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President: Mr. Essy (Côte d'Ivoire)

The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

Agenda item 9 (continued)

General debate

The President (*interpretation from French*): I call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden, Her Excellency Ms. Lena Hjelm-Wallén.

Ms. Hjelm-Wallén (Sweden): May I at the outset express my sincere congratulations to you, Sir, on your election to the important post of President of the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session.

The loss of the ferry *Estonia* in the Baltic Sea, where more than 900 people perished, brought disaster close to our shores. The shock still lingers in the hearts and minds of all people around the Baltic. I am certain that this tragic event will in the end bring the stricken peoples even closer together. Let me convey our sincere gratitude for the sympathy and condolences that have been expressed in this Assembly.

Sweden's commitment to the United Nations and its principles and ideals is longstanding, firm and deep. To the new Swedish Government this commitment is crucial. The fiftieth anniversary of the Charter of the United Nations is approaching. It is perhaps the most important political document in the hands of humanity today. Its strength and potential are immense and must be brought to fruition.

In the spirit of the Charter, world leaders should mobilize a global civic spirit of solidarity to extend the scope of and respect for international law and to strengthen global governance. The United Nations gives us an international system of law to avoid anarchy and the rule of the strongest. The United Nations enables us to work together to thwart ruthless assertion of self-interest and spheres of influence.

Sweden wants a United Nations which reacts effectively against atrocities and mitigates human suffering and through which we can tackle the major questions of global survival, together and in solidarity. Sweden wants a United Nations that not only is a forum for the interests of States but that places the well-being of the individual at the centre. Solidarity does not recognize borders. Let me quote from the statement of the President of South Africa, Nelson Mandela, in this Assembly a week ago:

"The millions across our globe who stand expectant at the gates of hope look to this Organization to bring them peace, to bring them life, to bring them a life worth living." (*Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-ninth Session, Plenary Meetings, 14th meeting, p. 10*)

These expectations and hopes are threatened by war and violence, by the suppression of human rights, and by racism and xenophobia. They are threatened by starvation, poverty, disasters and environmental degradation. Peace and security, democracy, human

rights and sustainable economic and social development constitute a cohesive entity. If we neglect any of these values, we endanger the others.

Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania are here among us in this Assembly as democratic and sovereign countries from which Russian troops have at long last been withdrawn. Diplomatic breakthroughs in the Middle East offer hopes for a comprehensive and lasting peace. In El Salvador the United Nations has made a significant contribution to ending the civil war. In South Africa, the apartheid has been dismantled.

Yet we are confronted with new conflicts and dangers. We must all learn from tragic events such as those in Rwanda and Somalia. The inconceivable suffering in Rwanda points to the need for preventive diplomacy, early action and the coordination of United Nations efforts. In Somalia, the break-up of organized society and the ensuing large-scale violence and starvation underline the need for the careful coordination of peace-keeping, peacemaking and peace-building endeavours.

While taking a forceful attitude to gain respect, the United Nations should avoid military enforcement other than as a very last resort and with a clear Security Council mandate.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina and in other parts of the former Yugoslavia, efforts to end the conflict must be intensified and accepted by all parties. Pressure on Bosnian Serbs has to be further increased. Only in peace can the tragic consequences of "ethnic cleansing" be reversed. Now is the time to work out plans for reconstruction and reconciliation.

The Swedish Government is concerned about information on Iraqi military activity close to the border with Kuwait. We fully support the statement on the situation made by the Security Council three days ago.

In facing the challenges of the post-cold-war international system, Member States must give their full support to the United Nations, but they must also actively promote necessary reforms of the Organization. The Commission on Global Governance, headed by the Swedish Prime Minister and by Mr. Ramphal, will present proposals for reform early next year.

Let me mention a few areas where, in my view, reform is urgently needed.

The United Nations must be able to operate more efficiently and according to modern principles of management, and new priorities have to be set.

We need an enlarged and more effective Security Council, one that is both legitimate and representative. There is a need for increased transparency in the work of the Council. Countries in all regions must feel that they are partners in its actions. The Council has to maintain political control over the actions it authorizes. It must not become an instrument for dividing the world into spheres of interest, one in which the collective nature of United Nations action is not sufficiently safeguarded.

Sweden has drawn experience from its participation in the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR). Substantive consultations between troop contributors, the Secretariat and Security Council members on a formal and regular basis are necessary.

There must be a particular focus on early warning and early action in conflict resolution. Preventive diplomacy should be further strengthened. Thousands of lives can be saved and costly relief efforts avoided if action is taken in time.

The new Swedish Government is ready to establish a United Nations peace-keeping brigade. We do this in response to the Secretary-General's proposal for stand-by forces set up by Member States, ready to be deployed in crisis areas without delay.

The need for better and more uniform training of peace-keepers is urgent. Particular attention should be paid to improved coordination between the military aspects of peace-keeping and civilian and humanitarian efforts. With this in mind, Sweden is prepared to contribute to improved training of peace-keepers.

Sweden would like to see closer interaction between humanitarian programmes and peace-keeping operations. There is great potential for humanitarian action as a tool of preventive diplomacy, as well as for promoting a political climate that can facilitate the peaceful settlement of disputes at an early stage.

The reluctance of Member States to pay their dues in full and on time is frustrating and must cease immediately. When this lack of discipline affects the financing of peace-keeping operations, it puts an additional burden on the troop contributors.

Sweden welcomes measures by the Department of Humanitarian Affairs to coordinate the activities of humanitarian agencies and many non-governmental organizations.

Human rights is another area of priority for the Swedish Government. Fortunately, there is a growing and widening awareness among Member States of the role of human rights and democracy for the development of modern societies. Binding norms protecting human rights exist, yet violations continue. This is unacceptable. Governments must show the will and commitment to fully implement human rights norms.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child was a great achievement. It is indeed a great challenge to assure all children of care, protection, education and freedom from hunger and from physical or mental violence, as provided for in the Convention and reaffirmed at the World Summit for Children. Governments which have ratified the Convention must live up to their commitments to the children of the world.

Solidarity is fundamental in our efforts to overcome global economic and social challenges, and, thus, fundamental to prospects for peace and solidarity. The United Nations has a unique and central role in this endeavour.

Sweden's development cooperation will focus on support for the long-term, sustainable development of poor countries, with special emphasis on democracy, popular participation and the rights of women and children.

Sweden will continue to allocate a substantial amount of its assistance to operational activities in the United Nations. We will also continue our efforts to strengthen the United Nations function as a forum for normative discussion and action and as a channel for development cooperation. The quality and effectiveness of United Nations activities in the economic and social field have to be improved, while at the same a stable and predictable flow of resources is secured.

