)
Mr. Sey (Gambia)
Mr. Perrier (Haiti)
Mr. Nanton (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines)

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In the absence of the President, Mr. Feyder (Luxembourg), Vice-President, took the Chair.

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

AGENDA ITEM 9 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. OLHAYE (Djibouti): Allow me at the outset, on behalf of my delegation and on my own behalf, to extend our warm brotherly felicitations to Mr. Garba of Nigeria on his unanimous election to the presidency of the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly. His long-proved record in public and international service, coupled with his broad diplomatic skills and his keen sensitivity to the manifold issues before us, makes him uniquely qualified to guide us ably in our deliberations.

I wish also to take this opportunity to convey to his predecessor, Mr. Dante Caputo, our sincere appreciation of the fine leadership qualities he brought to bear on the conduct of the last session.

We are proud to recognize, as usual, the quiet but effective diplomacy deployed relentlessly by the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, in both his quest for enduring solutions to the numerous intractable conflicts and his efforts to enhance the awareness of crucial developmental problems. We highly value his unruffled stewardship as he perseveres in steering us carefully away from collision and confrontation towards co-operation and consensus-building.

(Mr. Olhaye, Djibouti)

The changes that are now taking place in the domestic and foreign policies of the countries of eastern Europe have fundamentally affected the climate of international relations. For more than four decades the world has been plunged in divisions and tensions as a result of political polarizations, which has inevitably placed a tremendous burden on mutual respect and concurrence. It was, indeed, an era characterized by a massive build-up of arms and troops as it naturally also embraced regional conflicts and the superiority of national security interests as a political strategy.

The developing countries, loosely lumped together as the third world, not only became the ideological proxies or testing grounds, but were coveted prizes in the underlying politics of the big-Power rivalry.

In the intervening years these poor countries have been alternately confused and exhilarated by the apparent choices open to them, so that often local, social and economic imperatives have been subordinated to broad political initiatives. Even bread-and-butter issues involving basic human needs have lacked the desired focus.

In taking stock, therefore, of our past problems we ought to be careful not to be misled by false impressions of accomplishment. The reality is that standards of living dropped, political instability increased and sustained economic growth diminished. In all too many instances this malaise was associated with the absence of reliable infrastructure, inadequate education, chaotic housing and social problems.

It is a relief of some kind that the new perceptions in international relations seem to underscore genuine concessions, relative predictability and enhanced credibility.

(Mr. Olhaye, Djibouti)

No one, perhaps, is better qualified than the Soviet leader, Mr. Gorbachev, who convincingly has stated that

"Soviet security cannot be achieved at the price of the insecurity of other countries."

All this has serious implications for the many countries with protracted conflicts in their backyards as well as across their borders. Whether lasting settlements to the long-simmering disputes are to be found at the local level, through super-Power co-operation or through the United Nations, this definitely is the most auspicious moment for peace. Let us seize it; let us give peace a chance. We are extremely encouraged by the positive developments in peace-making and peaceful overtures that have been demonstrated everywhere, at both the domestic and the regional level.

The gains thus achieved in the international political arena, both in atmosphere and in substance, ought to be translated into practical action. They need not remain the exclusive preserve of the super-Powers; nor need they be directed only towards political and economic liberalization in the East. It would be inconsistent with moral justice and social equity if the improved climate of East-West relations bred complacency and neglect of third-world issues.

In the words of David Newsom, former Under Secretary of State and current Director of the Institute for the Study of Diplomacy at Georgetown University:

"To declare victory now, and to imply that the end of the cold war makes issues in the third world of less relevance, is to ignore regions in which serious global problems have arisen in the past and may again."

The African continent faces formidable challenges in the 1990s in its efforts at improving the living standards and quality of life of its populations. The worsening economic performance, against the background of severe drought

(Mr. Olhaye, Djibouti)

conditions, deteriorating terms of trade, weak international demand and high debt-servicing costs, continues to be a source of grave concern. While the long-term growth prospect has policy implications for improving human capital, mobilizing domestic savings and promoting exports, we need at the same time to give recognition to the inherent structural problems.

Some of these will be insurmountable so long as external constraints - such as dwindling export earnings, a dearth of finance for development and the staggering debt-servicing burden - play a major role in the continuing unsatisfactory macro-economic performance of the African economies. These constraints severely limit efforts towards economic restructuring and policy reforms intended to enhance recovery and bring about sustained growth and development.

The adverse effects of the crippling external debts are far-reaching and unfathomable, with debt servicing swallowing up over 40 per cent of export earnings in the case of Africa. According to the Economic Report on Africa, 1989, of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa:

"The continuing rise in the volume of debt and debt ratio underscores the excessive burden imposed on African economies and their vulnerability to adverse external developments. The proper understanding of African debt crisis, therefore, requires it to be placed within the framework of the concomitant adverse developments in commodity prices and resource flows and the ongoing efforts of adjustment."

At this juncture, we wish to record our profound satisfaction at the timely and generous decisions to cancel the entire outstanding public debts of over 30 African countries by France, Canada, Belgium, Italy and the United States of America.

(Mr. Olhaye, Djibouti)

Most of the initiatives designed to alleviate the debt burden seem, regrettably, to share a common strategy linking debt relief or debt rescheduling arrangements to medium-term adjustment programmes, with a strong element of structural reforms, which, in International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank parlance,

"are aimed at reducing economic distortions and financial imbalances". More often than not such a strategy does not achieve the desired objective. Instead, it engenders untold hardship and domestic civil turmoil, not to mention, of course, the inevitable political dimension of the impact of structural adjustment.

Perhaps it is a matter not so much of deficiency in the strategy as of its true relevance to the level and pattern of development of most developing countries, in particular in Africa, where zero economic growth has been the characteristic trend, despite the presence of the largest per capita number of foreign advisers in the world. That undeniably lies at the heart of the problem. If that is not the case one may well ask why it is that economic and social conditions in Africa today are significantly worse than 25 years ago given the substantial infusions of financial and technical assistance from the World Bank, the IMF and the developed countries.

It is high time, therefore, that the premier international development agencies realized the uniqueness of this group of countries and devised an appropriate, novel philosophical basis and theoretical framework for a specific, far-reaching, responsive and humane development strategy. Needless to say, this requires courage and iconoclastic vision on the part of those institutions.

(Mr. Olhaye, Djibouti)

The Belgrade Final Declaration of the Non-Aligned Movement cautions that "there can be no stability, nor better prospects for the world without reducing the disparities in the level of global development". We are hopeful reason will prevail to stave off a looming crisis that may engulf an important segment of mankind.

The United Nations can be a useful forum for addressing the grievous nature of this problem, which encompasses virtually every area of life, including agricultural production, industry, economics, finance, trade, education, infrastructure, research, housing and health care.

The world continues to seethe under the enduring effects of the thorniest areas of contention, despite the improvement in the international political climate.

In the Middle East, the intifadah in occupied Palestine is now entering its twenty-second month with carnage, brutality and bloodshed continuing unabated. The Palestinians live in a precarious situation of perpetual risk. That the Palestinian problem as yet is not susceptible to dialogue or to a properly structured international conference simply attests to the dismal failure of international diplomacy.

In our view all alternatives have been tried. In place of practical political accommodation and early progress towards direct negotiations we are saddened by the infusion of yet another deliberate distraction and confusion by Mr. Shamir - this time a tailor-made election proposal which is nothing more than a fait accompli, a deception, indeed a prolongation of the ugly status quo. Naturally, it had to fall on its face. Thanks to Egyptian diplomatic dexterity, President Mubarak, looking for ways to keep the momentum alive, unveiled not an alternative to Shamir's plan but a 10-point agenda to serve as the basis for comprehensive dialogue. It received wide support from Palestinians, the Israeli Labour Party and the United States Administration. By now, however, we are all aware of its fate; it has

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become the latest casualty, like the series of peace initiatives, plans and proposals in the past, of the so-called inner cabinet of the Israeli Government.

Under the circumstances one doubts whether Israel will ever move in the direction of peace before violence destroys all prospects of peace. For now it seems that the only viable policy option left for Israel, in the words of an Israeli Cabinet Minister, is one that promises the continuation of "force, might and beatings".

The widening gulf of mistrust in the Middle East poses serious challenges to the easing of tensions between the super-Powers. We urge the United States to use its considerable influence over Israel in order to place realistic limits on its recalcitrance. More and more, Israel has become impervious to international outcry and moral crusade, has become increasingly impervious to General Assembly and Security Council resolutions and decisions, and also to international pressures; it is content only in heaping up international wrath. On the contrary, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the sole representative of the Palestinian people, has amply demonstrated to the world that it can be a credible partner in an international peace agreement. Its historic policy change embracing the cessation of all hostilities and acceptance of the two-State principle based on relevant United Nations resolutions, required unequivocal reciprocity by Israel, in accepting the land-for-peace principle and restoring full political rights to the Palestinians, including the right to self-determination.

It is ironic that the opening offered by the PLO should reinforce Israel's intransigence. We believe the PLO position offers a reasonable basis for fairness, equity and justice. Outright rejection of the notion of a Palestinian State is wholly unjustified. Pressing for more and more unilateral concessions by the PLO without corresponding flexibility on the part of Israel would not at all serve the cause of peace.

