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PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE THIRTY-FIRST MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Thursday, 12 October 1989, at 3 p.m.

<u>President:</u>	Mr. LOHIA (Vice-President)	(Papua New Guinea)
later:	Mr. GARBA (President)	(Nigeria)
later:	Mr. LOHIA (Vice-President)	(Papua New Guinea)

- Conclusion of the general debate [9]

Statements made by

Mr. Vokouma (Burkina Faso)
Mr. Ovono (Equatorial Guinea)
Sir Baddley Devesi (Solomon Islands)
Mr. Al Sabah (Kuwait)

- Statement by the President
- Emergency assistance to Antigua and Barbuda, the British Virgin Islands, Dominica, Montserrat and Saint Kitts and Nevis [156] (continued): draft resolution

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In the absence of the President, Mr. Lohia (Papua New Guinea), Vice-President took the Chair.

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

AGENDA ITEM 9 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. VOKOUMA (Burkina Faso) (interpretation from French): Burkina Faso and Nigeria enjoy fraternal and friendly relations. Therefore it is with some pride and pleasure that we see as President of the General Assembly at its forty-fourth session a son of Africa whose experience, personality and qualities are well known in the United Nations.

To his predecessor, Mr. Dante Caputo, we would like to convey our appreciation for the way in which he performed his functions.

The Secretary-General's report on the work of the Organization, as usual, has provided us with a complete overview of the state of the world and of the efforts made by our Organization. Mr. de Cuellar's patience, tireless activity and quiet determination have made it possible for the Organization to go through periods of great uncertainty until we have now reached a time when recognition of the need for our Organization has once again become unanimous.

"On the strength of this, I venture to hope that at the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly the last guns will have been silenced on the last battlefields of the world, the Palestinians will be back in their land building a future together with the Israelis, the state of emergency will have been lifted in South Africa, Nelson Mandela will have been released from the apartheid gaol and, finally, Namibia will occupy in this Hall, somewhere between Mozambique and Nepal, the place that has been its right for so long, and for which it has waited far too long." (A/43/PV.7, p. 64)

(Mr. Vokouma, Burkina Faso)

These words which I have just quoted were the final paragraph of Burkina Faso's statement in the general debate at the forty-third session.

The implementation of Security Council resolution 435 (1978) has gone through some vicissitudes and it is our hope that the present stage will see all parties respect their commitment and make it possible for the provisions of the Security Council resolution to be applied fully and in their entirety. The Namibian people's right to self-determination should be exercised in justice and democracy. We would also like to express again our confidence in the Secretary-General in the delicate task that is his of ensuring that the process initiated will not be compromised by manoeuvres and diversionary tactics.

What is being said and what has been done by the South African authorities do not seem to indicate that this ignominy of the present time, apartheid, has been attacked at its root by its supporters. We cannot speak of any changes or improvement when Nelson Mandela and his companions remain in prison, when the peaceful movements that are demanding freedom are systematically restrained or repressed, when political parties and democratic movements are suspended, when the state of emergency is still in force, and when there is no sign of the beginnings of any real, consistent or detailed dialogue aimed at resolving the problem.

The fact that the international community has made the apartheid régime anathema has not yet brought it down. Nevertheless, the struggles and sacrifices of the South African people have induced the racist authorities to restrain their language and to come up with offers which could be expected to be confirmed subsequently by the simple dismantling of the apartheid régime. The recent elections in which more than 70 per cent of the population was excluded and the refusal of the racist authorities to recognize the democratic principle of "one man, one vote" are not in keeping with the bland reassurances of President De Klerk.

(Mr. Vokouma, Burkina Faso)

The racist régime of Pretoria thus continues to pursue its policy of apartheid and destabilization of the front-line States, and the international community expects more than a change in style and language. It expects that men have their dignity restored to them.

The right of peoples is also being violated in the territories occupied by Israel. The right of the Palestinian people to self-determination is ignored by Israel. The intifadah has been the bold and resolute response of a people which is determined to regain its inalienable and undeniable rights. Oppression and repression are the twin sinister companions which are no longer able to stifle the powerful cry for sovereignty and freedom of a people which has been gagged and trampled underfoot.

It must be regretted that Israel is locked in its conviction that concessions are due it, that Israel refuses to admit the increasingly incontrovertible reality that the Palestinian people do exist, that Palestine exists and that the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) is the authentic representative of the Palestinian people.

Hitherto, important decisions have been taken by the Palestinian side without any positive Israeli reaction having been recorded. The Israeli authorities have stated that there will be no elections so long as the intifadah continues, that Jewish colonies will continue to be installed in the occupied territories and that there will be no peace except under those conditions and only with those with whom they choose to speak. None of this is likely to restore peace to the region.

(Mr. Vokouma, Burkina Faso)

That is not the logical path to take, and on 6 October last the General Assembly confirmed this once again when it demanded that Israel fulfil its obligations.

Just as apartheid has set southern Africa ablaze, Israel's policy as cause, effect and pretext has turned Lebanon into a victim on its last gasp. A country, a people, and a nation are disintegrating. Burkina Faso supports the efforts of the Tripartite Committee of the Arab League to promote dialogue and the search for peace. We hope that peace will come to the Middle East, through the convening of an international conference under the auspices of the United Nations and with the participation of all the parties concerned, in particular Palestine.

Regional conflicts we hope will be resolved continue to cause concern in the international community.

The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, pursuant to the Geneva Agreements, has withdrawn its troops from Afghanistan more than six months ago. Burkina Faso supports all efforts to safeguard the sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity of Afghanistan, as well as the unity of its people.

We appeal to Iran and Iraq to take the necessary action in order to ensure the complete implementation of Security Council resolution 598 (1987).

It was not possible to conclude an agreement at the Paris Conference on Cambodia, but we may still entertain some hope since the Conference is scheduled to resume at the beginning of 1990. The withdrawal of foreign troops should lead to dialogue among all the parties to the conflict, the only ones likely to arrive at the necessary compromises for a return to peace and the non-aligned status of Kampuchea.

(Mr. Vokouma, Burkina Faso)

Similarly, in Central America we urge respect for the Esquipulas II agreements, so that the peoples of the region may enjoy peace and stability. In this connection, the Tela appeal must not go unheeded.

The question of Cyprus has still not been resolved, and we support all efforts to preserve its unity, sovereignty, independence and non-aligned status.

We reaffirm our solidarity with the Korean people. Burkina Faso supports the proposals for a peaceful reunification of Korea and to that end we urge the continuation of the North-South dialogue.

The efforts of the international community, in particular those of the African countries, led to the beginning of a solution in Angola and Mozambique. Burkina Faso sincerely hopes that these efforts will culminate in a final settlement guaranteeing the national unity and independence of these two fraternal countries and making it possible for them to channel their energies into the tasks of development. And may all interference be excluded.

With regard to Western Sahara, courageous decisions have been taken to speed up the peace process drawn up by the United Nations on the basis of the relevant resolutions of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). We urge the Secretary-General to pursue his efforts in conjunction with the current Chairman of the OAU with a view to implementing the right to self-determination of the Sahraoui people.

A distressing conflict has pitted two West African brothers against each other. Like a number of other African States, Burkina Faso is closely following this dispute and, in its capacity as Chairman to the Economic Community of West African States, is exerting its own efforts to find a peaceful and final settlement.

(Mr. Vokouma, Burkina Faso)

Burkina Faso welcomes and is gratified by the recent agreements entered into by the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and Chad, thus putting an end to 16 years of fratricidal confrontation.

It can be seen that there are still regional conflicts, although for the past two years the international climate has been described as having improved. Burkina Faso recognizes that there has been some improvement in the way in which problems are being tackled. Systematic confrontation or confrontation as a matter of principle has given way to dialogue and negotiation. No one could complain of such a turn of events. Nevertheless, for us, the countries of the South or the third world, we cannot confuse style with substance.

Although changing the way the problem is posed helps to resolve it, that does not change the actual nature of the problem.