Priorities and the allocation of responsibilities within the international community need to be discussed further. "An Agenda for Development" (A/48/935) is a key instrument in this endeavour. We must use it to draw up a clear and strategic programme of action for the United Nations system in the development area.

The International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo, the World Summit for Social Development to be held in Copenhagen, and the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing are all linked. They contribute to the achievement of human security in a broader sense.

The Cairo Conference established that questions of population and development must be treated together. The starting-point must be the human being and the rights and security of the individual.

Agenda 21, adopted at the Rio Conference, facilitates joint action to achieve sustainable development at both the local and the global level. All over Sweden local versions of Agenda 21 are now being actively pursued.

It is imperative to stop wasting resources and thereby depriving future generations of their means of livelihood. Patterns of consumption and production must be sustainable. In this regard, the developed countries have a particular responsibility. Ecological balance must be established also while we combat poverty.

Disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction are central to the goals of preventing conflicts, promoting peace and fostering economic and social development. In recent years important progress has been made. Agreements that were inconceivable only a few years ago have been concluded. But signatures are not enough. Agreements must also be ratified and implemented if they are to contribute to peace and security.

Furthermore, the present momentum should be used to strengthen and further develop well-established disarmament regimes. The need to establish a verification system for the Convention on biological weapons is a case in point.

The non-proliferation Treaty is a key to both nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The Treaty is the only multilateral agreement in which nuclear-weapon States have committed themselves to nuclear disarmament. As long as nuclear weapons exist, we must insist that these commitments be honoured. It is not least with this in mind that the extension of the Treaty should be pursued. Our common goal must be a world free of nuclear arms.

On several occasions, Sweden has presented proposals for a comprehensive test-ban treaty. We are gratified that all States, including the nuclear-weapon States, are now prepared to negotiate such a treaty. It is essential that these negotiations be concluded in the very near future.

Sweden was one of the first countries to ratify the chemical weapons Convention. So far, almost 160 States have signed the Convention, but only 16 have ratified it. We urge all States to take the necessary steps for ratification, so that the Convention can enter into force without delay.

Some 100 million land-mines all over the world represent both an acute and an impending humanitarian disaster as well as a threat to economic development, even years and decades after hostilities have ceased. The long-term solution is an international agreement to ban anti-personnel land-mines. Sweden has proposed such a ban.

Regional instruments for preventing and dealing with conflicts are being developed. This should not deprive the regions involved of support from the international community through the United Nations. The responsibility of the United Nations, including the Security Council, remains universal.

The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) is a central and indispensable institution for conflict prevention and management. The endeavours of the CSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities have effectively contributed to building security in Europe, as have the CSCE missions in the field.

The Swedish experience of cooperation between the CSCE and the United Nations tells us that global and regional efforts are not in contradiction but are mutually reinforcing.

Sweden's non-participation in military alliances remains unchanged. This policy contributes to the maintenance of stability in the north of Europe, and improves our possibilities of working for common security in Europe and in the world at large. Sweden will actively contribute to the new security partnership in Europe by responding rapidly to requests from the United Nations, and by contributing substantially to activities of the Council of Europe, the CSCE and the Partnership for Peace arrangement. We want to strengthen cooperation with all our neighbours around the Baltic Sea

and in the Barents Sea region. We look forward to cooperation in all areas with the new, democratic Russia.

Sweden has applied for membership in the European Union. In one month the people of Sweden will decide on this important question in a referendum. As a member of the Union, Sweden would whole-heartedly support the Union's efforts to promote security and economic and social development, not only in Europe but on a global scale. It is by looking outwards, by forging links and extending its cooperation to other regions, that the European Union makes its contribution to global stability and solidarity. Let me emphasize that there is no contradiction between European and global cooperation. Sweden will be an active member of the United Nations and defend openness and international cooperation.

Sweden has presented its candidature for a seat on the Security Council for the period 1997 to 1998. The Swedish candidature is based on our commitment to global security, on our will to promote international law, and on our conviction that conflicts can and must be solved by addressing their root causes before they lead to war.

Sweden's support for the United Nations is a fundamental national interest and a cornerstone in our foreign policy, for reasons of peace, freedom, security, democracy and justice. For these reasons, Sweden will strongly promote the United Nations — a United Nations based on democratic principles, giving us all a voice in our common future.

Address by Mr. Ntsu Mokhehle, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Lesotho

The President (*interpretation from French*): The Assembly will now hear a statement by the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Lesotho.

Mr. Ntsu Mokhehle, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Lesotho, was escorted to the rostrum.

The President (*interpretation from French*): I have great pleasure in welcoming the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Lesotho, His Excellency the Right Honourable Mr. Ntsu Mokhehle, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Mokhehle (Lesotho): On behalf of the people and Government of the Kingdom of Lesotho, and on my own behalf, I have the pleasure to extend to you, Sir, our

warmest congratulations on your well-deserved election to the presidency of the General Assembly at the forty-ninth session. Your election is a fitting tribute to the efforts that your country has made and continues to make in international relations, especially its mediatory role in conflict situations on our continent. Our special thanks also go to your predecessor, the Ambassador of the Republic of Guyana, His Excellency Mr. Samuel Insanally, whose abilities and clear vision in steering the Assembly during the forty-eighth session will forever be remembered with appreciation.

We are also indebted to our distinguished Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, whose track record is without parallel.

My delegation is proud to welcome the Republic of South Africa, now free and democratic, back into the international fold. The resumption of the right of South Africa, a founding Member of the United Nations, to participate in the deliberations of the General Assembly and other organs of the United Nations, is very timely, coming as it does as we approach the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations.

Even as we approach the threshold of the twenty-first century, our world is still mired in conflicts. Our Organization must strive to contain these and other situations, which are the legacy of the post-cold-war era. We are entering a new era, one in which democratic and inclusive global institutions can play a principal role in building a better world. It is still difficult, however, to have a clear vision of the future role of the United Nations in the new international political order that is emerging following the end of the cold war.

As it approaches its fiftieth anniversary, the United Nations faces a number of challenges; it has to become a real instrument of international legality, peace and security. The Organization needs to have the means and the flexibility to play an increasingly active role in these unpredictable times. Unfortunately, however, the United Nations of today still reflects the structure of the world of 1945 as seen by the victors of the Second World War. United Nations organs such as the Security Council need to be revitalized and democratized so that they may become more representative of the regions encompassed in this Organization.