(Mr. Olhaye, Djibouti)

In Lebanon, urban tank wars and artillery duels have taken their heavy toll of the helpless civilian population. Fourteen years of sectarian civil strife, compounded by proxy wars waged on its soil, have caused untold destruction and suffering and created confusion, division and anarchy. Lebanon's agony is bound to persist until Lebanese authority is fully restored. We fully endorse the initiatives of the Arab League Tripartite Committee for the restoration of Lebanon's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

We welcome the positive developments leading to the independence of Namibia. Nearly three decades of continuous diplomatic efforts to overcome the impasse have finally borne fruit, and Namibia will soon take its place among the free nations of the world. From the start of implementation of the United Nations plan for Namibian independence in accordance with Security Council resolution 435 (1978), numerous but inevitable set-backs were encountered: to mention a few, the menace of the Koevoet, the notorious counter-insurgency force, registration irregularity and the lack of secrecy of the ballot box. We however take pride at the reassurance by the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) of its commitment to peace, human rights and economic pragmatism. Such positive spirit of leadership will pave the way for a genuine national reconciliation.

In South Africa, the word "change" is being overplayed on the psyche and emotions of the black majority. The new President continues to assure his country and the world that an era of change lies ahead. Whether this is posturing and mere style or a prelude to a fundamental reform programme, the coming months will tell. He has been associated with the introduction and defence of apartheid laws. Will he now be the agent of change that the country deeply needs for the release of Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners, and negotiations with the African National Congress of South Africa (ANC) about a post-apartheid constitution? We

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are indeed sceptical about his commitment to deliver real change. South Africa remains a country beset by deep mistrust and divisions. Over 3 million black South Africans have been forcibly removed, thus causing intense suffering and social disruption. A common feature of apartheid is the redrawing of boundaries of tribal homelands resulting in deprivation and violent repression often associated with torture, beating and maiming.

Much needs to be done, not least to translate De Klerk's platitudes and ambiguities into a meaningful reform programme. It is inconceivable, so long as the reprehensible system of apartheid is in place, that it would be feasible to bring voteless blacks into government or even to build a new South Africa with full but unspecified political rights for the black majority.

We strongly urge the scrapping of repressive measures and institutional racism, the end of undiluted minority rule, affirmation of political and economic rights and the creation of democratic institutions. When talking of change or hope, we cannot help reminding ourselves of the immortal prophecy of the late Alan Paton, that indefatigable literary giant and anti-apartheid activist who, over 30 years ago, wrote: "South Africa is the kind of country where one is filled with hope on Monday only to be catapulted into utter despair on Tuesday".

(Mr. Olhaye, Djibouti)

With Mr. De Klerk, it is "business as usual" so far. In the absence of genuine and far-reaching reforms, the international community must continue to intensify its pressure for the total abolition of apartheid.

The situation in the Gulf remains unpredictable and vulnerable. The peace process needs a new impetus. We are satisfied that, under the scrutiny of the United Nations peace-keeping forces, the cease-fire is holding and further reckless destruction of property and loss of precious lives have been thwarted. We deeply regret, however, the lack of progress towards the full implementation of Security Council resolution 598 (1987). The prevailing impasse of "no peace and no war" has dangerous implications for sustainable peace in the region. We believe that it is in the interests of both Iraq and Iran to demonstrate more readiness and flexibility to negotiate in good faith, so that the exchange of prisoners of war can proceed and important initiatives leading to the normalization of relations can be undertaken.

Djibouti had great hope that the Paris Conference on Kampuchea would bring an end to the conflict and tension, and pave the way for the restoration of full democratic rights to the people. There can be no enduring stability in South-East Asia until foreign forces are totally withdrawn and the Cambodian people is left to determine its own destiny freely. We urge, therefore, a comprehensive peace settlement to the Cambodian question.

With respect to Western Sahara, we support the efforts of the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity directed towards the search for a durable solution to the problem.

We are a few months away from the second anniversary of the conclusion of the Geneva Agreements on Afghanistan and there are as yet no prospects for peace in sight. We believe that peace and tranquillity will continue to elude the Afghan people in the absence of a representative and popularly elected Government.

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As for the Korean peninsula, we are quite encouraged by the continuing dialogue between the two States, and hope that these exchanges will effectively contribute to an improvement in relations and further enhance the prospects for peaceful unification. In accordance with the principle of universality and consistent with the earnest desire to ease tensions in the peninsula, we support the admission of both Koreas, separately or simultaneously, to full membership of the United Nations.

Alarming environmental hazards pose or threaten to pose increasingly severe threats to the human condition and to our survival. We tend to treat environmental issues, such as degradation, resource depletion, hazardous solid wastes and pollution, as mere passing phenomena. Disasters like desertification, destruction of tropical rain forests, drought and famine have left a lasting impact in large parts of the world, particularly Africa. We are convinced that environmental issues cannot be separated from economic development, and that realization should provide the desired impetus for a concerted, collaborative effort at every level. It was in response to that common concern that six countries in East Africa forged environmental unity by the establishment of the Inter-Governmental Authority for Drought and Development (IGADD). Headquartered in Djibouti, IGADD is fast becoming a catalyst for the formulation of appropriate policies and projects in every member country. We wish to record our gratitude to the many countries and organizations that continue to provide IGADD with direct institutional support and needed financial resources.

In the view of our President, His Excellency Mr. Hassan Gouled Aptidon,

"The real enemies of men are not other men but rather hunger, disease, lack of water, homelessness and poverty".

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Those priority basic human needs require far more serious attention and allocation of adequate resources.

Despite satisfactory advances being made in all areas of development, Djibouti is still poor and far from achieving many of its goals. Unfavourable climatic conditions, declining economic activity, the constant influx of refugees, overstrained social services, and external constraints are some of the principal factors that militate against sound and steady progress. The destructive rainfalls and subsequent flooding that occurred earlier this year in Djibouti left behind heavy physical damage to vital infrastructures.

We are deeply grateful to the friendly countries and organizations that responded swiftly and generously with critically needed medical and relief supplies. We are confident that the international community will continue to support Djibouti's genuine development efforts.

In conclusion, I wish to state that the Republic of Djibouti has a vital interest in peace and in helping to build up a climate of confidence in our part of the world. For a young nation, small and lacking in major resources, the maintenance of a reasonable degree of internal harmony and the pursuance of a realistic and prudent foreign policy go hand in hand. Our positive regional and international diplomacy will continue to be matched by pragmatic domestic policies.

Mr. BWANALI (Malawi): I should like, on behalf of the Malawi delegation, to congratulate Ambassador Garba on his unanimous election to the presidency of the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly. He brings with him to that important position well-tested political and diplomatic skills, as well as a widely acknowledged wealth of experience in international affairs. We are already aware of his outstanding achievements in the many important posts he has held in the service both of his own country and of international organizations, including the United Nations, relating to the promotion of international understanding and

(Mr. Bwanali, Malawi)

co-operation. We are more than confident, therefore, that under his leadership and guidance the Assembly will be able to achieve success by aiming for pragmatic resolutions in its work. I should like to assure him of the Malawi delegation's full co-operation at all times.

My delegation also congratulates his predecessor, Mr. Dante Caputo, former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Argentina, on the effective manner in which he presided over the forty-third session. During that session the General Assembly was able to accomplish almost all of the work that had been assigned to it. We believe that much of the success was due to the business-like manner in which Mr. Caputo approached the duties and responsibilities entrusted to him, as well as the firmness and fairness with which he directed the Assembly's deliberations. My delegation wishes him well in all his future endeavours.

I should like to express the Malawi Government's satisfaction at the manner in which the Secretary-General, Mr. Perez de Cuellar, has continued to manage and direct the affairs of the United Nations. The past 12 months have seen yet greater efforts to ensure further improvement in the operations of the Organization and in the management of its financial and other resources.

Meanwhile, we note the patience and diligence with which the Secretary-General and his staff have carried out the mandates already given them by the General Assembly and the Security Council, especially in respect to the solution of already existing problems. We have also noted with satisfaction the timely initiatives taken by the Secretary-General to facilitate the search for formulas for solutions to the problems that have emerged since the last session of the Assembly, thus effectively helping to reduce international tensions and conflicts while at the same time promoting understanding and co-operation.

(Mr. Bwanali, Malawi)

My delegation wishes to assure the Secretary-General and his staff of the Malawi Government's full support for their invaluable contribution to the preservation of international peace and to the promotion of international understanding, co-operation and development.

My delegation would like to express its sense of encouragement at the many signs of apparently positive developments we have observed during the past 12 months in the sphere of international peace. For, while some incidents of tension and conflict have occurred during that period, in general the international atmosphere seems to have been marked by relative tranquillity.

Although there would seem to be cause for optimism on the political plane, the situation in the economic sphere does not, alas, seem to have provided us with as much reason to feel the same kind of encouragement. While some very interesting initiatives undertaken or proposed by countries of the industrialized North have been noted, North-South relations have remained unbalanced in favour of the North. At the same time the economic situation of most developing countries has continued its rapid deterioration, with the consequent threat to their political and social stability.

The Malawi delegation wishes to join those who have spoken earlier in expressing pleasure and encouragement at the fact that a number of questions of conflict and disputes that have preoccupied the international community may very soon be removed from the Assembly's agenda. In this context we have in mind, among others things, the question of the Territory of Namibia, which, under the supervision of the United Nations, now seems well advanced on the road to independence. We in Malawi welcomed the news of the successful conclusion of the agreements signed in New York in December 1988, which provided for the withdrawal of Cuban and South African troops from Angola and facilitated the implementation of Security Council resolution 435 (1978) on the independence of Namibia.