Indeed, the inequity of the international economic system is penalizing our national economies and frustrating the efforts and sacrifices of our peoples. Year after year we have made use of the rostrum of the United Nations to make known our ills; we have gone to the institutions of the United Nations to heal our afflictions. In May 1986, the critical economic situation in Africa led to the adoption of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Recovery and Development, but its promise has not been fully realized. External debt has emphasized a glaring and obvious injustice. Our products are increasingly fetching below-market prices, while we are reimbursing many times over the money we have borrowed, in view of the play of bank interest rates. This situation must be seen as very serious by debtors and creditors alike, because in the long run it will be harmful to all parties.

(Mr. Vokoums, Burkina Faso)

In a world of interdependence where words are uttered and used as weapons - which, in any case have finally become blunted - it is nevertheless necessary to have recourse to negotiation, take into account the interests involved and inevitably move towards the implementation of a just international economic order. The special session on international economic co-operation, to be held in April 1990, should not be just one more meeting; rather, it should mark a new approach in economic relations among States so that justice, equity and mutual advantage prevail in the world economy. However unrealistic this outcome may seem, it is nevertheless the best way to protect us all from economic paralysis and the incalculable consequences that that would entail.

In this connection, the environment which is today considered everyone's business, has long suffered the excesses and uses of the North. Whether it be the ozone layer, acid rains, toxic wastes - we know where the responsibility lies. Hence we should welcome the fact that the environment has become an essential concern and that preparations are now being made for the United Nations conference on environment and development, scheduled for 1992.

We listened very closely to the statement made by President Virgilio Barco of Colombia. As we see it, two lessons can be learned from it: the first is that, as he said, the international struggle against drugs cannot be a mere war of words; and the second, that in order to stem the supply of drugs, we must stem the demand for drugs.

In both cases it is co-operation and solidarity that can heal this contemporary wound. All the scourges that today beset human society can be overcome only through co-operation and solidarity.

A deplorable economic and social situation is the reason why this drug culture has developed. Burkina Faso affirms that this is a case involving human rights and

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the rights of peoples. We refuse to follow anyone who ascribes importance exclusively to the individual and to the protection and security of the individual, when millions are ignored, trampled underfoot, exploited, reduced to earning a living by compromising their lives and the lives of others. The champions of human rights have enough compassion to defend freedom; but not enough wisdom to defend human beings made of flesh and blood, not enough wisdom to stop children born and raised in disastrous circumstances from being condemned to a life of delinquency and crime.

(Mr. Vokouma, Burkina Faso)

Somewhere along the line more attention began to be paid to abstract ideas than to meeting our practical, basic, concrete, pressing, real needs. When we seek to defend human rights we should begin with those needs. The defence of human rights begins with the promotion of a just international economic order.

In Burkina Faso, Comrade President Compaoré, the leader of the Popular Front, is translating that desire for justice by organizing and ensuring the participation of people of all social levels and classes in making the political and economic decisions that mould our national life and our future. Democracy is a requirement of the Burkina Faso revolution. Revolution, for us, is not a hollow revolutionary slogan taken out of context, but the creative spirit linked to practical action towards qualitative change sustained and implemented in a permanent, organized way by the mass of the people for the mass of the people. In that context, women play a major role, children receive particular care and society acts in its own best interests, in order to live within its culture in harmony with the world.

Many have spoken of the imminent twenty-first century, the heritage we shall bequeath to our children, the increasingly interdependent world, threats and hopes. We in Burkina Faso want to live with our brothers throughout the world as worthy, free people. Co-operation and solidarity are the virtues needed today, tomorrow, and forever if we wish to bequeath a future to the generations to come. With that in mind we must be just and specific.

Mr. OVONO (Equatorial Guinea) (interpretation from Spanish): The delegation of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea comes to this session of the Assembly in the same spirit as it has always shown to join its efforts with those being devoted here to the service of the ideals of our Organization, ready to reaffirm and support all initiatives that can benefit the peoples.

I wish to express my delegation's satisfaction at the well-deserved election

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of Mr. Garba of Nigeria to direct the work of this session of the General Assembly. We are convinced that his outstanding talents and diplomatic skills, as well as the positive contribution of his country, Nigeria, to the task of consolidating international peace and stability, will help the Assembly to deal positively with the important and complex items on its agenda.

Our congratulations are also directed to the other members of the Bureau. We are confident that their skill, experience, and unselfish efforts will enable them to contribute substantially to ensuring that the decisions and resolutions adopted will not only be in keeping with the principles and provisions of the Charter, but also make it possible again to enhance the Organization's authority in the solution of current international problems.

In this connection, I can assure members of my delegation's total readiness to do its best to ensure that our work is to the point and achieves results satisfactory to all.

The outstanding President of the forty-third session, Mr. Dante Caputo, and the members of his Bureau deserve our praise for the seriousness and competence they demonstrated and the substantial work accomplished during that session.

A well-deserved tribute must be paid to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, and his staff for their determined, positive efforts in the last few years to solve the problems that are disrupting peace in various parts of our planet.

The report of the Secretary-General reflects the delicate problems that will be under the scrutiny of States and their representatives at this session. The fact that there is a stalemate on many items as compared with obvious progress in the search for suitable solutions to other problems shows that only readiness on the part of States or - which is one and the same thing - the practical application

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of the spirit and content of the principles of the Charter in solving problems that affect the international community can guarantee the peace, harmony, and well-being that all desire.

Another obstacle on the road to more just treatment of States, and hence to relations that would give equal weight to everybody's needs, is the conduct of some countries, peoples and leaders who put their own interest before the general interest.

That is why there is still inequality in international economic relations. There is a covert denial of the principles concerning recognition of the sovereign equality of States, the freedom of each State or people to choose the economic or political system that best meets its national interests, the peaceful coexistence of States, and the imposition of pre-conditions on some countries with regard to their co-operation arrangements, thus restricting their right to freedom and sovereignty simply because they are receiving such co-operation.

Equatorial Guinea's conviction that it is possible and indeed necessary to reinforce our Organization's authority compels us to appeal to the Assembly for a wide-ranging dialogue which, through the use of the best ways and means available to us, would lead to an impartial guarantee of universal peace, security, and well-being, which in turn would involve stepping up the present negotiations on disarmament and socio-economic development.

Political action in Equatorial Guinea has focused at all times on the attainment of the paramount goals of a modern State: unity, peace, justice and social well-being for the people. This action was embodied in the programme of democratization contained in the historic Act of 31 August 1979. In carrying out that programme we have organized the society of Equatorial Guinea from its foundations and drafted laws governing that organization.

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The preparation of the law on political parties in Equatorial Guinea concluded this programme of democratization. That law defines and recognizes the democratic principles of the State of Equatorial Guinea, on the basis of which we established the Democratic Party of Equatorial Guinea. Today we view the future with optimism and feel proud to have regained our political freedoms, which are indispensable for our progress and the achievement of our goal of national development.

During these years of arduous work, the Government, worthily headed by His Excellency Mr. Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, has enjoyed the full and unconditional support of the people of Equatorial Guinea, in a deep spirit of fraternal coexistence, peace and unity, guaranteeing the consolidation of the process of democratization.

The first Congress of the Democratic Party of Equatorial Guinea, convened in the city of Bata exactly one year ago, named His Excellency Mr. Obiang Nguema Mbasogo the President. A few months later he was proposed as the candidate in the presidential elections on 25 June last.

The people of Equatorial Guinea, in a democratic spirit, went in large numbers to the voting booths to exercise their right to vote in these first presidential elections since the country achieved independence 21 years ago. By an overwhelming result of 99.96 per cent in favour, the people of Equatorial Guinea demonstrated the political maturity they had acquired from the country's recent experience and from the dynamic action encouraged by the Democratic Party of Equatorial Guinea.

Accordingly, I can state to the Assembly that the process of democratization in my country has achieved a very positive level, enabling all the citizens to become aware of their responsibility to participate actively in political, economic and social affairs, not merely as spectators but as direct actors on the stage of our history.