The General Assembly, as one of the principal organs of the United Nations, an organ that is universal in character and one in which Member States enjoy sovereign

equality, needs revitalization as part of the current process of the transformation and reform of the United Nations system. The United Nations system should be able, at all times, to respond rapidly to changes and new developments as they occur around the world. In the last few years we have witnessed significant events of historic moment. We had not anticipated that the Iron Curtain would be dismantled so quickly; nor could we have foreseen the demolition of the Berlin Wall and the eradication of apartheid in South Africa. The United Nations may not possess the clairvoyance to predict events before they occur, but it should have the capacity to respond to developments and crises rapidly and effectively as they arise. The events in Bosnia and Herzegovina and, recently, in Rwanda starkly demonstrate the sluggishness of the decision-making process and the lack of responsiveness on the part of the system.

Disarmament, especially in the nuclear field, remains an urgent concern of this Organization. Its relationship to international peace and security is today more evident than ever before. We are mindful of the fact that in recent years, at the height of the cold war, the world experienced a period of uncertain peace, a peace that was sustained more by the fear of a nuclear holocaust than by the existence of harmonious relationships among nations, especially the opposing nuclear blocs, or by progress towards complete and general disarmament. Today, conditions exist for the establishment of a stable and peaceful global environment. It is under such conditions that the world can begin to enjoy what may be called the peace dividend, whereby global expenditures will be shifted away from preparations for war and unending concern for national security towards investment in development.

Solid groundwork for cooperation and confidence-building has been successfully laid in a number of regions. The progress in this regard bodes well for the future. In our region, the continental organization, the Organization of African Unity (OAU), has established a mechanism for the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts. The apparent inability of the world community to act in a timely and decisive manner during some tragic conflict situations in our continent has taught Africa the cardinal lesson that we cannot continue to delegate our responsibilities to the rest of the world. We have seen evidence of this a number of times, particularly during crisis situations in Rwanda and Somalia. Africa is taking up more seriously the challenge of fending for itself. We shall, however, continue to

count on international solidarity and cooperation during the trial stages of the mechanism.

In Liberia, the OAU, in conjunction with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the United Nations, continues to seek a solution to the conflict on the basis of the implementation of the Cotonou Peace Agreement. We are happy with the progress achieved thus far in Mozambique. The situation in Angola, however, continues to be of grave concern to us.

We urge the parties involved to show political will and to negotiate in good faith in order to ensure the early establishment of lasting peace, stability and development.

The complementarity between democracy and the observance of human rights on the one hand, and development on the other, can no longer be a subject of debate. Democracy is the cornerstone of every civil society and the preservation and sustaining of its institutions should be binding on all of us. The expression by the international community of the will to cooperate in this endeavour has been clear in recent times. If it is necessary to look backward to yesterday, it is only to draw lessons that will enable us to march confidently and resolutely into the future, a future in which our citizens will live in harmony and enjoy prosperity.

The attainment of democracy, peace and development as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and in the charters of the Organization of African Unity and other organizations has become the responsibility of all nations. Where these principles are threatened by those who are reluctant to come to terms with the realities of today, the international community has stood up resolutely in defence of our fledgling democracies. This attitude augurs well for the new world order we seek to establish.

The events in Haiti and our recent experience in Lesotho demonstrate beyond the shadow of a doubt that young and fledgling democracies can be seriously threatened or turned off their course. In the early morning of 17 August this year, the people of Lesotho woke up to hear an announcement over Radio Lesotho that shocked and bewildered them. According to that announcement, certain clauses of the Constitution of Lesotho had been suspended, and as a result of that illegal and arbitrary act the democratically-elected parliament and Government of Lesotho had, it was said, been dissolved. The constitutional crisis we faced has since been resolved; however, I recall these events because of the important lesson they brought home to all of us who were directly concerned.

First, it became abundantly clear that the support for democracy among our people cuts straight across party political lines. Secondly, the international community can no longer countenance an open attack upon democratic principles and the institutions of democratic governance. The people of Lesotho rose up in large numbers to demonstrate their displeasure and their abhorrence of the disguised coup against their elected Government. Despite the repressive measures taken by those who had brazenly intruded upon the constitutional order of our country, the people sent a clear signal that the powers of a tyrant are forever circumscribed by the will and the determination of the people to resist oppression and by their desire to be governed only with their own consent.

I take this opportunity to thank the United Nations, the Organization of African Unity and the commonwealth of nations for supporting my Government and my people in their struggle to maintain legality, constitutionality and democratic rule in Lesotho. I need to mention specifically the timely and principled intervention by President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, President Nelson Mandela of South Africa and President Ketumile Masire of Botswana. It is through their mediatory efforts that we were able to emerge from the unfortunate constitutional crisis that we experienced.

The people of Lesotho will always remember that when they faced a critical test, when the foundations of their young democracy were under attack and threatened with wanton destruction, the friends of democracy stood firm and remained resolute to the end. The member States of the European Union and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) never wavered in their support for democracy in Lesotho. The Governments of the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Japan, the Federal Republic of Germany and Sweden took a stand and immediately suspended all economic assistance to Lesotho, thus sending a clear signal to the usurpers of power that what is really here to stay is democracy, and nothing else.

We in Lesotho believe that the observance of human rights would go a long way towards eliminating hotbeds of tension and civil strife. In almost every country experiencing some kind of civil strife, it will always be found that the first casualty of that strife is human rights.

It is in this context that, recently, Lesotho ratified quite a number of international human rights instruments. At the regional level, we all support the work of SADC, which has recently decided to establish a sector to deal

with human rights questions. We pledge to work with our fellow SADC member States as we develop this new sector of our organization. We also pledge to fulfil our obligations at the international level through the various United Nations bodies engaged in human rights work.

The President (*interpretation from French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Lesotho for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Ntsu Mokhehle, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Lesotho, was escorted from the rostrum.

The President (*interpretation from French*): I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Zimbabwe, His Excellency Mr. Nathan Shamuyarira.

Mr. Shamuyarira (Zimbabwe): My delegation congratulates you personally, Sir, as well as your country, Côte d'Ivoire, on your election as President of the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session. Your election is testimony to the role you and your country have played in international relations. We are confident that the United Nations will benefit from the term of your presidency. Allow me also to congratulate your predecessor, His Excellency Ambassador Samuel Insanally of Guyana, on his outstanding stewardship of the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session. His conduct of the many complex and vital issues before that session was indeed praiseworthy.

Our tribute also goes to our Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for his sterling leadership of our Organization during the past year, a year in which it has continued to face ever-increasing challenges. We are especially grateful to him for his continued efforts to further the objectives of the United Nations in Africa and elsewhere, and for his tireless drive to enhance the Organization's role in maintaining international peace and security and addressing development issues.