(Mr. Bwanali, Malawi)

Despite some of the difficulties that threatened to derail the process of transition in Namibia, we believe that it can now be confidently expected that the elections for the Constituent Assembly will take place in November, as scheduled, and that in the New Year the new State of Namibia will finally be born. Of those who might still feel tempted to impede the process of transition to independence we ask these questions. Have the people of Namibia not waited long enough for their country's independence? Have the people of Namibia not already paid more than sufficiently for their own birthright to freedom?

We would like to pay a special tribute to the Secretary-General and to those serving in the United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) for their courage and determination in striving for the faithful implementation of the independence process in accordance with Security Council resolution 435 (1978). For its part, and in recognition of the importance of this independence process, as well as in the hope of actively helping to ensure its fulfilment, my country has decided to join the Organization of African Unity Observer Group in Namibia. Meanwhile, the Malawi delegation looks forward to seeing Namibia take its place in the Assembly at its next session.

When I had the honour of addressing the Assembly at the forty-third session I observed that most of the breakthroughs that had been achieved on a number of political questions during the previous 12 months were due mainly to co-operation between the super-Powers, the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. In this connection we expressed the hope that the two super-Powers would also turn their attention to two of the seemingly most intractable problems confronting the international community: namely, the political deadlock in the Middle East and the dangerous situation in southern Africa arising from South Africa's campaign to preserve its policy of apartheid.

(Mr. Bwanali, Malawi)

We in Malawi have noted with much encouragement the apparent indications that the super-Powers may indeed have begun to co-operate on these issues, for some very significant new developments have occurred, hinting at the possibility of new approaches to the two questions.

With regard to southern Africa we have witnessed during the past 10 months a number of encouraging developments. For us in Malawi, perhaps the most significant aspect of those developments is the apparent new desire for peaceful, negotiated solutions to existing political disputes and conflicts.

In this context we welcomed the agreement in June by the leaders of Angola and UNITA - the Union for the Total Independence of Angola - which provides for a cease-fire between the Angolan military forces and those of UNITA and also calls for negotiations for a settlement of the political differences between the MPLA Government and UNITA.

My delegation has noted that despite the difficulties that have impeded progress efforts continue in the search for ways to resume the process of negotiation. We support those efforts because we believe that negotiation is the only vehicle for reaching a permanent, equitable settlement.

We have been similarly encouraged by recent positive announcements with regard to the political situation in Mozambique. Far too many human lives and too much invaluable property have been lost, while Mozambique's social and economic development has been severely impeded as a result of the insurgency by RENAMO rebels during the past 14 years. We believe that it is time that the people of Mozambique were finally able to begin to enjoy the peace, stability and socio-economic development that they had expected to come after their long and bitter war of liberation.

(Mr. Bwanali, Malawi)

As one of the neighbouring countries that have also borne part of the brunt of the conflict in Mozambique, Malawi fervently hopes that the invitation issued by President Joachim Chissano to RENAMO to join his Government in seeking a negotiated solution will bear fruit. We support the Mozambique Government's bold initiative on this matter. I should therefore like to take this opportunity to declare Malawi's readiness to render such assistance as it can to contribute to the furtherance of the current initiatives and to their successful conclusion.

The countries in our subregion of southern Africa are very closely interlinked, historically, politically, socially and economically. Consequently, instability or conflict in any one country invariably has an effect on the others as well. We have already seen the damaging impact that the conflicts in Angola and Mozambique have had on neighbouring countries. Similarly, the tensions and conflicts engendered by apartheid inside South Africa have left an indelible mark on all the southern African States. Therefore, any further escalation of the violence that now pervades that country would in our view not only have adverse implications for the future development of South Africa itself but also greatly worsen the political and economic difficulties now being experienced by its neighbours.

It is for this reason that we in Malawi have welcomed the signs of apparent rethinking by the Government, as well as by some anti-apartheid movements, on how best to bring about political change in South Africa. We wish to express the hope that these developments will provide the much-needed impetus for a rapid movement towards a solution to the problem.

With regard to the Middle East, we in Malawi believe that the declaration last December by the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) of its recognition of the State of Israel removed the main obstacle to any meaningful search for a solution

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to the political problems of that region. But that declaration, in our view, constitutes only one of the prerequisites for any permanent and equitable solution. The others include the right of the State of Israel, as well as all other States in the region, to live within secure and recognized boundaries and the right of the Palestinian people to their own homeland.

We note that in the wake of the PLO declaration recognizing the State of Israel and affirming that organization's readiness to enter into a dialogue on the political future of the Palestinian people a number of interesting proposals have been presented on how to resolve the problems of the Middle East. We welcome the dialogue, both direct and indirect, between the various parties to the Middle East question that has been reported in recent months, and we sincerely hope that all these developments will continue and that they will contribute towards a universally acceptable formula for solving the Middle East problem.

Another matter that we believe needs the concerted attention of the major Powers, particularly the super-Powers, is the situation in Lebanon. In this connection we are pleased to note the resumption of the pan-Arab efforts to bring the two sides in that country's 13-year-old civil war together to negotiate a permanent peace agreement. None the less, we wish to appeal to all those with an interest and influence in the Lebanese situation to give this question the most urgent attention.

(Mr. Swanali, Malawi)

In the mean time, we should like to observe that in order to be viable any solution to this question must include the total withdrawal of all foreign troops and other foreign elements from Lebanon. For until all external forces end their physical presence in that country and refrain from encouraging intercommunal rivalry among the Lebanese people, peace will not return to that land. We therefore appeal to all of Lebanon's neighbours to respect its sovereignty and refrain from interfering in its internal affairs.

With regard to the problem of Western Sahara, we are encouraged by the continuing co-operation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU). Indeed we welcome some of the Secretary-General's most recent initiatives on this matter. However, the Malawi delegation notes with deep regret that, despite the optimism which was engendered by Morocco's and the POLISARIO's acceptance last year of Mr. Perez de Cuellar's proposals for bringing about a solution to the question, there has apparently been no further progress. We believe that time is of the essence, and that the time to act is now.

My delegation continues to be optimistic that lasting peace will eventually come to the various parts of the world currently locked in conflicts. The Malawi Government therefore supports the continuing efforts aimed at finding solutions in the various other areas of tension and conflict in the Mediterranean, Asia and in South-East Asia and in Central America. We especially welcome the withdrawal of all foreign troops from some of these areas as a first step towards finding durable and lasting solutions to their respective problems.

While the resolution of all these existing regional conflicts - as well as others that might yet occur - could bring some peace, this in our view would not by itself assure permanent peace or guarantee international security. It is necessary to eliminate the causes of differences between nations, as well as the tools of war

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that tend to encourage nations to turn differences and tensions into armed conflict. Hence to us the adage that "If you want peace, prepare for war" is no longer a sound principle upon which nations should base their security. We believe, rather, that security today demands that the adage be changed to "If you want peace, prepare for peace".

In this context, the Malawi delegation is encouraged to note that concerted international effort in search of ways to bring about total and comprehensive global disarmament remains a high priority, despite the many setbacks often encountered. We applaud the important role the United Nations plays in keeping this question at the centre of international attention.

We are also encouraged by the steady increase in co-operation between the super-Powers in matters of disarmament. The initiatives and measures they have embarked upon, or on which agreements have been reached, in particular with respect to the elimination or the reduction of certain types and classes of weapons in their own respective arsenals, have had a positive effect on the world-wide campaign for disarmament.

Permit me, however, to express the Malawi Government's hope that the super-Powers will realize that, while the elimination of all types of arms is indeed necessary and urgent, the use of outer space only for purposes that will increase man's knowledge of his world in order to promote development and welfare here on his own planet will enhance the desired goal of global disarmament and security.

It is a matter of concern to my delegation that the situation on the economic front, especially for the majority of the developing countries, has continued to worsen despite clear warnings of the frightful implications for global peace and security. The debt burden plaguing the developing countries has reached a crisis

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point; the reverse net flow of funds from developing to developed countries now runs into billions of dollars. The terms of trade have become totally unrealistic. The prices of primary goods produced by the countries of the developing South have continued their downward spiral, while higher tariff barriers against their finished goods have risen in the markets of the developed countries of the world.

We have of course closely followed developments since the Montreal Declaration by the industrialized group of States in 1988, and we have also noted with some interest recent initiatives, including those taken by the United States of America, Canada and France, aimed at easing the difficulties of countries facing heavier debt burdens.

Welcome as such initiatives may be, they can only serve as palliatives in the face of the enormous economic problems facing the affected countries. Moreover, we are rather uncertain about the helpfulness or justice of the conditionalities, such as the acceptance of an externally prescribed structural adjustment programme, attached to some of these initiatives. It is especially so in view of the now accepted fact of the non-universal applicability or effectiveness of adjustment schemes. Indeed, even where there has been an apparent positive effect, such as in the seemingly successful balancing of national books of accounts, the social cost of implementing such programmes has been very high and fraught with great political risks for the Governments concerned.