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Today, 12 October 1989 - the exact date on which I spoke before the General Assembly last year - my country is commemorating 20 years of existence as a sovereign and independent State. It is also the anniversary of our joining the Hispanic world. In this regard, we congratulate all the countries of the world, and particularly those of the Hispanic world. The distance between States and continents has yielded to technological progress. That is why my country, of the Hispanic persuasion although on the African continent, feels close to the Hispanic peoples and shares the concerns of the Hispanic community.

As a result, I take this opportunity to appeal to the Hispanic States and peoples, echoing the desire and mission of the people of Equatorial Guinea, for an increase in our co-operation in all sectors of development. One cannot want what one does not know about. As a result, a physical presence in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, is necessary if a contribution is to be made to the best possible development of our co-operation. From this rostrum, we extend our warmest welcome to all those who will come.

This session has been convened at a time when all the countries and peoples of the world expect our Organization thoroughly to study the various international questions on its agenda. We believe that the course of our history will change qualitatively and quantitatively if greater understanding among States is achieved, thereby consolidating what has already been done to lessen existing tensions in various areas of the world. The participation of the Secretary-General in this work has contributed to enhancing the authority of our Organization. That shows the need to pursue this work in order to ensure peace and harmony between peoples.

We believe that the time has come for intransigence to yield to understanding on the long road towards decolonization. We know that there can be no reason for

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excessive optimism so long as the important Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, contained in General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) is not implemented.

The situation in Namibia remains a matter of concern because of South Africa's failure to comply with the letter and spirit of Security Council resolution 435 (1978), which was confirmed in the debate that took place from 6 to 29 August last and in the report of the Committee of 18 on its mission to Namibia from 7 to 16 August.

My Government reaffirms in this forum its view that Security Council resolution 435 (1978) must be implemented in its final and definitive form, as that constitutes the only acceptable way for the people of Namibia to participate in free and just elections, under the supervision of the United Nations.

My Government continues to be concerned about the tense and dangerous situation in southern Africa. The destabilizing conduct of the racist Pretoria régime has turned the insecurity of living conditions and the systematic violation of the sovereignty of the front-line States into law and custom. There is no justification for the insolent conduct towards the peoples of southern Africa. The tragic situation inflicted on thousands of refugees and repatriated and displaced persons by a régime that behaves in a manner contrary to the principles and decisions of the United Nations requires Member States to work together to put an end to the excesses perpetrated by that régime and to bring its behaviour into line with that of the rest of the world.

The reasonable thing for the racist leaders to do would be to face historical facts and to take action to enable all South Africans, without any distinctions whatsoever, to become actively involved in the solution of the country's problems. In this connection, my Government rejects and strongly condemns the racist

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elections held in South Africa on 6 September last, from which, contrary to the well-known demands of the South African people, the broad majority of the population was excluded.

Apartheid must absolutely be eradicated by strict adherence to the principles of the Charter and by unequivocal support for the just solution that is clear to the entire international community.

My Government is pleased to note the political will and constructive spirit evinced by the People's Republic of Angola in the search for a peaceful and negotiated solution to the national and regional problems of that fraternal country. In this connection, we support the Gbadolite agreements of 22 June, which were ratified at the summit meeting of the eight African Heads of State on 22 August in Harare.

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Given their importance, recent events call for further thought. I refer to the proclamation of the Palestinian State. The people of Palestine should find respect for the relevant United Nations resolutions, with which we are all familiar, are respected. We believe that the will of Palestine - as expressed in the decision of its national council in Algeria in November 1988, in the peace initiative announced by President Arafat at the plenary meeting of the General Assembly in Geneva on 13 December 1988, and in the support expressed by Arab States, in the course of the special summit conference in Casablanca in May this year, for that peace initiative represents a positive contribution to a solution of the problem that pits the PLO against the State of Israel. Such initiatives should be supported in this forum, and we should make a start on the path towards dialogue that will lead to a peaceful solution acceptable to both parties to the dispute. It is a matter of ongoing concern to my Government that Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) have not yet been implemented. To date, those resolutions remain the only valid, positive means of guaranteeing peace in the Middle East.

However, we welcome the progress made at the first and second informal meetings held in Jakarta in July 1988 and February 1989, as well as the international conference on Kampuchea held in Paris from 30 July to 30 August this year. They made a meaningful contribution to a global solution that would satisfy all parties.

Similarly, we welcome the recent meetings between the Government of Cyprus and the Turkish Cypriot community. We believe that continuing substantive dialogue between the two communities may constitute the only way to achieve a just and lasting solution to that problem.

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The uncertain situation on the Korean peninsula is no less alarming so long as the division of the peninsula continues. We hope that at this politically important time an increasingly open, positive and constructive dialogue will be begun with a view to achieving a balance of peace and meeting hopes of national reunification.

In this connection, we hope that a more wide-ranging and responsible dialogue will contribute to putting an end to Argentina's dispute with the United Kingdom with regard to the Malvinas Islands.

My country welcomes with great satisfaction, and is very interested in, all negotiations leading towards peaceful solutions to all domestic and international problems and conflicts. In this spirit, we should like to express our thanks and acknowledgment to the Secretary-General for his efforts to put an end to the dispute between Iran and Iraq. We congratulate those two countries on their decision to observe the cease-fire that began on 20 August this year, which has contributed greatly to the alleviation of tension in that area. We believe that speedy and full implementation of Security Council resolution 598 (1987) might lead to a general and just solution to the problem.

Similarly, we congratulate the fraternal peoples of Chad and Libya for the will that both have expressed, and we hope that implementation of resolution 184 (XXV) of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) will contribute to the achievement of a peaceful settlement of their border disputes.

The negotiations that were conducted between the parties involved as a result of OAU recommendations give us to understand that the problem of Western Sahara will see a positive solution that satisfies all concerned.

However, we remain concerned about the situation prevailing in Afghanistan. We believe that implementation of the Geneva Agreements and of General Assembly

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resolution 43/20, leading to a political solution to the problem that afflicts the Afghan people, would indeed constitute an important contribution.

The hotbeds of tension in Latin America and the Caribbean resulting from the deliberate manipulation of imported ideologies cause us growing concern. My Government hopes - indeed, it is entirely convinced - that the peace accords signed recently at Tela, Honduras, and the very positive role played by the Contadora Group and the Support Group will be fundamental in finding a political solution to the Central American crisis.

Important steps have recently been taken to reduce the threat of destruction hanging over mankind. We applaud the decision by the two super-Powers to reduce their war-waging arsenals, which have imperilled international peace and security. What we want, however, is not a mere reduction but total elimination of nuclear weapons from our planet. We urge the other nuclear Powers to show the same desire as the United States and the Soviet Union to negotiate a global agreement to dismantle all weapons of all types. That might constitute the best contribution they could make to the cause of peace and security throughout the world, as they are protagonists of our time.

Despite the increasing degree of interdependence, there has been an increase in the inequalities and in the socio-economic imbalances between the developed countries and the underdeveloped countries. These trends are bound to constitute a threat to peace and stability throughout the world. We express our deep and abiding concern about the drastic deterioration in the economic situation in the great majority of developing countries. These countries, which are trying to develop despite their unfavourable situation, stubbornly continue to work hard to adjust their economies. However, in current conditions, which are so adverse, and in the

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absence of simultaneous adjustment by developed countries, such efforts increasingly raise the social and political price.

The international political panorama facing the developing countries is sensitive and unfavourable; the prices of commodities decline constantly and systematically; the terms of trade deteriorate daily; all kinds of protectionism are becoming more acute; the flow of capital investment is declining, and interest rates are still high in real terms; monetary and financial instability and inequality in the terms of trade persist, and it remains impossible to achieve the desired goals; external debt has become an irreversible burden that gets less bearable daily, and a problem the developing countries find increasingly difficult to solve.