My delegation would like, at the outset, to welcome the delegation of South Africa in our midst. Its readmission into the community of nations signifies victory in its long and difficult struggle for justice and equality. For the African continent, it marks the closing chapter in the total decolonization of the continent; and for the United Nations, it concludes an extraordinary collective struggle against the policy of apartheid.

In this context, I must add that the recent decision by the General Conference of the International Atomic Energy

Agency to redesignate South Africa as Africa's representative on the Agency's board was indeed appropriate and welcome.

However, in welcoming South Africa back to our international Organization, we should also heed the words of President Nelson Mandela - uttered from this rostrum only a week ago - that his country needs massive financial and material aid to cope with the problem of the millions of poor and unemployed people in his country.

While the triumph of democratic forces in South Africa is cause for celebration, the tragic situation in Angola continues to be a source of major concern to my delegation. We are gravely concerned at the continued conflict in that country. If the peace accord negotiated in Lusaka is not signed by the end of October, the Security Council should immediately impose economic sanctions on UNITA, as agreed in resolution 864 (1993). We cannot continue delaying and postponing action while waiting for a peace that does not come. However, if the peace accord is signed, the United Nations, for its part, should stand ready to deploy a greatly increased peace-keeping force to supervise the cease-fire.

In Mozambique, despite delays in the implementation of the General Peace Agreement, we are hopeful that peace and stability will soon be realized. The forthcoming national elections, planned for 27 and 28 October, should produce results acceptable to all Mozambicans so that they can live in peace and harmony. The international community and the United Nations should continue to provide the material assistance that is needed to realize that peace in Mozambique.

Members are aware of the crisis situation that had been developing in the Kingdom of Lesotho since the beginning of the year, which culminated in the attempted unseating of the democratically elected Government. We have just heard a statement by the Prime Minister of Lesotho himself, Mr. Mokhehle, describing to us the events that took place in his country. Consistent with the Organization of African Unity mechanism for the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) charged Botswana, South Africa and Zimbabwe with undertaking a regional initiative to resolve the crisis in Lesotho.

Mr. Blandino Canto (Dominican Republic), Vice-President, took the Chair.

We are happy to report that this joint mediation has resulted in the restoration of constitutionality and constitutional Government in that country. Prime Minister Mokhehle has adequately described that situation, and I need add nothing more.

In Rwanda, the horrendous acts of genocide we have witnessed will surely haunt every one of us for a long time to come, both those among us who had the means to act but did not do so and the many who, while desiring to help, lacked the means. We call for the strengthening of the United Nations presence under the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR), as an essential confidence-building measure to provide the displaced people of Rwanda with tangible assurances that they can safely return to their homes. A few days ago we heard a statement by the President of Rwanda, Mr. Pasteur Bizimungu, inviting an increase in the size of UNAMIR in order to achieve precisely what we are asking for: confidence-building.

In both Rwanda and Burundi, the tensions are still too close to the surface for anyone's comfort. In Somalia, the deterioration of the security situation and the resurgence of inter-clan fighting, banditry and lawlessness are still a source of great concern to my delegation. The people of Somalia should take full advantage of United Nations peace-keeping efforts and of the OAU mediation effort led by President Meles Zenawi of Ethiopia, and forge a political settlement based on sharing the power among the Somali nation as a whole. Zimbabwe has contributed two battalions to peace-keeping in Somalia. As we start gradually withdrawing those battalions, we hope they will not be called back to a Somalia where law and order have broken down again.

We are glad that the Identification Commission of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO), has begun its work, and we urge both parties speedily to resolve any outstanding impediments to the holding of the referendum in that country - and we know from debates in this Hall that there have been many impediments. The quest for self-determination in Western Sahara has taken too long, and has remained on our international agenda for a long time. It should therefore not be delayed any further.

My delegation also welcomes the recent major developments in the Middle East peace process which have brought the people of Palestine closer to their inalienable right to self-determination. While we fully support that peace process, we believe that it should proceed on the

basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1975), and that the international community should continue to monitor developments in that region closely so as to generate and maintain the momentum for change. The people of Palestine still need and deserve our continued support until they reach the goal of nationhood in a Palestinian State with its capital in Jerusalem.

We from the African region are particularly mindful of the inextricable link between peace, security and stability on the one hand and socio-economic development on the other. There can be no economic development without peace and stability. Central to these fundamental concerns about peace and stability are the basic issues of protecting human rights and democratic governance. We believe that high priority must be given to these issues in our national policies. Consequently, dictatorial and non-democratic regimes should be shunned and isolated by all of us and by the international community at large, as well as by regional organizations. The curtailment of people's participation in decision-making processes undermines the capacity of countries to provide all their people with even the basic necessities of life including food, water and shelter and basic social services such as education and health.

Zimbabwe believes that international efforts to promote peace, stability and security where these do not exist or are threatened can largely be facilitated through regional organizations and good neighbours. We in Africa have taken concrete measures in this regard by establishing a permanent mechanism of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) for the prevention, management and resolution of conflict. It is in keeping with the spirit of regional arrangements that the countries belonging to the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) joined hands in addressing the situation in Liberia - work that still continues - and that we in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) took the initiative in Lesotho to which I have already referred. In our view, such arrangements could also be devised to address situations elsewhere in our continent, for example in Rwanda, Burundi and Somalia. What we are urging is the involvement of regional organizations, subregional organizations and neighbourly countries in conflict resolution and conflict management, because they know the problems and they know the issues.

For such regional arrangements to become sustainable it is essential that other regional organizations and the United Nations extend a helping hand by

providing financial and other material assistance. For indeed, what are initially regarded as internal or local conflicts have the potential, if left unattended, to grow into trouble spots threatening international peace and security itself.

This is an auspicious time for the family of nations to further the goal and achieve the objective that the founding fathers of our Organization had foremost in their minds: - that of disarmament. In this context, my delegation is of the view that the extension and review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) scheduled to be held in March 1995 is a unique opportunity for practical steps to be taken to ensure the total elimination of nuclear weapons. Clearly, the treaty itself is discriminatory and the nuclear-weapon States have not fully implemented their obligations under article VI of the Treaty. Several speakers today have referred to the inadequacies of the Treaty. We will not support any indefinite and unconditional extension of the NPT in its present form. The nuclear-weapon States must undertake to reduce and eliminate their nuclear arsenals within an established and binding timetable. As a demonstration of their good faith they must also stop impeding the early conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty. Only then will a nuclear non-proliferation regime be meaningful.