My Delegation wishes to recall that in its mid-term review in 1988 of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990, the General Assembly pointed out the consensus that the structural adjustment programmes currently prescribed by such international financial institutions as the International Monetary Fund, especially in the case of Africa,

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have tended to exacerbate rather than ameliorate the economic situation plaguing the continent.

It was for that reason that the African States took the initiative to consider the possibility of alternative adjustment programmes or mechanisms. The African Ministers of Finance and Economic Planning recently adopted, and the OAU Heads of State or Government Summit endorsed, the Alternative Strategy for African Economic Revitalization Framework. The second session of the Economic and Social Council has already considered that Strategy, which is due to be presented before this Assembly. It has been studied by experts from international financial institutions, including the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, which found it viable as an alternative to the current structural adjustment mechanism. The Malawi delegation sincerely hopes that the General Assembly will find it possible to lend it its support.

In the light of factors such as that Strategy and other alternative ways of dealing with the economic problems, the Malawi delegation considers that the insistence upon programmes presented by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank as pre-conditions for receiving economic relief is not completely helpful or fully just.

The economic crisis facing the developing countries cannot, as experience has shown, be redressed by merely looking at only one aspect in isolation of other aspects. We have consistently stated that the most effective way to deal with the problem is to approach it in a global manner, addressing all of its aspects together, both from the perspective of the developing countries and also from that of the developed countries. Only in that way can a comprehensive and effective formula for solving the existing problems be reached.

(Mr. Ewanali, Malawi)

It is for this reason that my delegation looks forward to the special session of the General Assembly on economic co-operation to be held in April 1990. It is our sincere hope that the special session will provide an opportunity for the creditor nations of the North and the debtor States of the South to work together in finding better solutions to these problems. As has been observed by economic and development experts, the problems currently afflicting developing States have an equally negative impact on the economies of the developed. A resolution of these problems would therefore be of mutual benefit to all. The onus of finding an effective solution is ipso facto, the mutual responsibility of both developed and developing countries.

On behalf of the Malawi Government my delegation wishes to express its satisfaction over the apparent improvement in the financial resources of our Organization. We are also encouraged to learn from the Secretary-General's annual report that greater effort has been made by member States with arrears on the regular budget to settle their accounts. We also note that the programme of restructuring, begun in 1987, is proceeding smoothly and in most cases is producing the desired effects.

The United Nations ability to function effectively and provide the various services it has been mandated to perform depends on having adequate financial and human resources. The continued improvement in the level of funds available to the Organization, and the improvement in the quality of the personnel who serve it, assure us that the United Nations will be able to continue to provide the invaluable assistance that is so important in enabling countries such as Malawi to carry out their national programmes for social and economic development.

(Mr. Bwanali, Malawi)

In this context, I would avail myself of this opportunity to express the Malawi Government's appreciation for the assistance it has continued to receive from the United Nations. My Government is particularly grateful at this time for the special assistance that has been rendered through various inter-agency programmes co-ordinated by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in connection with the refugee problem which continues to confront Malawi. In this connection I should further like to express the Malawi Government's encouragement and satisfaction with the co-operation which it has also received from bilateral and other donors.

As the General Assembly might be aware, Malawi has since 1985 provided refuge for Mozambican refugees, who now number about 700,000, which is equivalent to about 8 per cent of our national population. While we are most willing to offer hospitality and refuge to our brothers and sisters, Malawi's economic capacity is very limited and the large number of refugees has seriously strained the country's socio-economic infrastructure.

This Assembly might wish to know that as a result of the influx there has arisen a problem of internal displacement of Malawians who have been compelled to move from the areas now occupied by the refugees. This has created even greater problems for the Government because, while external assistance has been generous, it could not address the problems of land.

Permit me to inform donor agencies, both bilateral and multilateral, that in the case of Malawi the assistance being provided for the refugee community cannot be and is by no means rechannelled to benefit the indigenous people of Malawi. It is for this reason that my delegation would wish to appeal once again, on behalf of the Malawi Government, for increased international assistance so as to enable it to provide relief for refugees who have flocked to Malawi.

(Mr. Bwanali, Malawi)

In concluding my remarks, I should like to express once again to the President our best wishes for his own personal success and also for a very fruitful outcome to the Assembly's deliberations.

Mr. SEY (Gambia): Let me first of all extend to Mr. Garba my warmest congratulations on his election as President of the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly. His unanimous election is a clear testimony of the high personal regard, esteem and confidence which he enjoys in this Assembly given his vast experience as a seasoned diplomat, a fine soldier and a statesman. It is equally a recognition of the respect we all have for his great country and people. My country enjoys most cordial and very special relations with the sister Republic of Nigeria and we are indeed proud of the leading role his country has always played and continues to play in the cause of freedom, justice and peace. While wishing him all success in his presidency, I would like to assure him of my delegation's fullest support and co-operation throughout the session.

I would also like to express our sincere thanks and gratitude to his predecessor, Mr. Dante Caputo of Argentina, for the efficient and successful manner in which he directed the work of the forty-third session of the General Assembly. To the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, I salute his unswerving efforts and relentless pursuit of the promotion of world peace and international understanding.

The forty-fourth session is taking place at a momentous time in the history of international political relations, when the quest for collective security and peace has witnessed very positive developments, particularly in the prevailing atmosphere of détente between the two super-Powers. It is often said that in world diplomacy things move glacially; but the recent positive achievements in resolving regional conflicts are in themselves unprecedented. The commencement of the independence process for Namibia, the cease-fire in the Gulf and the progress towards resolving

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the Kampuchean problem are achievements of which our Organization can rightly be proud, and it is the fervent hope of my delegation that this encouraging trend in seeking peaceful solutions to conflicts between nations will be further consolidated in the years ahead. The Gambia believes that in the United Nations we have the machinery for the peaceful settlement of differences among nations; the machinery for replacing mistrust with mutual confidence, for engendering understanding instead of suspicion, and above all the machinery that can institutionalize dialogue in place of confrontation as a means of settling disputes among nations.

My delegation also believes that the achievements made so far in resolving regional conflicts will be negated so long as the threat of nuclear destruction continues to hang over our heads like the sword of Damocles. That is why we note with satisfaction that disarmament stays on the agenda as a high priority in world politics. The United Nations has an exceedingly important role to play in establishing a climate conducive to meaningful dialogue on this critical issue. The elimination of weapons of mass destruction and an end to the arms race will not only serve the cause of world peace and security, but will also release human and material resources that could be devoted to meaningful and beneficial social and economic programmes in developing countries. In this vein, President Bush's declaration before this Assembly that the United States is ready to destroy over 80 per cent of its existing chemical weapons stock even before the conclusion of the chemical weapons convention and the Soviet Union's positive response to this proposal is an unprecedented occurrence in super-Power relations that should be applauded by all Members of the United Nations.

However, those of us in the developing world should admit that the end of the arms race by the super-Powers would be meaningless in terms of mobilizing more resources for national development if those countries themselves continue to spend

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colossal sums out of their national budgets on defence expenditures. The disproportionate amounts being spent on military expenditures by developing countries not only diverts valuable resources from national development but also puts into question our declared aim of peaceful resolution of disputes.

It is regrettable that the notable achievements made in the resolution of regional conflicts or in creating a salutary atmosphere in international political relations generally are not reflected in the situation in southern Africa, where the racist minority régime in Pretoria continues to pursue its odious policy of apartheid at home and its aggression against the front-line States, thereby causing havoc and untold suffering in the region.*

* The President took the Chair.

(Mr. Sey, Gambia)

The pernicious and outrageous system of apartheid remains an unacceptable affront to the civilized world and should be met with a firm and uncompromising response on the part of the international community. Attempts at appeasing, persuading or pampering the racist Pretoria régime in order to make it change its policy can only fortify that régime in its defiance of world opinion. It is true that the wind of change blowing across South Africa has raised some optimism about the final demise of apartheid. But it must be admitted that without the courageous and determined stand of the freedom fighters of South Africa under the leadership of the African National Congress (ANC) and other democratic and popular movements, coupled with the limited economic sanctions against the apartheid régime, there would not have been the trend towards change in that country. There is need, therefore, to maintain and intensify the pressure for the abolition of apartheid. The racist régime should not be left to proceed at its own pace. The peoples of South Africa, as has been demonstrated by the current campaign of defiance of segregationist laws and regulations, cannot wait indefinitely for the reform of a system that is unreformable and must be destroyed. Freedom is an inalienable right; it cannot be negotiated or dished out in small morsels over a period of time.

The Gambia is firmly convinced that one of the most effective and peaceful ways of compelling Pretoria to enter into immediate and substantive negotiations with the authentic representatives of the majority population is the imposition of comprehensive and mandatory sanctions against the racist régime.

The Gambia has been following with keen interest the implementation of Security Council resolution 435 (1978), and we are gravely concerned about the obstacles and impediments that South Africa continues to place on the track of the independence process. Because of the continuing irregularities in the implementation of resolution 435 (1978), the minimum conditions for holding free and fair elections are still absent in Namibia. The continued existence of the

(Mr. Sey, Gambia)

notorious paramilitary Koevoet elements, which under different quises harass and intimidate the local population in a reign of terror, is designed to disrupt the electoral campaign of the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) and enhance the electoral chances of Pretoria's puppets in Windhoek. This is a blatant sabotage of the independence process and is totally unacceptable. But what can one expect from a régime suffering from moral bankruptcy and institutional decadence? My delegation would therefore urge the Security Council to continue to intensify its efforts to bring pressure to bear on South Africa to comply with resolutions 435 (1978) and 640 (1989), which will guarantee free and fair elections in Namibia leading to the early independence of the Territory.