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None the less, we highly appreciate and praise the position taken by some developed countries in totally or partially forgiving the external debt contracted by developing countries. That helps developing countries carry out more appropriate and reasonable structural adjustments and improve their economic and social situation.

The Government, the Democratic Party and the people of Equatorial Guinea consider that current economic trends and the grave economic situation of developing countries require the urgent adoption of measures and action to foster substantive structural reforms in the context of international economic relations with a view to establishing a system that will contribute to constant equitable growth in the world economy. That is why we favour the establishment of a new international economic order as a broad, workable and valid framework for the world-wide effort to achieve social and economic development.

The Republic of Equatorial Guinea is convinced that the convening in April 1990 of a special session of the General Assembly devoted to international economic co-operation and, in particular, to reactivating economic growth and development in developing countries will provide an opportunity to achieve a new consensus on action based on that growth and development.

We believe that the international development strategy for the fourth United Nations development decade will provide a cohesive framework for international co-operation for the coming decade and will spell out the commitments that will contribute, in the common interest, to hastening and consolidating economic and social progress in developing countries. That strategy should include among its major goals special international support for the least developed countries, which include my country.

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External debt is the greatest handicap to the economic and social development of developing countries. High real interest rates currently consume a disproportionate part of the export income, the gross domestic product and the savings of underdeveloped countries. The sacrifices made by the peoples of those countries have caused serious social disruption, threatening their economic and social stability. It is difficult for those countries to pay their external debt in view of the current economic situation.

We believe that solving the problem of external debt depends principally on the creation of conditions more favourable to more rapid economic development in debtor countries, on the basis of joint responsibility, through co-operation between all the parties concerned, including the Governments of debtor countries, the Governments of creditor countries and the World Bank and other international financial institutions.

Like so many other peoples, the people of Equatorial Guinea is deeply concerned about the drug trafficking and illegal drug use which in recent years have reached alarming proportions in many countries. The growing magnitude of this problem amounts to a social calamity for mankind and must be fought courageously and decisively on all fronts and with all available national and international weapons. Drug trafficking destabilizes the very structure of States, using corruption and the most varied criminal resources in an intricate network of operations, conspiracies and schemes involving all social strata and the most powerful economic sectors, including the fundamental structures of public power. In some States, this poses a threat to national security and sovereignty. It is time, therefore, to view this as a universal problem, because of the social, economic and political factors at stake.

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I wish also to address the role of the international community in the world of science and technology. Today more than ever before it is necessary to support the creation in third-world countries of a network of world-scope institutions and research centres devoted to implementing, developing and promoting the most advanced technology. It is necessary to encourage and organize broader and more coherent international co-operation in that sphere. To achieve this, we must adopt without delay an international code of conduct on the genuine transfer and exchange of technology. In the context of those convictions and criteria, we in Equatorial Guinea have established a council for scientific research, which has already taken the first steps in its research. From this rostrum we appeal to the international community to work together to accelerate and support efforts in that sector.

I cannot conclude without saying that Equatorial Guinea appreciates and values the efforts made since 1982, the year of the first donors' conference for the economic revitalization of our country, held in Geneva under United Nations auspices. Those efforts have made possible a new plan of structural adjustment and tangible economic improvements in our society, in keeping with the recommendations of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

We are certain that the programme for sectoral meetings adopted during the most recent follow-up round-table of the donors' conference, held in November 1988 in Geneva, will be effectively and punctually implemented with a view to achieving its aims, thanks to the ongoing support of the United Nations Development Programme and the three major donors: the World Bank, Spain and France.

I wish in conclusion to reaffirm my conviction that, under the excellent guidance of Major-General Garba, the Assembly will achieve the desired success.

Sir Baddiey DEVESI (Solomon Islands): Let me first congratulate Mr. Garba upon his election to the presidency of the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly. His elevation to that high office is a reflection not only of his competence but also of the esteem in which his country, the Federal Republic of Nigeria, is held internationally. We are confident that under his able leadership our deliberations will reach a successful conclusion.

I should also like to commend his predecessor, Mr. Dante Caputo, the former Foreign Minister of Argentina, for the excellent manner in which he guided the work of the last session.

To our Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, I wish to pay a special tribute for his untiring efforts, which have brought significant results in the further advancement of peace. We are grateful to him.

After being forced to remain in the wings for too long, we are heartened to note that with common sense prevailing the United Nations is at the forefront of international efforts to secure our collective desire for a better and peaceful world. The two super-Powers continue to sit together, talking peace. Even in places of seemingly intractable conflict the prospect of giving peace a chance is increasing. We are therefore witnessing a trend of world-wide rapprochement that has given greater meaning to the idea of peace, which we hope will be translated into a reality. Our presence here is intended to give encouragement to the extension and consolidation of those trends and efforts.

In the Gulf, thanks to the cease-fire arrangement between Iran and Iraq, monitored by the United Nations, the cessation of hostilities has now been effective for more than a year. This, however, is only the beginning, for Security Council resolution 598 (1987), the basis for that peace, remains to a large extent unimplemented. We urge its full implementation and express our full support for the peace efforts of the Secretary-General and his Personal Representative.

(Sir Baddley Devesi,
Solomon Islands)

On Namibia, the implementation of Security Council resolution 435 (1978) on its independence is a major advance which must be maintained so that free and fair elections to the constituent assembly, under the supervision and control of the United Nations, can take place next month. If those elections are to succeed it is essential that all the parties concerned respect the letter and spirit of the United Nations plan and other related arrangements to ensure that nothing is done which could cause them to unravel.

No less significant are the winds of political change blowing across Western Sahara. We note that a breakthrough appears imminent in the 14-year-old dispute there and welcome the acceptance by the two parties to the conflict of the Secretary-General's proposal to work out the details of the implementation of the peace plan presented to them by the Secretary-General and the Chairman of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). We encourage them both to continue their efforts to find a durable solution to the conflict.

Pursuant to the Geneva Agreements on Afghanistan, all foreign troops left Afghanistan in February of this year. Regrettably, the fighting still continues and has in fact escalated, increasing the suffering of the people of Afghanistan. With the massive importation across its border of military hardware to nourish the fighting, the problem in Afghanistan requires a political solution, which must come from the countries concerned. We therefore support the efforts of the Secretary-General to secure a political consensus that will eventually put an end to the unnecessary loss of life and suffering in Afghanistan.

On the Cyprus question, we welcome the recent high-level contacts between the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities and their commitment to achieving an overall settlement. The Secretary-General must be commended for his untiring search for a peaceful solution to the conflict. We therefore call on all parties

(Sir Baddley Devesi,
Solomon Islands)

to co-operate with the Secretary-General and his Special Representative with a view to achieving an agreed settlement.

While we have seen major advances towards peace emerging in the Gulf, Namibia, Western Sahara, Afghanistan and Central America, and super-Power rapprochement, it is indeed sad that this new wave of accommodation and reconciliation still eludes other areas of long-standing conflict.

The recent Conference on Peace in Cambodia, held in Paris, was a step in the right direction towards ending two decades of war, destruction and human suffering. Regrettably, the Conference could not arrive at a comprehensive political settlement. Be that as it may, we should not give up hope of a negotiated political settlement but should encourage to any efforts aimed at reconvening the Paris Conference, which we hope will pave the way for the people of Kampuchea to exercise their inalienable right to self-determination through general and free elections under the auspices of the United Nations.

The lack of progress towards a solution to the conflict in the Middle East continues to be a source of grave concern. We continue to regard an international peace conference under the auspices of the United Nations as the best formula for bringing the parties together in binding negotiations. The right of all to live within secure borders must be recognized and respected.

Elated though we are about the very positive developments in Namibia, we note with concern that the same cannot be said about South Africa. The exclusion of the country's black majority from the parliamentary elections last month made those elections a farce. The new leadership that emerged from the recent elections represents a change only of guard, not of the policies of apartheid. We reiterate the call for comprehensive mandatory sanctions against South Africa and hope that

(Sir Baddley Devesi,
Solomon Islands)

the special session of the General Assembly planned for December will provide the impetus to translate that call into action.