Last year the Non-Aligned Movement submitted a draft resolution asking the Assembly to request an advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice on the legality of the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. This was in pursuance of a long-standing position of the Non-Aligned Movement favouring complete disarmament. Regrettably, that draft resolution was not brought to the vote. We are, however, glad that the Non-Aligned Movement has this year decided to submit the draft resolution once more, and to press it to the vote in the Assembly. This initiative is deserving of the strongest support of all members. In recent years nuclear disarmament has become a bilateral issue; yet the international community has a right to play a central role in ensuring that the nuclear threat, which affects all mankind, is removed forever. If the Assembly were to request an advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice, nuclear disarmament would be brought back into the multilateral forum where it belongs, so critical issues related to nuclear proliferation and nuclear controls could be discussed openly and commented upon in the General Assembly. It would also be consistent with the Secretary-General's recommendation on resort to International Court of Justice advisory opinions in his report entitled "An Agenda for Peace" and would give impetus to the process

of nuclear disarmament, which has begun to flag in the post-cold-war era. The Non-Aligned Movement is to be congratulated for having taken this initiative this year; we hope it will gain the support of the Assembly.

We all agree that there have been so many changes on the international scene that the present Charter and methods of operation of the United Nations should be revised to meet the challenges and aspirations of a new and changing world order.

In this regard, my delegation has already put forward some very specific proposals, which I will not recapitulate in any detail here. Those proposals are now part of the African common position paper which refers to the powers of the Security Council, the General Assembly and the relationship of those bodies to the Bretton Woods institutions and to the specialized agencies. This subject has been referred to by a number of speakers from this rostrum; indeed, the speakers from Africa have repeated the African common position.

It is quite clear that the present arrangement, where Africa and the Latin American region are not represented at all amongst the veto-wielding permanent members of the Security Council, should not be allowed to continue. The underrepresentation of these two regions is both undemocratic and unfair, and I hope that the matter will be addressed at the appropriate time in terms of the African common position.

Furthermore, any exercise in the revitalization of the United Nations should envisage coordination of the activities of the Bretton Woods institutions to which I have already referred.

We are pleased that world-wide socio-economic problems of equitable utilization and distribution of resources are going to be fully addressed at the Far Social Development World Summit in Copenhagen next year. Several important conferences have recently been held within the framework of the United Nations: the Rio Conference on Environment and Development and the International Conference on Population and Development held in Cairo in Cairo. We are now looking forward to the World Summit for Social Development, to be held in Copenhagen next year, and the Fourth World Conference on Women, to take place in Beijing later next year.

These conferences all address matters that are vital to the South and/or to the third-world countries as a whole, and we hope that the social development Summit

will focus on growing poverty in the world and how to attack it. The rapid development of science and technology is taking place in the middle of increasing poverty and disease amongst large population groups, especially in the third world. It is time we took enormous steps to eradicate world poverty and to create full employment. We hope that the combined efforts of the environment and population Conferences, to which I have already referred, and the social development Summit and the Beijing Conference will mobilize the international community for a final and sustained attack on world poverty.

Zimbabwe believes that at the national level it is imperative that development put people first by promoting social development through employment-creation opportunities and other poverty- eradication programmes. In our view, the provision of adequate food, water and shelter as well as such basic social services as education, training and health is an absolute imperative. In the promotion of opportunities for increased popular participation, the enhancement of the role and status of women requires paramount attention. Employment creation requires greater private initiative and increased investment. Thus domestic policies have to be pursued with the aim of creating a favourable environment for investment.

The critical economic situation in Africa - the least developed and most marginalized of all the regions of the world - has to be addressed if global economic growth and interdependence are to have any meaning at all. With 90 per cent of all poverty stricken people in developing countries, the eradication of poverty remains a major concern at both the national and the international levels. Yet neither the economic reform measures which we are carrying out nor our efforts to alleviate and eradicate poverty can be expected to succeed without the provision of adequate financial resources on a predictable, assured and continuous basis, and we appeal to those countries that have surplus resources to increase their support and aid to the developing countries.

For most developing countries the issue of resource flows cannot be dissociated from that of the external debt problem, a problem that has also been addressed in many statements to the Assembly. Figures available clearly indicate that the overall debt of the developing countries is still on the increase - from some \$800 billion in 1982 to \$1.4 trillion in 1992 - and it continues to rise. Combined with the interest rates, the figures are constantly growing, indeed becoming staggering. We believe that new, comprehensive and coordinated approaches to the debt and debt- servicing problems have to be adopted, including

outright cancellation or at least the application of the measures proposed under the Trinidad terms for low-income developing countries.

Zimbabwe believes that the expansion of international trade is essential to economic growth and is indeed an integral part of development. We therefore consider the conclusion of the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations to be an important achievement which deserves to be welcomed by developing and developed countries alike. We also welcome the landmark agreement to create the new World Trade Organization, which we hope will reinforce the multilateral trading system. We welcome the meetings that have been arranged both in Africa and elsewhere to study the impact of the Uruguay Round agreement and the World Trade Organization on our economies.

We reiterate the hope that these developments will improve the access of developing countries' exports to markets in developed countries, and that the new conditionalities or new forms of protectionism under the guise of social or environmental clauses will be avoided. Particular attention has also to be paid to the critical need for the diversification of the African economies. In that regard, we once again reiterate the need for the international community to support our proposal for the creation of a diversification facility for the development of the African commodity sector.

Finally we would urge the big Powers - and especially the United States - to adopt a policy of dialogue rather than confrontation in resolving disputes with smaller Powers around the globe. In particular, we would urge full-scale discussion and dialogue with Cuba aimed at normalizing relations with a small neighbouring country in the American region, dialogue with Libya in order to get a fair and just trial for those suspected of causing the Lockerbie air disaster, and the continuation of the meetings with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in order to resolve the issues related to nuclear-weapons development and, hopefully, pave the way for the reunification of North and South Korea.

With the end of the cold war, global peace - so much coveted -is now within our reach. A concerted effort by regional organizations and the international community can get us to the promised land of international peace. We should try and try again, but the attainment of peace is not the task of international organizations alone: it is also the task of national Governments and national leaders.

In this context we would like to appeal to the leaders in the Gulf to pursue the path of peace that has been charted for them by the United Nations in several resolutions, and to assure them that any attempt at occupying other countries in the Gulf, such as the one we witnessed in 1991, will not be accepted by the Assembly or by the international community as a whole.

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): I now call on Mr. Carlos Morales Troncoso, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of the Dominican Republic.

Mr. Morales-Troncoso (Dominican Republic) (*interpretation from Spanish*): On behalf of the Dominican Republic and its Constitutional President, Mr. Joaquín Balaguer, I offer to the President of the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session, Mr. Amara Essy, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Côte d'Ivoire, our congratulations on his well-deserved election.