Apart from the critical situation in South Africa, the continent is still beset by the persistence of a number of regional disputes. It is our fervent hope and desire that these long-standing problems and the new ones that might emerge will finally be resolved within the framework of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). The Gambia will give its full support to the endeavours of the current Chairman of the OAU, President Mohammed Hosni Mubarak of Egypt, to find a peaceful solution to these disputes.

On Afghanistan, my delegation is very happy to note that foreign troops have now been withdrawn from that war-torn country and it is our hope that favourable conditions will be created to guarantee the safe return of all refugees to their country, thereby ensuring the restoration of peace and stability to Afghanistan. Once again I should like to take the opportunity to pay a tribute to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan for the valuable role it has played in providing refuge to millions of displaced Afghans and also for its endeavours to create an atmosphere conducive to the resolution of the Afghan problem.

(Mr. Sey, Gambia)

It is also gratifying to note the suspension of hostilities in the conflict between Iran and Iraq, a conflict that has bedevilled the international community by the intensity of its destructiveness. We strongly urge the two parties to co-operate in the implementation of Security Council resolution 598 (1987) so that the peace process can result in the attainment of the desired objective of a genuine and durable peace in the Gulf. An end to this fratricidal conflict not only would enable Iran and Iraq to undertake the much-needed national reconstruction, but would also remove the threat of the internationalization of the conflict in a region of strategic political and economic importance.

The situation in Kampuchea continues to be of concern to my delegation. Despite the continued efforts of the international community in the search for a peaceful solution to this protracted conflict that has resulted in immense suffering, the problem still remains unresolved. It is hoped that the recently suspended Paris Conference on Kampuchea will resume in the near future and that a negotiated comprehensive settlement will be achieved, a settlement based on the independence, sovereignty and non-aligned status of Kampuchea. A genuine withdrawal of foreign troops from Kampuchea will, it is hoped, accelerate the peace process in that country, and my delegation calls on all parties to the dispute to continue to support the efforts of the United Nations and the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) to resolve the problem of Kampuchea.

With regard to the situation in the Korean peninsula, the Gambia welcomes the process of dialogue initiated to ensure the reunification of that divided country, and we are of the view that if membership in the United Nations would facilitate the process of unification the international community should support the admission of the Koreans into the Organization, in accordance with the principles of universality.

(Mr. Sey, Gambia)

In the Middle East, the situation continues to pose a grave threat to international peace and security. My delegation wishes to reiterate the Gambia Government's conviction that the Palestine question is at the crux of the Middle East problem and that a just and permanent solution can be achieved only if the legitimate and inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to an independent homeland, are restored. The Palestinians have suffered for decades and have made many sacrifices in pursuit of their aspirations, as manifested by the 22-month-old intifadah. They have also made many concessions in the search for peace and security. These peace overtures are highly laudable, and we once again call on Israel to respond positively in order that the genuine search for peace in the Middle East can take off. We are convinced that unless the attitude of Israel changes the Middle East situation will continue to be a threat to world peace and security. It is for that reason that the United Nations must be closely involved in finding a solution to the problem in the Middle East, and in this connection my delegation renews its call for a United Nations-sponsored international conference on the Middle East with the full participation of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) as the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

In the eastern Mediterranean, the Gambia will do all it can to encourage contacts and negotiations between the representatives of the two communities in Cyprus under the good offices of the United Nations Secretary-General. We therefore fully support the search for a mutually acceptable political arrangement which recognizes the equal status of the two communities in Cyprus.

(Mr. Sey, Gambia)

The seriously deteriorating situation in Lebanon gives cause for genuine concern. We therefore urge the warring factions to put an end to this unduly protracted conflict, which, in addition to the heavy toll in terms of human and material costs, continues to pose a grave menace to the peace and stability of the region. We believe that any solution guaranteeing Lebanon's sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity must include the complete withdrawal of all foreign troops from Lebanese territory. In this spirit we express our support for the peace plan of the Tripartite Committee of Arab Heads of State, comprising the Kingdoms of Saudi Arabia and Morocco and the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, and we welcome the results achieved so far.

Although the current session is taking place at a time of considerable improvement in the international political climate, deep structural imbalances in the world economy continue to characterize the current international economic environment. The most serious and critical of these imbalances is the widening socio-economic gap between the developed and the developing countries.

These negative trends not only threaten the socio-economic and political fabric of developing countries but also will endanger international political security and peace and will undoubtedly undermine the positive effects of the ongoing relaxation of world tension.

The current decade has seen very painful structural adjustments on the part of several developing countries, particularly the least developed ones in Africa. These countries, while already facing formidable structural handicaps, experienced a sharp deterioration in their overall socio-economic situation, in spite of significant domestic policy measures undertaken by them pursuant to the declared objectives and commitments contained in the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development (1986-1990), which was adopted in 1986.

(Mr. Sey, Gambia)

Their efforts, however, have in most cases yielded inadequate results owing to the insufficient flow of external assistance, unfavourable terms of trade and crippling debt-service obligations.

The role of the United Nations system in mitigating the social effects of structural adjustments cannot be over-emphasized. In this regard, mention must be made of the valuable contributions of specialized agencies such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Economic, Social and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in the initiation and promotion of programmes that address those sectors which are the first to be adversely affected under structural adjustment programmes. In particular, the Gambian delegation would like to commend UNICEF for its tireless efforts in providing support and assistance to the most vulnerable group of our growing population - the child. In this respect, I should like to emphasize the importance we attach to the draft convention on the rights of the child, which the General Assembly will be called upon to adopt in the near future. I should like also to place on record our unequivocal support for the holding of a world summit on the child, as proposed by UNICEF.

There is need, however, for the developed countries similarly to undertake appropriate structural reforms aimed at adjusting the structural imbalances in their economies that have given rise to high interest rates, fluctuations in commodity prices and a resurgence of protectionism - policies that are inimical to equitable international economic relations and also to the capability of developing countries to address the serious economic problems confronting them.

There is, finally, a need to develop a new debt strategy geared towards a substantial alleviation of the burden on developing countries, including possible debt reduction, rescheduling on concessionary terms or debt write-offs.

(Mr. Sey, Gambia)

As we rejoice at some of the positive developments in current international relations, we are willing to acknowledge that other challenges continue to require the attention of the international community.

We in the Gambia have been paying special attention to environmental issues. In this regard, we are deeply concerned at the threat of climatic changes, the over-exploitation of the earth's resources and the pollution of the seas. My delegation would therefore like to reaffirm the need to strengthen international concerted efforts and co-operation for environmental protection within the framework of the United Nations.

We also welcome the increased international attention being paid to the inextricable link between the environment and development. My delegation would like to launch a solemn appeal from this rostrum for more supportive measures from the international community to help developing countries in their efforts to protect their environment. It is our hope that the United Nations conference on the environment and development, in 1992, will be able to address environmental issues from an overall and integrated perspective, making possible the formulation of action-oriented programmes with regard to the most urgent environmental and developmental problems facing mankind.

The Gambia, being fully aware of the grave dangers posed to our survival by the dumping of toxic wastes, is committed to collaborating with all members of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in the dissemination of information on the movement of toxic wastes. The practice of the illegal dumping of these hazardous substances in mostly poor and developing countries is a serious phenomenon whose repercussions are as deadly as the trafficking in narcotics. Those involved in this practice of dumping hazardous wastes are traffickers in slow-motion death directed against developing countries, and their activities - nay, their trade - should be roundly condemned by the international community.

(Mr. Sey, Gambia)

A few weeks ago we held at the United Nations the second annual observance of the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, pursuant to the proclamation by the General Assembly in December 1987. The problem of drug abuse and illicit trafficking is of serious concern to my Government. In the words of the Secretary-General, which we endorse, the problem of drug abuse and illicit trafficking in drugs constitutes "one of the most devastating threats facing the world today". We in the Gambia therefore share the generally accepted view that the terrible dimensions of the drug phenomenon transcend frontiers and cut across political, economic and social boundaries. No country can handle it single-handed. No country can consider itself immune from it.

The adoption, last December, of the International Convention against Illicit Trafficking in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances can therefore be seen as a clear indication that Governments are now determined to co-operate against this new social evil, which is undermining the very foundations of our societies and destroying the future of our youth. The Gambia has already embarked on the necessary process of signing and ratifying this Convention.

We should therefore like to appeal to the international community to make available the necessary resources, both at national level and within the relevant international bodies, for a more forceful, world-wide campaign against the production and use of all kinds of illicit drugs. In this regard, we should like to pay a tribute to the Governments of the United States of America and of the United Kingdom for the valuable assistance they are providing in the fight against this modern-day scourge.

An issue of cardinal importance to the Gambia is the question of human rights. The Government and people of the Gambia are firmly committed to the protection and promotion of human rights.

(Mr. Sey, Gambia)

It is true that recent developments on the international scene augur well for the future of multilateral diplomacy. However, the current favourable international climate of reduced tensions, the new spirit of co-operation between the major Powers and the achievement of peaceful solutions to many long-standing regional conflicts have not been matched by meaningful progress towards increased respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in some countries.