The situation in the Korean peninsula still requires constant vigilance. To assist in their efforts to arrive at a peaceful settlement of disputes in the Korean peninsula, we would welcome the admission of the two Koreas, whether simultaneously or separately, into the United Nations.

Solomon Islands attaches great importance to respect for human rights and we cannot, therefore, remain indifferent to the violations to which those rights are subjected. The events of Tiananmen Square were indeed shocking. We hope the People's Republic of China will eventually heed the appeals addressed to them by the international community.

(Sir Baddley Devesi,
Solomon Islands)

In less than two months from this time next year we shall be commemorating the thirtieth anniversary of the United Nations historic 1960 Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. By then Namibia will, we hope, have been admitted as the 160th Member State of our Organization. But happy as, we are at the prospect of Namibia's admission to the United Nations, we cannot become complacent until the legitimate aspirations of all colonized peoples for a free and genuine act of self-determination is realized.

In New Caledonia, we note the positive measures taken by the Government of France which have restored peace and dialogue to that Non-Self-Governing Territory. We are encouraged by the agreements concluded in Paris last year and hope these will continue to form the basis of New Caledonia's peaceful progress to self-determination.

It is also our hope that the Government of France will, in the near future, co-operate with the United Nations in accordance with Article 73 (e) of the Charter.

It is our firm belief that, as in Namibia and other former Non-Self-Governing Territories, a free and genuine act of self-determination in New Caledonia must be in accordance with the principles and practices of the United Nations. This is also the collective belief of the 15 countries of the South Pacific Forum. At its recent summit meeting held at Tarawa, in the Republic of Kiribati in July of this year, the Forum's Final Communiqué was explicit on this question:

"The Forum restated its strong support for an act of self-determination consistent with the established decolonization practices and principles of the United Nations, in which all options, including independence, would be open, and which would lead to a settlement that safeguards the rights of the

(Sir Baddley Devesi,
Solomon Islands)

indigenous Kanaks and all New Caledonians in a multiracial society."

(A/44/463, para. 19)

That is also the belief shared by my Melanesian brothers and Kanak leaders, and by the late Jean-Marie Tjibaou and Yeiwene Yeiwene, whose tragic assassinations in May this year stunned us all. We shall continue to miss them. But it is up to us to keep their hopes and dreams alive and to ensure that they are translated into a reality.

The commitment of the United States and the Soviet Union to cut their nuclear arsenals by 50 per cent, which we welcome, is a timely reminder that the possession of nuclear weapons is not a guarantee of genuine global security. We welcome also the proposals made at the beginning of this debate by President Bush, and the positive Soviet response, on the reduction of United States and Soviet stockpiles of chemical weapons. But big or small, developed or developing, all Member States have a commitment to global security and stability.

The Treaty of Rarotonga, in the South Pacific, which declares the South Pacific region a nuclear-free zone, constitutes an important disarmament measure. It embodies a major security commitment for the South Pacific region and represents a solemn step in contributing to both regional and global peace and security. Solomon Islands ratified this Treaty last year and to date it has received 11 instruments of ratification from 11 countries in the South Pacific region. The Treaty entered into force upon the deposit of the eighth instrument of ratification on 11 December 1986.

The People's Republic of China and the Soviet Union, as nuclear-weapon States, have already ratified Protocols 2 and 3 of the Treaty. We commend them for their sensitivity in accepting our contribution to what we hope will eventually be a nuclear-free world.

(Sir Baddley Devesi,
Solomon Islands)

It is, however, much to our regret, that the United Kingdom, the United States and France have not, as yet, heeded our concerns, and we urge them to do so by acceding to the Protocols of the Treaty.

On the current economic situation, hard choices have to be made to narrow the widening economic gap between the developing and the developed countries. As an island heavily dependent on commodity exports, Solomon Islands places a premium on the final outcome of the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations, which we hope will take due consideration of the unique problems of island developing countries.

Of the major issues confronting us today there is probably none that has captured our imagination more than the deterioration of the natural environment. The greenhouse effect, global warming, the depletion of the ozone layer, acid rain, waste dumping, forest depletion, and drift-net fishing, threaten our existence.

The greenhouse effect and the resulting global warming and the rise in sea level constitute a direct threat, no longer dismissable, to our survival. We in the Pacific have more cause than many to be deeply concerned about it since if the rise in sea level is significant some of our islands and coastal areas may become permanently inundated. The possibility that entire countries may also drown is almost beyond comprehension.

We in the South Pacific, like other regions I believe, have our environmental problems. But the irony is that while these have contributed very little to the causes of global climate change it appears that we may be among the first of the innocent victims of its consequences - the first, but not the last.

The sea, for many Pacific island countries, is our greatest resource. For some it may be the only resource.

(Sir Baddley Devesi,
Solomon Islands)

Drift-net fishing, or the "wall of death" as it is appropriately called, poses a real and undeniable danger to our marine resources. These "ghost" nets, 15 metres deep and extending to about 60 kilometers, whose primary target is the albacore tuna, suffocates almost anything that comes its way. Whales, dolphins, seals and sea birds, in pursuit of what appears to be easy prey, are entangled helplessly in these nets. We believe drift-nets will seriously deplete albacore tuna stocks in the region over the next two years. This practice must therefore stop.

We welcome the recent decision of Japan to cut by two thirds the number of its tuna fishing vessels using drift-nets in the South Pacific. We hope that this will be the first step towards ending drift-net fishing in the region.

We call on Taiwan, which remains the only holdout, to heed the concerns of the South Pacific Forum and abandon immediately its damaging drift-net operations in the South Pacific. The Pacific Ocean is certainly the largest ocean in the world, but it is certainly not large enough to endure indiscriminate exploitation.

Another danger which threatens our environment is nuclear testing. We therefore call on France to put an end to its nuclear-testing programme in the Pacific. It is not a reduction in the number of nuclear tests that we seek but a complete cessation of those tests.

The bitter truth about the greenhouse effect, gill-net fishing, nuclear testing, acid rain and the depletion of the ozone layer is that their effects transcend national boundaries. It therefore demands an international response. It is time for all nations to join together in a common effort to protect our environment.

(Sir Baddley Devesi,
Solomon Islands)

With conflicts reduced and dialogue resumed, we are indeed witnessing a different political climate, a favourable climate that should now inspire the resolution of long-standing conflicts in other areas; an appropriate time also to inspire and consolidate international co-operation in economic development and the protection of our home and the environment.

(Sir Baddley Devesi,
Solomon Islands)

Global co-operation in the management of global problems is essential to our search for global solutions. Now is the time, so let us all rise to this momentous occasion and proceed to expand the frontiers of peace and harmony.

This is the task, this is the labour, to which we must all bend our efforts. It is the earnest hope of my delegation that as we move into the last decade of this millennium, together, in unity, we can make further positive contributions towards achieving a better world.

Mr. AL SABAH (Kuwait) (interpretation from Arabic): I have the honour to congratulate Mr. Garba, on behalf of Kuwait, upon his election to the presidency of the forty-fourth session of the United Nations General Assembly. We are pleased that he comes from Nigeria, a friendly African country with which we maintain good relations and share common interests. We are confident that his experience and competence will be of great help to us in ensuring the success of the work of this session.

I am also pleased to commend his predecessor, Mr. Dante Caputo, the former Foreign Minister of Argentina, for his success in conducting the work of the last session.

I am making this statement after having listened and followed for the past three weeks, the speeches of many Heads of State and delegations representing the entire world community, with all its different policies and orientations. The common denominator and consensus among all those valuable contributions made by those who have spoken before me was that, on the threshold of the 1990s and drawing near to the advent of the twenty-first century, the world is encountering unprecedented opportunities for peace and development, as well as new challenges that have arisen from the nature of the political, economic and social evolution of the world.