Likewise, our delegation pays a tribute of gratitude to Ambassador Samuel Insanally, for his stewardship of the work of the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly, and, especially, to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, who has dedicated all his time and effort to ensuring full observance of the purposes and principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter.

My Government's policy towards the pressing need for development is exemplified by the urgent efforts it is making on behalf of its people in the changing context of today's world.

Forty-nine years ago, when the United Nations system was created following the end of a second major world-wide conflagration, the idea and hope prevailed of bringing about a new world order that would exorcize the spectre of war and, once and for all, do away with war's attendant human degradation and hatred.

However, the victorious emergence of two ideologically opposed Powers led to the creation of a bipolar international system that gave birth to the so-called cold war, marked by lateral confrontation and an arms race which, because of the ever-present possibility of direct confrontation, could have led to a nuclear holocaust and the annihilation of mankind.

Thus it was that the General Assembly became the stage *par excellence* for the airing and debate of the most urgent world-wide problems. While its political

effectiveness may not have met all the requirements of peace because of the structure of world power that had prevailed since 1945, it did achieve overwhelming success in the actions and programmes of its specialized agencies.

Born to foster peace and security and to promote development, the United Nations was the fruit of the post-Second-World-War era. At that time peace meant the absence of war and of the justifiable fear of world-wide self-destruction.

The hope for a renewed international order based on new values has gained momentum. Unique and monumental events symbolized by the razing of the "wall of infamy" have created the propitious conditions and opportunities for recapturing and relaunching the lofty goals of the signers of the San Francisco Charter.

Those events summon us to struggle for a world built on solidarity, respect for the self-determination of peoples, and the quest for a better standard of living for all.

A new world and its agonizing challenges require new answers and clear and unambiguous objectives combined with an iron will to achieve them. The human being must be at the centre of all concerns. Our efforts must thus be aimed at combating poverty and achieving social justice. We must foster new democratic ways for the exercise of power and genuine respect for human rights. In other words, we must ensure that democracy works, prospers and prevails.

Unquestionably, the present-day world is beset by economic and political complexities incompatible with the aspirations of people everywhere to a decent life.

Globalization of the economy, intense financial competition, national cultural diversity, and the various tensions between groups, countries and regions, typified by the ethnic and religious regional conflicts of recent years, constitute the features of the new reality.

The answers to these challenges and problems are no longer to be found in the use of arms. They lie in the will to build a consensus and in the ability to promote development through fair competition regulated by rules that are accepted by all participants.

Unless world peace is at stake, the threat or use of force is no longer a viable instrument for achieving the decent life to which all peoples are entitled.

How, then, can we defend democracy and ensure that, rather than perish, it becomes stronger and more effective in dealing with starvation, unemployment, drug trafficking, the depletion of natural resources, forced migration and the new forms of trade protectionism that undermine development?

If, indeed, we are to protect human rights and strengthen democracy, we must undertake a thorough review of this whole issue and of the very concept of development on the basis of equitable access to markets, capital and new technologies.

The Dominican Republic is one of the most solid and deeply rooted democracies on the American continent. It is one of the few Latin American democracies in modern times with a record of lasting and commendable political stability. It is an example of harmonious and civilized coexistence in a society marked by contrasts. We have shown to the world that our democracy is participatory, with reconciliation and dialogue as the channels for the solution of the major political and economic crises that we have experienced.

In the economic arena, global interdependence poses challenges, and yet offers opportunities. We must therefore make progress in harmonizing financial, technological and production policies in order to achieve growth at all levels.

The development of the most industrialized nations may be inadequate without the growth of developing nations. The greatest growth in outlets for the commodities of industrialized countries will be found in the markets of developing countries.

We are witnessing a transition towards trade liberalization that can lead to freer trade and the eradication of poverty through the creation of more and better jobs.

However, certain threats appear on the horizon. One of them is neoprotectionism. Even though the "barbed-wire" hostility of former protectionist tariffs is being dismantled, the re-emerging protectionism may not be based on tariffs, but it conceals certain invisible, yet genuine enemies: environmental regulations, customs barriers, quotas, anti-"dumping" rules, social clauses and others. In this way the aspirations to free trade may become mere rhetoric.

Impoverishment is another threat. Are we fully aware that opening up our economies can cause us to overlook the need to properly administer their attendant social costs?

Unemployment and the acceleration of social investment plans threaten to negate the efforts we have made over many years to democratize our political systems. While the formation of economic blocs is an established fact, it gives us pause nevertheless: To what extent might this phenomenon constitute a stumbling block for a world based on the democratic rules of free trade and on equal conditions for all?

As members know, more emphasis is placed on selling than on producing. However, we do not have adequate means of production or fair access to them; yet we are supposed to compete on an equal basis with the more industrialized countries of the world. These are not invalid complaints and claims. New rules must be worked out to permit developing countries to gain access to technology and finance their infrastructures on favourable terms - in other words, to attain practical and acceptable levels of competitiveness.

How can we meet these new challenges? To begin with, any development policy must attempt to modernize our sources of production. If we have little or nothing to sell, what is the point of continuing to open up our markets? This is closely linked to the development of a proper transport and communication infrastructure and to the optimum use of energy sources.

We must thus create new conditions of productivity, particularly in the fields of technology social development. If human beings are to be the focus of all development policy, the fostering of effective programmes becomes the best possible business. An investment in health, education and housing is profitable not only socially but economically.

All these initiatives and actions to meet the new challenges that stem from the globalization of the economy must be viewed in that context. Therefore we need a new kind of cooperation, which must be the keynote of international activities. Among other things, we must adjust national policies to global objectives. We should be able to achieve a new idea of cooperation. Cooperation is the alternative to intervention, the way to fulfil the international community's desires for peace, stability and democracy.

In this new age, we must be keenly aware of the trends that are shaping the end of this century and the beginning of the next. The world is becoming smaller, more interdependent and globalized; the survival of human life is gravely threatened by the deterioration of

the environment and by short-sighted, uncoordinated policies to stem the tide of problems besetting the planet.

We in the Dominican Republic, have our share of problems, but one stands out: we live geographically next door to the poorest nation of the hemisphere. Haiti has written glorious pages in the history of the struggle for freedom and equality. Its past, heavy with confrontation and long periods of authoritarian rule, has unfortunately turned it into a nation requiring international assistance. There must therefore be a determined and generous show of cooperation on the part of the international community so that the Haitian people may pursue its destiny - economic and social, as well as political. The Dominican Republic has always been ready to cooperate in effective initiatives for the betterment and viability of needy countries, whose peoples have every right to live in dignity, with all the opportunities offered to others.