While international machinery is already in place for the protection of human rights, it is still important for the international community to undertake a world-wide campaign and education to ensure that basic human rights are enjoyed by all persons everywhere on this planet, in keeping with the noble and worthy ideals embodied in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by this Assembly some 40 years ago.

We in the Gambia maintain our position that the issue of human rights transcends the narrow barriers of self-centred political and economic interests. This firm commitment to the observance of fundamental human rights is embodied in our domestic laws and manifested in our foreign policy. In order further to promote and consolidate our achievements in the field of human rights, the Gambia has taken the initiative of establishing an African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies. The Gambia Government has also provided the necessary infrastructure for the headquarters of the Commission on Human and People's Rights of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in Banjul, the Gambia. His Excellency the President of the Republic of Gambia, Alhaji Sir Dawda Kairaba Jawara, whose commitment to human rights and democracy is renowned the world over, inaugurated the facilities for those institutions on 12 June this year.

We should like to acknowledge the support given by the United Nations Geneva-based Commission on Human Rights to the African Centre for Democracy and

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Human Rights, and we appeal to all those who have an abiding faith in the cause of human rights observance to support and provide assistance to the Centre.

Given our stand on the issue of human rights, the Gambia cannot but be very concerned about the gross violations of the fundamental human rights of the Turkish Muslim minority in Bulgaria. The unprecedented deportation and expulsion of hundreds of thousands of people of Turkish origin from Bulgaria is a serious development which should be condemned by the entire international community. The pathetic sight of thousands of women and children being expelled from their own country on grounds of race and religion, and suffering in refugee camps, is intolerable, and the international community should speak out lest silence be taken to mean acquiescence. We call on Bulgaria to accept Turkey's invitation to enter into a meaningful dialogue so that an amicable solution be found to this humanitarian problem.

My delegation therefore supports the proposal made by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Germany, Mr. Genscher, when he addressed the Assembly on 27 September about the need to appoint a United Nations high commissioner for human rights and set up an international court of human rights.

The pressing political issues facing the international community are complex, but we share the hope of many that, with dedication and determination, they can be resolved, and in a way that assures peace and stability for all nations.

On the economic front, however, there is a dire and compelling need for a whole range of North-South issues to be addressed with greater political resolve and in a realistic and constructive manner that will take due account of the acute and growing needs of the developing world in order to achieve a more balanced and equitable order.

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It is therefore imperative that the same dynamic and pragmatic spirit that has characterized international relations, which is indeed responsible for the recent developments on the political scene, should be extended to the economic sphere, with the hope that it will yield the long overdue desired results.

I therefore conclude by reaffirming the Gambia's total commitment to the maintenance of peace and security and to meaningful international co-operation for the economic and social advancement of all peoples.

The lofty ideals enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations deserve our full attention, our firm dedication and energetic support.

In this regard, we shall continue to render all necessary support to the United Nations system, which is and will remain the custodian of the hopes and aspirations of mankind for long-lasting peace, progress and prosperity.

Mr. PERRIER (Haiti) (interpretation from French): May I first address to you, Sir, the congratulations of the delegation of Haiti and tell you how very pleased we were to see you elected to the presidency of this, the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly. Your outstanding personal qualifications, your vast experience in dealing with international affairs and what you have done at the helm of the Special Committee Against Apartheid have allowed us to take the full measure of your qualities, and they ensure the fullest success for the work of this session.

I should also like to voice our gratitude to your predecessor, Mr. Dante Caputo, who brought the full range of his competence and wisdom to bear upon his work and thus fully merited the confidence the Assembly had placed in him.

We pay special tribute to the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, who has succeeded with so much courage and determination in pursuing progress towards obtaining the objectives embodied in the Charter. Without a doubt, the

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United Nations owes him much for the restoration of confidence it enjoys today. Let him be assured of the fullest support of my country as he pursues his efforts for peace.

This decade is drawing to a close with particularly contrasting results facing us in terms of matters economic and political. The forty-fourth session is in duty bound to reflect a period when the international community as a whole is stopping and thinking about these matters. There can be no doubt that we are living through a particularly crucial period in which progressively there is emerging before us a new landscape in international political relations. In this connection, we think it obvious that the United Nations, so long the butt of complaints and denunciation, is, now that it is being endowed with the wherewithal, ready to play a more intensive role in facilitating the resolution of conflicts that have been with us for a long time and were once deemed insoluble.

(Mr. Perrier, Haiti)

The cessation of hostilities in the Persian Gulf and the emergence of solutions to the questions of Western Sahara, Cyprus and Namibia are highly significant successes that bear witness to the restored credibility of the United Nations. Rarely in the past half-century or more has the world experienced such dynamic progress towards peace. These results confirm, if confirmation be needed, the overriding importance of the purposes and principles upon which the United Nations is founded and the increasing adherence to them by its Member States. This is a source of satisfaction and hope.

At the same time, there are grounds for welcoming the conjunction of factors that now offers an unexpected opportunity to change the confrontational terms of East-West relations. The proposals recently put forward by the United States and the Soviet Union and the commitments made at the Paris Conference on banning chemical weapons give good reason for hope concerning the prospect of genuinely controlling the arms race.

There would be a great temptation to believe that this state of affairs represented a turning point in the establishment of a new international order if there were not at the same time and year after year, the growing, unacceptable gulf separating the North from the South. Furthermore, one cannot ignore the still numerous obstacles that continue to block the road to peace, in particular the persistence of various hotbeds of tension in many areas of the world and the emergence of new challenges that rightly command the attention of the General Assembly at this session.

Once again this year southern Africa is in the forefront of our concerns, for, notwithstanding certain apparent changes recorded at the level of the political discourse, the structure of the apartheid system has not changed. Neither the expected freeing of Nelson Mandela nor the release of political prisoners, which

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could have given indisputable proof of goodwill, has been obtained from the Pretoria Government. South Africa remains under the yoke of the last régime in the world to profess a racist ideology, which is expressed in blind, systematic repression of the aspirations of the country's black majority. It is the duty of the international community, which has been too long defied, to do all it can to ensure that the South African Government ends a policy that is universally censured and condemned.

That is why, in declaring our solidarity with those resisting apartheid, notably through the courageous struggle of the African National Congress of South Africa (ANC) and the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (PAC), the Republic of Haiti calls for the implementation of comprehensive sanctions against the South African régime. All in all, that is indeed the only recourse the international community has available to it by means of which to ensure that the black majority assumes, with dignity and equality of rights and duties, its rightful place in a multiracial, egalitarian and democratic society.

Following a heroic struggle, actively supported by the front-line States and waged by the genuine representatives of the people under the leadership of the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO), and many initiatives launched by the friends of Africa, the Namibian people is preparing to decide its future. The Haitian Government welcomes this fact and the forthcoming entry of Namibia into the international community. We reiterate our firm support for United Nations efforts, vigilant action in the field by the United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) and the sustained efforts of the United Nations Council for Namibia. They have all worked together to bring about the advent of a sovereign and independent Namibia in keeping with Security Council resolution 435 (1978).

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My delegation also welcomes the climate of reconciliation which seems to be gaining ground in Angola and which, we hope and expect, will make it possible for that country to bend all its energies to the task of reconstruction and to economic and social development.

The evolution of the situation in Western Sahara makes it possible, notwithstanding a certain hesitancy, to perceive the possibility of an end to this conflict that has divided the Maghreb States for so long. The Government of Haiti notes with interest the results that the parties concerned have achieved, with the support of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU). We hope that the two organizations will pursue their efforts to encourage the resumption of the indispensable dialogue between the parties, with the prospect of a referendum through which the Sahauri people can freely decide its destiny.

In the Middle East, the violence that has been raging in the occupied territories for some two years now bears witness to the fact that Palestine is an undeniable reality at the heart of any settlement of a crisis that has persisted for too long. The maintenance of the present state of affairs is in the best interests of none of the parties concerned. Clearly, the only possible course is that of dialogue. In this connection, it seems to us that the convening of an international peace conference under United Nations auspices deserves an immediate consensus. That alone is likely to make it possible for the groundwork to be laid for an overall settlement of the conflict.

The Government of Haiti supports fully the convening of such a conference, since it is convinced that just and lasting peace in the region can be established

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only on the basis of the principles defined, in particular, in Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973): that the State of Israel has the right to exist within secure and internationally recognized borders, and that the Palestinian people has the right to a homeland and to self-determination.

With regard to Lebanon, the Republic of Haiti, cardinal principles of whose foreign policy have always been non-intervention in the internal affairs of States and respect for the right of peoples to decide for themselves, is following with growing alarm the evolution of the situation in that martyred country. The Lebanese people are enduring a painful, bloody tragedy, which all friends of Lebanon ardently hope it will soon be ended. This is why the Government of Haiti expresses its solidarity with Lebanon and calls for the withdrawal of foreign forces from Lebanese soil and consistent action by the international community to make it possible for the Lebanese people to regain its sovereignty and unity, with territorial integrity.

In Kampuchea the process of the withdrawal of foreign occupying forces, which must be full and final, constitutes the first step in the right direction. We sincerely congratulate the French Government on having taken the initiative, together with the members of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), of convening the Paris Conference, which, although it has not yet had all the hoped-for results, has none the less been a major step forward in the search for a solution. The delegation of Haiti desires the resumption of the dialogue between the parties concerned and the continuance of efforts to bring about true national reconciliation. That alone will make it possible to put an end to the tragedy that has for so many years afflicted the Cambodian nation.