(Mr. Al Sabah, Kuwait)

We must face these opportunities and challenges with new thinking and advanced methods of action that take into consideration the international variables we are now experiencing and witnessing. It is our destiny and responsibility at this juncture to seize opportunities that have the potential to create the appropriate atmosphere for a new dawn in international relations, a dawn that derives its light from the triumph of reason and diplomacy over bigotry and force. It is also our destiny and responsibility to stand up to the new challenges that will put our will to the test, in particular the challenges resulting from the international economic situation, of which indebtedness is one of the most significant components. There are also the challenges of the social situation, in which the questions of environment and drugs are salient features as well as the challenge of international terrorism, which threatens the very core of our values, traditions and norms.*

The role and importance of the United Nations increase in such conditions and thus the Organization requires continuous support. Kuwait wishes to express to the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, its deep appreciation of his efforts and dedication in utilizing the positive aspects emerging in the international arena for the benefit of world peace and to consolidate its foundations, and to reaffirm its support for him and his endeavours.

There is no doubt that the international political atmosphere is improving and that there is détente in international relations. There is the danger, however, that this improvement will not continue while the world economic situation continues to deteriorate and seems even to become more complicated, since the gap between the developed and the developing countries remains wide and is increasing. Meanwhile, the world debt is growing, the prices of raw materials are falling,

* The President took the Chair.

(Mr. Al Sabah, Kuwait)

tariff and trade barriers are increasing, the balance of payments is in a state of disequilibrium, and technical know-how and technological advancement remain the exclusive monopoly of a handful of nations which refuse to share them with others.

Kuwait feels that the debt problem poses the most intractable and significant obstacle to development. It requires urgent, comprehensive solutions that take into consideration the human suffering that afflicts the peoples of the debtor countries. The debt problem has become a source of despair and frustration to them.

It was against this backdrop that the historic initiative by His Highness the Emir of the State of Kuwait, Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Al Jaber Al Sabah, was announced from this rostrum last year. Its aim was the alleviation of the debt burden and the distressed economies of the developing countries, thus extricating those countries from the cycle of crises in which they have been rotating and launching a new phase of more equitable and just international economic relations.

In line with his commitment to this benevolent approach, His Highness the Emir proposed before the ninth summit Conference of non-aligned States, held in Belgrade last September, an appropriate mechanism to set in motion the implementation of his proposal concerning the debt problem.

The Emir of Kuwait did not confine his effort to sounding the alarm about the debt problem, but embarked boldly upon tackling the issue, with the appropriate prescription for its cure, in which he pursues justice and highlights altruism. The world community should therefore study this proposal, the text of which was submitted to the Secretary-General, by virtue of his responsibilities, so that it might be considered in a spirit of co-operation and faith in our common human destiny.

Together, we are proceeding towards the 1990s benefiting from the positive developments in most centres of international disputes, developments which have been inspired by the new spirit whose warmth has begun to thaw the frost around

(Mr. Al Sabah, Kuwait)

those disputes. An earnest and impartial attitude is necessary on all sides, together with a rearrangement of our priorities, to exploit this new spirit.

The withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan and Cambodia, the implementation of the plans aimed at settling the situation in Central America and the continuance of dialogue in Cyprus are all examples of the new responsibilities of the people in those countries in the realization of national harmony and unity, the consolidation of stability and security, and the preparation and implementation of the economic development plans which the peoples of those regions need.

However, neither global peace and security, nor economic development and world prosperity can last or be ensured as long as the Palestinian question remains without a just solution. The Middle East region has for four decades been living with a conflict which has always been and still is a threat to world peace, security and stability. At the root of that conflict is the cause of the Palestinian people, a people that Israel has been attempting by the most inhumane means of all kinds to uproot and expel from its land, while obliterating its national identity.

(Mr. Al Sabah, Kuwait)

Nevertheless, Israel daily awakens to the fact that brute force, however tyrannical, cannot extinguish the torch of the political struggle being waged by the Palestinian people. On the contrary, it only fans the flames, and consequently brings nearer the attainment of that people's legitimate objectives.

There have been two developments of considerable significance in the Palestinian struggle: first, the outbreak of the intifadah, which is nearing the end of its second year, and, secondly, the positive and brave position adopted by the Palestinian leadership since the meeting of the Palestine National Council in November 1988. At that meeting, the Palestinian leadership declared its readiness to assume full responsibility for the establishment of a comprehensive peace based on the principles set forth in the Proclamation of the independent Palestinian State, with Holy Jerusalem as its capital, and with all the international rights and obligations that such readiness implies.

At the recent summit conference at Casablanca all the Arab countries endorsed and supported the resolutions of the Palestine National Council and the new line adopted by the Palestinian leadership. As a result, the Palestinian position is now an Arab one. It is a position that seeks peace anew and puts forward an integrated plan based on justice, international laws and relevant United Nations resolutions.

Those two developments with respect to Palestine increase the responsibility of the international community in general, and the United Nations in particular, to deter Israel from persisting in its obduracy, its rejection of every just peace initiative and its continued perpetration of crimes. Israel must be pressed to respond to international variables and to yield to the logic of right and justice. Israel cannot swim against the world tide; it certainly will not be able to resist its surging waves forever.

(Mr. Al Sabah, Kuwait)

Comprehensive peace is a product of international will, which is unified in calling for an international peace conference with the participation of the five permanent members of the Security Council and all parties involved in the conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, on an equal footing. The international community believes that such a conference constitutes the legal framework within which the Palestinian issue must finally find a just and lasting solution.

The people of the sister country of Lebanon have for 14 years been suffering through a crushing tragedy that threatens their security and stability and has completely devastated and wreaked havoc on their country. The use of force and violence has intensified to the point that the country's national unity and territorial integrity are seriously jeopardized. Earnest and sincere Arab efforts have been exerted to halt the irresponsible hostilities in that Arab country and to achieve national concord based on the justice, equality and coexistence that have characterized the Lebanese people throughout history. At present the sister Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is acting as host to a meeting of members of the Lebanese Parliament to debate the document on national concord proposed by the Tripartite High Arab Committee that was authorized by the recent Arab summit conference to find an appropriate formula for national reconciliation that would definitively stop the fratricidal fighting, preserve Lebanon's national unity, territorial integrity and sovereignty over all its soil, and realize the coexistence and fraternity of all the population in one unified entity on a basis of equality and justice. The international community, which is shocked by the deteriorating situation in Lebanon, is urged to support the Tripartite High Arab Committee and to help it succeed in attaining its goals.

We are, however, in duty bound to declare that the situation in Lebanon will

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not be settled as long as Israel continues to occupy part of its territory, to interfere in its internal affairs, and to persist in acts of aggression against Lebanese sovereignty and territorial integrity. The international community must compel Israel to implement the many Security Council resolutions calling for complete unconditional withdrawal from Lebanese territory. Without such withdrawal, the cycle of violence will continue to afflict that torn country and abort every sincere effort made for its sake.

Perhaps one of the most remarkable achievements of the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security is Security Council resolution 598 (1987), which provided the foundation for the halting of the Iran-Iraq war. Since the endorsement of that resolution by the two parties, regional and international efforts have been focused on achieving success in the ongoing negotiations between the two countries under the auspices of the United Nations Secretary-General. However, unfortunately those negotiations have not yet led to the desired conclusion, namely consummation of a lasting peace based on good-neighbourliness, fraternity and constructive co-operation in which the countries and peoples of the region will enjoy security and stability. We are therefore obliged, by necessity and by duty, to continue to support the efforts of the Secretary-General aimed at making the negotiations a success and full implementation of Security Council resolution 598 (1987).

We are looking forward to the forthcoming visit of Mr. Jan Eliasson, the Secretary-General's Personal Representative, to Baghdad and Teheran. We support his benevolent efforts, and we wish him all success in his coming mission.

Kuwait is grieved to see that an important humanitarian aspect of the sequels of hostilities remains unsolved. The exchange of prisoners of war has not yet been completed, nor have some of its technicalities been ironed out. We call for the

(Mr. Al Sabah, Kuwait)

completion of that exchange as expeditiously as possible, for we believe that that would demonstrate the goodwill and intentions of both parties with regard to the full implementation of resolution 598 (1987) so that peace, security and co-operation may prevail in that critical part of the world.