The problem of drug trafficking and narcotics consumption continues to be a scourge of world-wide dimensions. It is the Dominican Republic's State policy to deal most severely, in keeping with our legal provisions, with the trafficking, consumption and possession of narcotic drugs. What is more, our country has offered, and will continue to offer, its cooperation to other nations in the apprehension, prosecution or extradition of those who have made this criminal trade the most lucrative activity of our new times.

Although the developed countries are the most attractive market for the sale of narcotic drugs, the underdeveloped countries, whether or not they are producers of narcotic drugs, have seen an increase in drug addiction too. The entire international community must continue resolutely to deal with this scourge so that drug abuse does not become the side effect of a seductively excessive well-being or the amnesia-inducing product that helps some to cope with poverty.

The Dominican Republic, a nation of pacifist traditions, will continue to support the efforts of the United Nations in preventing armed conflicts and in the establishment, maintenance and consolidation of international peace and the internal peace of all nations.

In another field of endeavour, the Dominican Republic retains the concern voiced at last year's session of the Assembly on the proposal made by the Secretary-General to merge the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) and the United Nations Development Fund for

Women (UNIFEM). INSTRAW was conceived at the first World Conference of the International Women's Year, held in Mexico City, and was created pursuant to the decision of the Economic and Social Council.

The Dominican Republic takes this occasion to reiterate its request that INSTRAW and UNIFEM not be merged. We also request retention of the commitments entered into under Economic and Social Council resolution 1998/LX, of 12 May 1976, which establishes the permanent headquarters of INSTRAW in the Dominican Republic, so that our great city in the Americas may continue to host that important organ.

We are deluding ourselves if we think that peace, security and development can be pursued as separate goals at either the national level or the international level. The new order and new balance that are coming into being call for new ways of thinking and new priorities. They require a reappraisal of current international realities in the light of established norms with regard to the sovereignty of all nations and recognition of the pluralism of the world's peoples.

The new era demands that confrontation turn into dialogue and that calls for justice be replaced by shared commitments of peoples.

The promising, peaceful future of which we all speak in meetings and assemblies will come about if, above all, we, the Governments of our region, do our bit, without haggling or imposing conditions, according to our material and leadership potential.

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): I now call upon His Excellency Mr. Bolong L. Sonko, Minister of External Affairs of the Republic of the Gambia.

Mr. Sonko (Gambia): My delegation welcomes the election of Ambassador Amara Essy as President of the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly with a genuine feeling of great pride and satisfaction; he is not only our neighbour in the West African subregion, but a seasoned diplomat. He is certainly no stranger here, having served his great country, Côte d'Ivoire, as Permanent Representative at the United Nations for many years. We in the Gambia hold him in high esteem for his constructive and positive contributions to problems of common concern, both at the bilateral and multilateral levels. I have no doubt that those qualities, for which he is well known, will contribute immensely to the successful conclusion of our deliberations. I should

therefore like to congratulate him warmly on his assumption of office and to assure him of the full support of my delegation in carrying out his important mandate.

Let me also take this opportunity to pay tribute to Ambassador Insanally for the excellent manner in which he performed his duties during his tenure of office last year.

In the same vein, I wish to commend the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for his untiring efforts and effective leadership in ensuring the realization of the ideals for which our Organization, the United Nations, was founded.

My delegation joins many previous speakers in wholeheartedly welcoming South Africa to the Assembly after a 20- year absence. The advent of a non-racial, democratic Government in South Africa symbolized a significant turning point in the constitutional and colonial history of South Africa, in particular, and of Africa in general. The resilience and resourcefulness that have guided and inspired the people of South Africa in the crucial years of their march to a non-racial and democratic Government will, I have no doubt, serve as important assets in South Africa's effective participation in the work of the United Nations.

On 22 July this year there was a peaceful removal of Government in the Gambia, when it was replaced by the Armed Forces Provisional Ruling Council under the chairmanship of His Excellency Lieutenant Yahya A.J.J. Jammeh. This change was caused by a series of events and developments within the country that the previous Government had neglected and in some cases had refused to address. The continued abuse and misuse of political power and of public office, coupled with serious corrupt practices at various levels of Government departments, necessitated this action.

Mr. Ngendahayo (Burundi), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The Gambia has since independence in 1965 enjoyed a relatively long period as a democratic State and as a politically stable country. We acknowledge this achievement, but at the same time we also have good reasons why the Government in power had to be removed.

In the evolution of nation States a stable political system is essential in any country for peace, security, stability and development. When that stability comes under increasing strain, however, and is threatened from within by

certain important officials of Government and politicians alike, the preservation of that stability and national integrity becomes more important than anything else.

There is no political system that is perfect. We take the view that when a democratic political system is under attack by some unscrupulous individuals holding public office through corrupt practices and other selfish acts, in open violation of the moral tenets of honesty, commitment, discipline and hard work, it becomes necessary to institute corrective measures to stop and prevent that system's decay and instability.

The privilege of being the people's representatives does not confer any rights that entitle those representatives to do anything other than the people's business. The restoration of public trust and confidence in government in the older democracies is an institutionalized process that has acquired value and stability. The mechanisms that protect the State and allow for a peaceful and acceptable mode of restoration of public trust and confidence have been tested and proved effective over time.

That action is reinforced by the fact that the strength of democratic societies lies with the people, who freely participate in the political process and select or elect their representatives. The legitimacy of government derives, therefore, from the expressed will of the people to have a government that will promote and protect their rights as well as the collective interest of society.

In the newer democracies, however, where there are no mechanisms or institutions that can protect and preserve the essence of the democratic process, there has been a tendency, in response to a moral imperative, to take radical measures that are intended to arrest the abuse of political power and the misuse of executive authority in the interest of society as a whole.

We wish to emphasize that the events that took place in the Gambia in July this year must be understood as politically necessary to allow for corrective measures to be put in place and to usher in a new and equitable democratic political system. In this connection, the present provisional Government's overriding objective is to set up those institutions that would provide the necessary checks and balances and thus enhance the democratic process in the Gambia and the right of the people to elect a government of their choice.

The essence of a democratic political system is, in addition to its inclusive character, its ability to promote the political, economic, civil, social and cultural rights of the individual and of the community as a whole. Any unbalanced approach to the promotion of those rights renders the system less democratic, less responsive and thus more suspect.