(Mr. Perrier, Haiti)

The Republic of Haiti, in welcoming the proposed dialogue on the peaceful reunification of the Korean nation, believes that the time has come to explore ways and means of making the admission of the two Koreas to the family of the United Nations a reality, in accordance with the wishes of the parties concerned.

(Mr. Perrier, Haiti)

We note with great satisfaction that the cease-fire between Iran and Iraq is being maintained and express the hope that the negotiations already under way between the two parties will result in a settlement that will open the way to permanent peace.

Similarly, Haiti welcomes the evacuation of foreign troops from Afghanistan and hopes the fratricidal war there will soon come to an end.

Closer to home, in Central America, the initiatives aimed at ending the hostilities and building peace and democracy should be encouraged. The Government of Haiti fully supports the recent Tela agreements ruling out the option of sterile confrontation, foreign pressure and recourse to force among fraternal countries that should be working together in co-operation.

The Government of Haiti, sharing the concerns of many countries across the continent, is lending tireless support to the efforts being exerted notably by the United States of America to fight illegal drug trafficking. Beyond that, the delegation of Haiti is fully prepared to lend all appropriate support to the initiative of the Caribbean countries aimed at stepping up within the framework of the United Nations the relentless struggle that must be waged against this scourge. We wish particularly to stress our solidarity with Colombia, whose courageous decisions have placed it in a difficult situation indeed.

The Republic of Haiti again reiterates its firm support for efforts aimed at international co-operation and a concerted approach to the protection of the environment from the threats looming over it, which threaten the survival of the entire planet given the accelerated deterioration of our natural resources.

Notwithstanding the vigorous economic expansion recorded in industrialized countries, the third United Nations Development Decade is ending on a note of profound disillusionment: promises have not been kept and the expectations of the third world - the vast majority - have not been met.

(Mr. Perrier, Haiti)

Suffice it to recall that in sub-Saharan Africa the gross domestic product per capita has declined by a record 10 per cent - indeed, over 10 per cent - compared with the 1980 level, and the situation in Latin America and the Caribbean is hardly better. Having reached the very limits of the economic, social and human costs we can bear as a result of indebtedness, which is compounded by the pernicious and destabilizing impact of adjustment programmes, the nations of the South find themselves plunged ever deeper into despair and doubt that they shall ever see movement towards a better life for our people. However paradoxical it may appear to some, the third world continues in large measure to finance the prosperity of the wealthy nations through a net inverse transfer of resources amounting to economic haemorrhaging that we cannot sustain and is morally unacceptable.

Faced with such a state of affairs, the delegation of Haiti stands in solidarity with all those countries which, on the eve of the launching of the fourth international development decade, call for a readjustment of the machinery governing international economic relations, and for substantive changes in strategy at the level of international co-operation, so as to enable our countries of the South finally to become an integral part of the race to development.

To achieve this, an unprecedented effort of international solidarity is indispensable. Instead of aid - which is often uncertain, lacks common standards, and is not necessarily appropriate to the medium- and long-term needs of the recipient countries - it is necessary for the industrialized countries to devote to co-operation for development those resources that correspond with the needs for overall economic recovery throughout the South. What this means, at the very least, is that we must attain the goals set some 30 years ago: 0.7 per cent of the gross domestic product of the donor countries.

(Mr. Perrier, Haiti)

By the same token we consider urgent the adoption by the creditor countries, in multilateral financing institutions, of additional measures aimed at lightening the external debt burden and, if necessary, writing off such debt, particularly in the case of the poorest countries, even if these are not necessarily the most indebted ones. In this connection, what comes to mind is France's decision, announced last May at Dakar, unconditionally to write off all public credits given to 35 African countries. We hail that step, which we hope and expect will be emulated so far as all the least developed countries are concerned. We hope that this particular approach will gain currency.

How could we not stress the delicate situation facing the countries of sub-Saharan Africa, island countries and the Caribbean nations, some of which have just been hard hit by hurricane Hugo?

It is particularly appropriate for us to emphasize how acute are the social and economic problems confronting the least developed countries, often disappointed by the lack of international solidarity they receive, which in large measure explains the essential failure of the new substantive programme of action for the least developed countries for the 1980s.

However, our country continues to have strong hopes of the special session of the General Assembly, to take place next spring, devoted to international economic co-operation. By the same token, we welcome the holding in Paris next year of the second United Nations conference on the least developed countries, hoping that in both instances these meetings will provide the second wind the North-South dialogue so direly needs.

The delegation of Haiti deems it useful to remind the Assembly of the evolution of the situation in Haiti at a time when the Haitian people is turning a major corner in its history. Having first stemmed the adverse impact of successive

(Mr. Perrier, Haiti)

crises facing our State, the Government of 17 September 1988 resolutely committed itself to setting up a lasting state of law. The building of a representative democracy, based on the pre-eminence of and respect for human rights, the effective functioning of pluralism and the guaranteeing of freedoms, are all now well under way.*

The Government of 17 September 1988, headed by Lieutenant-General Prosper Avril, has successfully passed through a number of phases which we consider decisive.

The Constitution which the Haitian people gave itself in 1987 has been restored, and several articles which, because of the provisional nature of our Government, are still not in final form, will be completely restored as soon as the two legislative chambers are reconstituted.

In this connection, elections will be organized, in 1990, at all levels, on the basis of a fixed timetable, by the permanent electoral council. For the Government, this is a matter of honour. The elections will reflect the free expression of the will of the people, and will bring new leaders to the helm of the State in February 1991.

We are, of course, well aware that the reforms undertaken and the establishment of new institutions, and the forthcoming electoral contests, however decisive they may be, will not suffice in and of themselves to guarantee the future of democracy in Haiti. The experience of the past three years has shown us that the struggle for democracy can be long and difficult. Like many other countries that have recently emerged from the long night of dictatorship, Haiti is

* Mr. Feyder (Luxembourg), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Perrier, Haiti)

considering the promises of the future without losing sight of the serious handicaps of the present. To succeed in building a democratic country while the country is still struggling with a particularly acute structural crisis in the economic and social spheres indeed is a major challenge for us.

(Mr. Perrier, Haiti)

In view of the importance of what is at stake, the Government of Haiti deems it necessary to reiterate its appeals to the international community to help Haiti make up for lost time in the key areas, to free Haiti from the vice of dire poverty in which three quarters of the population are caught, and, above all, to help them find the road to renewed growth.

We believe in a renewed and effective solidarity with friendly countries, of the North and the South, in accordance with the wish expressed by the General Assembly in its resolution 39/196 adopted on 17 December 1984 entitled "Economic assistance to Haiti". Unfortunately, that resolution has remained a dead letter - so much so that Haiti has found itself alone in the face of the damage caused by the social problems which the country has been experiencing for more than three years. And even after cyclone Gilbert it again found itself alone, facing the desolation of the families in the southern part of the country, victims of this natural disaster, who are still waiting for some show of international solidarity. We must, at the same time, express our deepest gratitude to the countries of the Caribbean who, responsive to our legitimate aspirations, and with mutual respect, have shown us fraternal support, which we value highly.

We are certain that the united efforts of our partners can be of substantial assistance to the people of Haiti in their untiring search for economic and social betterment.

This aim is certainly not beyond our reach. It is, after all, one of the conditions and the ultimate goal of democratic life. To help us attain it is, obviously, within the framework of the highest mission of the United Nations. We therefore appeal to the Organization to lend Haiti its valuable assistance in co-ordinating far-reaching international action to help the country meet the serious challenges it faces today.

(Mr. Perrier, Haiti)

We are convinced that the United Nations, which has constantly managed to go hand in hand with our people in its long trudge towards real democracy, will once again be by our side this time.

Mr. NANTON (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines): The delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines wishes to offer Mr. Joseph Garba its sincere congratulations on his election to the presidency of the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly. We look forward eagerly to playing our part to ensure the success of the session under his experienced leadership.

The historic forty-third session is still fresh in our minds, and we would be found wanting if we failed to pay a tribute to the former President, Mr. Dante Caputo, for the efficient manner in which he presided over the forty-third session of the Assembly, thus ensuring its successful conclusion.

My delegation wishes to congratulate the Secretary-General for his enlightening and comprehensive report on the work of the Organization and for his initiatives during the past year in pursuit of peace and security.

There is a wind of change blowing in international politics. We witness a trend in international relations in which confrontation is being replaced by co-operation, and bitter cold-war rivalries of the past by consensus and mutual accommodation.

The present mood to a large extent reflects the easing of East-West tension and greater co-operation between the major Powers. The international community welcomes the progress made by the United States and the Soviet Union in negotiations aimed at reducing by half their stockpile of strategic weapons. The prospects for a comprehensive and verifiable treaty banning chemical weapons, which has been proposed by both super-Powers, is also very exciting.

(Mr. Nanton, Saint Vincent
and the Grenadines)

The eyes of the world are upon us at this time. The General Assembly at this session will earn the respect of the present as well as future generations, if, through its deliberations and decisions, it can sustain the present trend and widen the current détente to ensure peace and progress for all mankind.

The Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines applauds the people of Poland for their historic decision to enhance democracy and move to an open-market economy.

The positive developments in the Soviet Union, Hungary and East Europe, inspired by General Secretary Gorbachev, hold tremendous lessons for the third world on the evolution of political theory.

The cordial atmosphere of international politics today presents an opportunity which should not be missed for resolving those intractable regional conflicts which for so long have destabilized the world community.

In Afghanistan, in spite of the 1988 Geneva Agreements and the withdrawal of Soviet troops, the war continues unabated. The delegation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines supports the Secretary-General in the efforts he is making to facilitate a settlement. We look forward to a return to normalcy in that country torn by civil war, and to the early return to their homeland of the millions of Afghan refugees in Pakistan and Iran.

The fragile cease-fire in the Iran-Iraq war and the direct talks between the two sides have yielded no conclusive results. We urge the Governments of the two countries to co-operate with the Secretary-General's efforts to transform the present cease-fire into a lasting peace based on Security Council resolution 598 (1987).

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and the Grenadines)

While the Paris Conference on Cambodia held in August did not yield a comprehensive solution to the problem, it was nevertheless a commendable step towards achieving the conditions necessary for the Cambodian people to freely exercise their right to self-determination.

We also applaud the diplomatic and other initiatives of the Association of South-East Asian Nations and hope that all other interested parties will join in the search for a durable peace in Cambodia.

The problem of the two Koreas still remains unresolved. It appears that efforts to establish a machinery for dialogue and peace have made no substantial progress. It is the firm belief of my delegation that the admission of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations would not only be in conformity with the principle of universality, but would help to create a better political environment for a peaceful solution of the Korean question.

My delegation looks forward with enthusiasm to the implementation of the Secretary-General's peace plan for Western Sahara. We hope that there can be an early referendum on self-determination. We urge continued dialogue between the POLISARIO and the Kingdom of Morocco and a continued search for a settlement of this issue within the framework of the proposals of the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity.

While encouraging signs have emerged on the political horizon in many parts of the world, there are some intractable problems which defy our best efforts to find solutions.

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and the Grenadines)

The oppressed majority of South Africans are still struggling to achieve their freedom and self-determination. My delegation reiterates its call for the intensification of sanctions and other forms of pressure by the international community on South Africa for the dismantling of the inhuman system of apartheid and for the unconditional release of Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners.

The end of Namibia's long road to independence is in sight. The withdrawal of South African forces and the demobilization and disarming of territorial forces were carried out on schedule; the draft electoral law is under careful examination before final assent is given; political detainees have been released by both parties to the conflict; some 83 per cent of estimated eligible Namibians have demonstrated their commitment to the electoral process by registering to vote a month before the deadline; and many thousands of refugees, some in exile for a whole generation, have returned to their homeland. These are all positive steps leading to the eventual independence of Namibia. We join those who have paid a tribute to the Secretary-General, his Special Representative and Deputy, and the many United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) military police and civilian personnel for their dedication and personal commitment to Namibia's freedom.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines fully supports the United Nations plan for implementing Security Council resolution 435 (1978) and calls on all parties not to impede the movement towards peace. My country looks forward to the day when the Namibian people, who have waited so long for the opportunity to determine their future, take their seat as the newest Member of this Organization.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is concerned that recent efforts to bring about a settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict have not yielded any positive results. My country will support any initiative which is aimed at securing a

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comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). There is today growing support for a properly structured conference based on Israel's right to exist and recognition of the legitimate rights of the Palestinians. We support that proposal.

The bloody civil war drags on endlessly in Lebanon. My delegation supports all initiatives, including those of the Arab League, for stabilizing the situation in that strife-torn country. All the parties to the conflict should move towards securing an effective cease-fire and initiating the process of national reconciliation leading to the full exercise of Lebanese sovereignty. All external pressures in Lebanon should be removed in order that the Lebanese parties might agree on some viable system of peaceful coexistence.

Last year this body paid a glowing tribute to all those serving and those who have served in the United Nations peace-keeping forces on being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for

"their achievement and their contribution to the United Nations peace-keeping operations and, by extension to world peace and security".

Today, we lament and deplore the tragic, cold-blooded murder of Lt. Colonel William R. Higgins, a United States citizen, while serving in the United Nations peace-keeping forces in Lebanon. We call on those organizations or groups which are at present holding foreign hostages to release them and thus end their suffering and that of their relatives and friends. We also urge those countries with influence over the hostage-takers to assist in arresting this crime against humanity and to help to bring all the foreign hostages home from Lebanon.

Turning to my own region, Latin America and the Caribbean, my delegation welcomes the very positive developments in Central America. We commend the five Central American Governments for their determined efforts to restore peace and

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stability to the region and call on the international community to do all in its power further to advance the peace process.

My country welcomes the ratification of the Cartagena Protocol which opens the way for accession of the Caribbean nations of Belize and Guyana to the Organization of American States.

We also note with satisfaction the progress being made in the Republic of Chile for the full restoration of its democratic institutions.

The eastern Caribbean, particularly Antigua and Barbuda, the British Virgin Islands, Dominica, Montserrat and Saint Kitts and Nevis recently experienced the full force of hurricane Hugo, which left death and considerable damage to housing, infrastructure and agriculture in its wake. The road to recovery will be long and costly and we hope that the international community will move swiftly to assist in the rehabilitation efforts.

While being encouraged by all the positive developments in the international community, my Government feels, however, that insufficient progress was registered during the past year in resolving various existing non-military threats to global peace and security. These threats include persistent poverty in many parts of the world, lack of economic growth and development, large-scale unemployment, injustice and inequalities between nations and severe environmental degradation. These problems tend to be global in scope and require the concerted efforts of the international community to find solutions to them.

The fruits of science and technology are very unevenly distributed internationally and in the current North-South frame of analysis, the developing countries of the South find themselves falling further behind in the race for development and progress.

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The external debt crisis continues to impede growth in developing countries and this situation is aggravated by fundamental imbalances in the international monetary system.

Protectionism is on the increase and the terms of trade for the primary-producing countries still work against them in the current unfavourable international market situation.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines welcomes the convening of the special session of the General Assembly devoted to international co-operation, the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, and the preparation of the international development strategy for the fourth United Nations development decade - all of which will be held within the coming year. We hope that these conferences will lead to a clearer understanding of the present problems in the areas of trade, external debt and development.

The international community should be constantly reminded of the problems of small island developing States, in which category Saint Vincent and the Grenadines falls. These States are characterized by narrow economic bases, limited internal markets, diseconomies of scale, and lack of opportunities to take advantage of external markets. There is a further disadvantage in that many of these States - like Saint Vincent and the Grenadines - are archipelagic, a phenomenon which poses serious problems with consequential economic and social cost.

Their small size also makes such States run the risk of being overlooked in international economic and financial decision-making. It is important that adequate resources be made available to them on appropriate terms for national development.

The population explosion of our time and over-exploitation of the natural resources of our planet due to poverty and rapid economic expansion have resulted

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in a number of environmental problems which put at risk the entire human race. The issues of toxic waste, deforestation, desertification, acid rain, the widening gap in the ozone layer, erratic climatic changes and the greenhouse effect are global in scope and must be dealt with by the entire international community working together. Swift and workable solutions must be found if mankind is to preserve the environment for coming generations.

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Other problems in society, such as the international flow of refugees, the status of women and children, and the international scourge of drugs continue to require the urgent attention of the international community.

The Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines recognizes the grave danger that international drug trafficking and drug abuse pose to all countries. That scourge transcends national borders and it is imperative that international co-operation be increased and intensified to eradicate it from the face of the globe. To that end, my delegation gives unqualified support to the proposal of Trinidad and Tobago for the establishment of an international criminal court to investigate and adjudicate the criminal responsibilities of persons engaged in drug trafficking, and to the initiative of Jamaica for the establishment of a United Nations multilateral, multisectoral force that would provide assistance to States, on their request, in the areas of intelligence and interdiction.

The next decade will perhaps be the most challenging ever faced by human society. Advances in science and technology have put into our hands the means of achieving unlimited progress. Current developments in nuclear technology, space travel, oceanography and biotechnology will profoundly affect our lives in the future. But the same technology can be the means of annihilating the human race. Some of the fundamental issues facing the world today have to do with life and death and survival.

As we examine these issues during the remainder of the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines will work with all other nations in the interest of world peace, security and prosperity.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): The representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran wishes to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

(The President)

May I remind members that, in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, the first intervention in the exercise of the right of reply should be limited to 10 minutes and the second intervention to five minutes, and should be made by delegations from their seats.

I now call on the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mr. HOSSEINI (Islamic Republic of Iran): My delegation wishes to address the baseless allegations made by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Grenada in his statement yesterday.

The nature of his statement was clear interference in the internal affairs of another sovereign State. It is interesting and ironic that the speaker considered it appropriate to pick, among many important and pressing international issues, a subject that not only has no international bearing, but is also within the sphere of local decision-making in different countries.

The Assembly is the venue for discussing issues that affect the smooth running of international relations. We were surprised to hear the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Grenada embark on distortion and demagogic reasoning on a totally irrelevant subject. Of course, we understand that Grenada may be under pressure from certain quarters. But it is necessary to observe a minimum degree of coherence and priorities.

The meeting rose at 5.35 p.m.