The positive developments in Namibia, as reflected by the implementation of the steps set forth in Security Council resolution 435 (1978), are gratifying to the international community. Kuwait urges support for the United Nations efforts to implement resolution 435 (1978) fully and calls for alertness and caution vis-à-vis the practices and strategies of South Africa aimed at undermining Namibia's independence plan or at turning it into independence in name only. Kuwait, which has always supported the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) as the legitimate representative of the Namibian people, is hopeful that the young State will join the ranks of independent countries and contribute to the security, stability and welfare of the African continent.

Although the world has managed to score some progress in the Namibian question, the African wounds will not heal until the abhorrent system of apartheid in South Africa has been dismantled, until the native black majority there has fully regained its rights and until democratic majority rule has been established in that country, thus restoring to African persons in South Africa their dignity and sovereignty over their land and returning life to normal.

We look forward to a General Assembly session notable for its achievements and expressive of the positive spirit that lights the sky and serves as a beacon and inspiration for our countries and peoples. May God grant us success.

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

The PRESIDENT: We have just heard the last speaker in the general debate, which began on Monday, 25 September, and took 31 meetings. In the course of the debate we were privileged to listen to important addresses from 16 Heads of State, including two Kings - Their Majesties the King of Lesotho and, this morning, the King of Swaziland; one Provisional President, the President of Panama; five prime ministers, nine deputy prime ministers, 105 ministers and two cabinet ministers. We also heard 16 chairmen of delegations. The total number of speakers was 137.

While that number of participants is by no means the largest on record in terms of past participation in the general debate, it does reflect the growing measure of importance attached to the universal perception of the revived respect for what the United Nations stands for, and humanity's renewed faith in our Organization, that 16 Heads of State honoured us with their presence and wise counsel.

As if timed by a common pulse, all the addresses we heard acknowledged and welcomed the helpful relaxation of tensions and manifestation of mutual respect as well as the thaw in relations between the two super-Powers. It is my hope and expectation that the trickle-down effect of such a development will further help to concentrate the minds of all nations on the imperatives of our shared commonality of interest and interdependence. Indeed, it is my hope that it will also help us focus greater attention on all the concerns and preoccupations so eloquently articulated in the debate, in order to make our world a better place for all - the rich and the poor alike, the powerful as well as the weak.

The recurrent themes have been the pathos, poverty and despair in the third world, the scourge of drug trafficking, the inequities in the prevailing economic

(The President)

order, the crushing burden of debt of third-world countries, the defiant abuse of the environment leading to desertification and other natural calamities, racial injustice, and the denial of human rights to millions in the world.

With differing degrees of emphasis, all participants have underlined the pressing need for the United Nations to be allowed to play a central role as mankind's last hope for peace, justice and international co-operation. I have also discerned a certain welcome commitment by all nations not to impede the task of the Organization as it braces itself to fulfil the hopes and aspirations of the Charter and give effect to the decisions and resolutions which you as Member States have adopted. What I believe is left for us to do in the coming weeks is to summon that imperative political will to achieve those noble aims.

Let us not mince words. There is more serious work ahead. The special session on apartheid scheduled for December is designed to allow us to reflect upon the promised benefits, if any, emanating from the recent elections in South Africa; to reflect upon the even-handedness of the new Pretoria régime, if any; and to allow for the drafting of a consensus declaration on the dismantling of apartheid in South Africa.

But that is not all. The international development strategy ideas will loom large in the spring. I believe that the new atmosphere of co-operation must be utilized to serve the pressing needs of developing countries. That special session will provide a long-awaited sympathetic and constructive hearing on development and much-needed resource transfers. Regional conflicts, drug trafficking and environmental issues will also definitely demand a place in the spotlight. As responsible representatives of our nations we shall be obliged to consider these issues seriously and to produce workable programmes of action.

The calendar for the year is full; yet I believe we are off to a propitious start.

(The President)

I must thank all delegations sincerely for the helpful co-operation extended so far to me and to the other presiding officers in the conduct of our work. Thanks to their co-operation and understanding our meetings have begun on time and every participant has been enabled to be heard in dignity and quietness, without the occasional disruption attendant on the offering of congratulations on the Assembly floor. It is my hope that this wholesome and helpful practice - especially the punctuality and the encouraging spirit of co-operation and good will manifested so far - will continue to prevail during the remainder of the session.

In conclusion, I wish once again to express my most sincere thanks and appreciation to all the speakers and the representatives who have been so lavish in their congratulations to me on my election as President of the General Assembly at its current session. Frankly, I have sometimes wondered whether those generous remarks really were directed to me. As I mentioned earlier my election is a singular honour and tribute to my country and to my continent - not to me. So once more I thank delegations.

(The President)

I wish also to reiterate my pledge that I shall continue to do my best to justify the confidence and trust so manifested in me and I shall continue to count on the Assembly's co-operation in the conduct of the work of this session. I am convinced that together we shall make this session not only a constructive but a memorable one, one in which Member States showed enough courage and political will to move beyond the threshold of a favourable international climate into the realm of greater mutual understanding, respect and concerted global action. And in so doing let us acknowledge that we live in a world where we either swim or sink together. The choice is ours.

We have concluded our consideration of agenda item 9.

AGENDA ITEM 156

EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE TO ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA, THE BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS, DOMINICA, MONTSERRAT AND SAINT KITTS AND NEVIS; draft resolution A/44/L.3

The PRESIDENT: I call on the representative of Trinidad and Tobago, who will introduce draft resolution A/44/L.3.

Mrs. THORPE (Trinidad and Tobago): On 16 September 1989 the Caribbean nations of Antigua and Barbuda, the British Virgin Islands, Dominica, Montserrat and Saint Kitts and Nevis were all struck by hurricane Hugo. Fortunately, the loss of life was mercifully low. However, massive destruction was inflicted on homes and other buildings, agricultural crops and services such as electricity and water.

In its wake the hurricane left several hundred families homeless, and severely damaged schools, hospitals and other health facilities. Electricity, water and telecommunications were extremely hard hit and are still in a state of disruption. The damage to crops such as bananas and sugar cane and to the fishing industry is particularly severe. A large segment of the work force depends on these sectors for their livelihood.

It has been estimated by the five Governments that the overall cost of the

(Mrs. Thorpe, Trinidad and Tobago)

damage to both public and private sectors is in the region of \$500 million, a sum that far exceeds the annual export earnings of Antigua and Barbuda, the British Virgin Islands, Dominica, Montserrat and Saint Kitts and Nevis combined.*

I wish to present for consideration and unanimous adoption by the Assembly the draft resolution A/44/L.3, entitled "Emergency assistance to Antigua and Barbuda, the British Virgin Islands, Dominica, Montserrat and Saint Kitts and Nevis", on behalf of the following delegations: Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Colombia, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Malta, Mauritius, the Netherlands, Nicaragua, Peru, the Philippines, Portugal, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Singapore, Suriname, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Venezuela and my own delegation, Trinidad and Tobago.

In the preambular section the General Assembly recognizes the destruction wrought by hurricane Hugo and the efforts of the Governments and peoples of Antigua and Barbuda, the British Virgin Islands, Dominica, Montserrat and Saint Kitts and Nevis to alleviate the suffering of its victims. It also recognizes the prompt response by Governments, international agencies, non-governmental organizations and private individuals to provide emergency relief. It further notes the magnitude of the disaster and that its long-term effects will require, as a complement to the efforts being made by the countries affected, a demonstration of international solidarity and humanitarian concern to ensure multilateral co-operation in order to meet the immediate emergency situation in the affected areas as well as to carry out reconstruction.

* Mr. Lohia (Papua New Guinea), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mrs. Thorpe, Trinidad and Tobago)

In the operative paragraphs the General Assembly expresses its solidarity with and support for the Governments and peoples of Antigua and Barbuda, the British Virgin Islands, Dominica, Montserrat and Saint Kitts and Nevis. It also expresses its appreciation to States, international agencies and non-governmental organizations providing emergency relief, calls upon all States to contribute generously to the relief and reconstruction efforts and requests the Secretary-General, in collaboration with the international financial institutions and the United Nations system, to assist the Governments of the affected countries in identifying emergency medium- and long-term needs and in mobilizing resources.

It is our collective hope that the Assembly will be able to adopt by consensus the draft resolution before it.

Mr. ARROSPIDE (Peru) (interpretation from Spanish): On behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States, I should like to inform the Assembly that since 6 October the draft resolution on emergency assistance to Antigua and Barbuda, the British Virgin Islands, Dominica, Montserrat and Saint Kitts and Nevis has enjoyed the support of each and every member of the group. This is an earnest gesture of the solidarity of the members of our group with people in emergency situations. We recommend that the draft resolution be adopted by consensus.

Mr. STANISLAUS (Grenada): On behalf of the Government of Grenada I wish to speak a few words in support of draft resolution A/44/L.3, entitled "Emergency assistance to the peoples of Antigua and Barbuda, the British Virgin Islands, Dominica, Montserrat and Saint Kitts and Nevis", introduced by the Permanent Representative of Trinidad and Tobago.

The Government and people of Grenada express solidarity and empathy with the peoples of Antigua and Barbuda, the British Virgin Islands, Dominica, Montserrat, and Saint Kitts and Nevis, which have suffered loss of life and tremendous loss of property through the fury of hurricane Hugo.

(Mr. Stanislaus, Grenada)

The history, the geography and the demography of our Caribbean region is such that when one island State hurts, all Member States feel the pain; when one Member State is helped or exalted, all rejoice. It is in this spirit therefore and with this in mind that I express the heartfelt thanks of the Government and people of the affected island States to those countries represented here at the United Nations, to the agencies and individuals who have responded so readily and so generously to the plight of our sister islands, some of which have been literally destroyed. Additionally, profound gratitude is expressed to the Secretary-General and the United Nations, particularly the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator and the United Nations Development Programme, which have been so helpful, especially during the days immediately following the hurricane.

The peoples of the Caribbean recognize that much of the recovery effort from this disaster is their own responsibility. Therefore my country, Grenada, within the constraints of its limited resources, has already sent medical manpower, medicine and other material to the affected islands. However, the customary support and assistance from a generous and caring international community will bring additional material help and comfort to a gallant people in their present travail.

It is for this reason that an urgent appeal is made to all Member States not only to support the resolution presented today but also to participate fully in the United Nations pledging conference to be held here at Headquarters in the very near future.

Finally, as a people of faith and courage, we accept this natural disaster, over which we have no control, realistically and philosophically as we recall these comforting words: "It is an ill wind indeed that blows no one some good".

(Mr. Stanislaus, Grenada)

Furthermore, we believe that just as nature never bestows its benevolence without exacting a price, equally so is the converse true.

Dame Ruth Nita BARROW (Barbados): As one of the sponsoring Governments, I speak in support of the resolution introduced by Her Excellency the Ambassador of Trinidad and Tobago. She has spoken feelingly about hurricane Hugo as has our previous speaker. We know of no means to prevent a hurricane. No action may be taken to avoid its deadly and disastrous forces. One may be an attempt to protect oneself against its effects as best one may.

Countries like ours which, due to their geographical location and through no fault of their own, are devastated by a hurricane deserve all forms and kinds of assistance which may be delivered. Last month hurricane Hugo, the latest hurricane, swept through the Caribbean leaving in its wake death and destruction, as members have read and seen on television. CARICOM countries under the aegis of CARICOM - the Caribbean community - have co-ordinated and launched a relief effort for the sister countries which were afflicted and in one case, as we know, completely devastated by hurricane Hugo.

Barbados pledges to continue its assistance for as long as it is needed. However, in the Caribbean we are small island developing countries with limited resources and capacities. More, much more, is needed if the afflicted countries are to overcome the destruction wrought on their agricultural sectors, their infrastructures and their economies in order to resume their development efforts with the shortest possible delay.

Barbados therefore joins its voice with all those others urging the international community to contribute most generously to the relief and reconstruction efforts being undertaken in Antigua and Barbuda, the British Virgin Islands, Dominica, Montserrat and Saint Kitts and Nevis. Also, we cannot forget our sister islands of the American Virgin Islands.

(Dame Ruth Nita Barrow,
Barbados)

We must be careful, however, to ensure that due consideration is given and sufficient resources are allocated to the medium and long-term reconstruction programmes which it will be necessary to formulate.

Two days ago, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Barbados, in addressing this Assembly, expressed his hope that the devastation caused by hurricane Hugo would serve as an impetus to the international community to give its full support to the proclamation for the international Decade for the Reduction of Natural Disaster. I reiterate that concern.

Mr. RICHARDSON (United Kingdom): My delegation is pleased to have joined the sponsors of the draft resolution before us. It is hard to overstate the destruction and chaos which hurricane Hugo caused when it struck the Caribbean last month. My Government takes this opportunity to reiterate its deep sympathy to all those in the region who suffered.

My Government rendered prompt assistance to all the Caribbean States and territories mentioned in this draft resolution during the first critical phase of emergency relief. This included a dispatch of a naval vessel with supplies to the island of Montserrat, which was particularly severely affected.

Looking to the future, we have just announced that we are providing \$3 million for immediate emergency relief and rehabilitation purposes. We are meanwhile discussing the long-term rehabilitation needs of Montserrat with its Government.

On behalf of the Governments of the British territories affected by hurricane Hugo, I should like to thank all those who have helped mitigate the effects of this terrible disaster. We strongly commend this draft resolution, and we hope that the General Assembly will adopt it by consensus.

Mr. AMIGUES (France) (interpretation from French): I should like at the outset to express again to the Governments of Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, and Saint Kitts and Nevis as well as to the authorities in Montserrat and the British Virgin Islands the French people's deep sympathy for their peoples, which have suffered so terribly from the effects of hurricane Hugo. My delegation would like to assure them of the French Government's readiness to continue to demonstrate its regional solidarity in helping them to overcome this trial.

Immediately after the hurricane had passed, emergency relief measures were provided from our provinces in the Antilles and from the metropolitan country. A member of the French Government, the Secretary of State for Humanitarian Assistance, Mr. Kouchner, visited the region himself to assess the needs.

We took action to support these countries stricken by the hurricane despite very heavy constraints arising from the grave emergency then prevailing in Guadeloupe.

Our main actions were: the dispatch of three National Marine vessels, particularly to transport a medical team to Montserrat, and three helicopters; the dispatch of a Hercules aircraft with 16 tonnes of emergency supplies - that aircraft then being made available for the transport of those supplies; and the provision of food, medicine, medical supplies, generators, tents, chain-saws, cisterns and disinfectants. That initial relief assistance already totals in excess of 1.5 million francs and will certainly reach a final total of 2.2 million francs.

Finally, France is currently considering, together with the countries affected, ways and means of providing assistance to those countries as they engage in reconstruction.

Mr. VAN SCHAİK (Netherlands): The delegation of the Kingdom of the Netherlands would like to express its feelings of solidarity with the Caribbean countries that have been recently hit so brutally by hurricane Hugo.

This disaster also hacked its destructive path through the Caribbean part of the Kingdom. The people of Saba, St. Eustatius and St. Maarten immediately began to pick up the pieces, and jointly we have started the process of rebuilding what has been lost.

We therefore doubly empathize with our Caribbean neighbours and we sincerely hope that the international community and the United Nations system will do whatever they can to assist in the reconstruction of the affected islands in the Caribbean region.

It is in that spirit that we have co-sponsored the draft resolution before us.

The PRESIDENT: May I take it that the Assembly wishes to adopt draft resolution A/44/L.3?

Draft resolution A/44/L.3 was adopted (resolution 44/3).

The meeting rose at 5.25 p.m.