Any democratically elected Government that only promotes the civil and political rights of its people and neglects the promotion of their social, cultural and economic rights, or that deliberately fails to provide equal opportunities for all its people, forfeits, in our view, its right to govern. The challenge that faces democratic Governments - and any Government, for that matter - is how to promote that cluster of human rights without giving any undue attention to a few of them. In other words, the promotion and protection of human rights requires a balanced approach as opposed to an unbalanced one.

His Excellency Mr. Samuel Insanally - the President of the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session - in his address to those who participated in the Second International Conference of New or Restored Democracies, which was held in Managua, Nicaragua, in July, said:

"To survive and flourish, democracy must be provided with an infrastructure of institutions which are conducive to the culture of a free society. Each citizen must be guaranteed, in addition to his or her fundamental human rights, opportunity for economic and social development. ... Basic rights such as education, health and housing must be provided by the State to guarantee a stable society in which democratic norms and practices can prevail."

The Gambia subscribes fully to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and other human-rights instruments. We shall continue to respect our obligations under these international covenants. In this regard, we shall also continue to give full support to the Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights of the Organization of African Unity and the African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies, which are based in Banjul.

To those who, in these times of new and emergent democracies in Africa and elsewhere, may argue that the Gambia had a genuine democratic system we wish to

restate that democracy as practised in our country had certain fundamental weaknesses, which failed to allow change to emerge from within the democratic process. We affirm our commitment to returning the country to civilian rule after addressing these inherent weaknesses.

The peaceful manner in which the people of the Gambia responded to the change of Government encourages the Armed Forces Provisional Ruling Council to move towards a timetable that would return the country to civilian rule before long.

A programme of transition and rectification will shortly be announced. This will give details of the activities to be undertaken within a time-bound framework. As part of the programme, and in an effort to institutionalize transparency and accountability in our society, the Armed Forces Provisional Ruling Council is setting up four commissions of inquiry designed to shed light on the past practices of some public servants and former politicians suspected of corruption and the embezzlement of public funds.

The Armed Forces Provisional Ruling Council has made it abundantly clear that much as we are determined to recover funds stolen from public coffers, there will be no witch-hunt. In pursuit of these objectives, we are mindful of the need for objectivity and impartiality. No military tribunals will be set up. All the suspects will be tried in civilian courts by civilian judges.

In this connection, the new regime has already approached a number of friendly countries in our subregion that have the same legal heritage as the Gambia and asked them to assist by providing judges with the requisite expertise in similar exercises. In this way the objectivity, impartiality and independence of the judiciary will be further guaranteed.

At the same time, a Constitutional Review Commission is being established to look into certain aspects of the Constitution with a view to making it more functional in terms of advancing the cause of democracy. As part of this process, an independent electoral commission will also be put in place for the same purpose - to strengthen democracy.

The military take-over was not, therefore, directed against any country; its purpose was to redress certain internal difficulties. As soon as that task has been completed the country will be returned to civilian rule. It is our intention to ensure that the democratic system

that will be put in place in the Gambia will champion, in word and in deed, the balanced promotion and protection of all human rights and respect for those rights on the part of all those who hold public office. We look forward to the understanding and support of the international community at this critical phase of the transition process.

It goes without saying that while we are engaged in this national exercise we shall also honour all our international obligations, in addition to playing an active role in the comity of nations. I therefore take this opportunity to renew my country's unswerving commitment to the ideals and principles of the United Nations.

We have followed with interest the numerous events that have taken place around the world since the last session of the General Assembly.

The situation in Liberia has always been of major concern to us, and the failure to implement the Cotonou Accord fully has not dampened our enthusiasm. The Akosombo Agreement constitutes another attempt, in a long and tortuous peace process, to galvanize the principal players in the Liberian conflict in an effort to achieve a genuine peace leading to free and fair elections. It is the fervent hope of my delegation that the continued efforts and sacrifices being made by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and other African friends of Liberia, and indeed by the United Nations in the shape of the continued presence of the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL), will encourage the warring factions to agree to disarm without further delay.

The Gambia has followed with keen interest recent positive political and military developments in Rwanda leading to the cessation of hostilities and the establishment of a Government of national reconciliation, which we hope will be consolidated further. The assistance of the international community will continue to be needed in Rwanda, not only to restore peace and stability and law and order but also to ensure the smooth, safe and speedy return of all Rwandese refugees and displaced persons to their respective homes.

We continue to observe with concern the failure of the peace process in Somalia. The current inability of the international community to broker a durable peace and reconciliation between the parties to the conflict should not deter us; rather, it should spur us to redouble our efforts and our resolve to find a satisfactory solution to the conflict.

We understand and appreciate the international community's frustration at the failure of the warring factions to work towards reconciliation and reconstruction. But peace is priceless and constitutes one of the principles underlying the creation of this noble Organization, and this is certainly not the time for the United Nations to consider withdrawing the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNISOM).

It is with equal concern that my delegation views the situation in other trouble spots around the globe - notably, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

On the question of Bosnia and Herzegovina, it is saddening to note that, so far, all the efforts deployed by the international community to find a negotiated settlement have been persistently frustrated by the Bosnian Serbs without the slightest compunction. Furthermore, the Bosnian Serbs have persisted with their heinous policy of "ethnic cleansing" and other war crimes, in total disregard of the basic norms of international behaviour.

At the General Assembly's last session my delegation expressed the firm view that the defenceless Muslim population should be given the opportunity to defend itself in accordance with Article 51 of the United Nations Charter, which makes provision for the exercise of the right of self-defence. I believe that by lifting the arms embargo against Bosnia and Herzegovina the international community would be sending strong and clear signals to the intransigent Bosnian Serbs.

With regard to the dispute over Jammu and Kashmir, my delegation upholds the view that the Simla Agreement and the relevant Security Council resolutions provide a sound basis for a just and lasting solution to the conflict.

With regard to the situation between Kuwait and Iraq, my delegation would like to reiterate that the key to a durable solution lies in compliance by Iraq with all the United Nations resolutions on the issue - in particular, those dealing with recognition of and respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Kuwait. However, recent Iraqi military action does not augur well for a speedy lifting of United Nations sanctions and the achievement of stability in the region.

In respect of the Arab-Israeli conflict, we are encouraged by the events that have been unfolding since the signing of the Peace Accord between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). The balance

sheet has been generally positive, and we encourage both sides to pursue the peace process.

At this juncture I should like to congratulate Jordan and Israel on the courageous and constructive step they took recently to end the state of war between them. Such a positive development will give added credibility to the entire Middle East peace process to secure a comprehensive and durable solution in accordance with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

Another important and worrying factor, which threatens to undermine any political gains in our countries, is the question of poverty and the lack of economic development. Extensive external debt and debt-servicing obligations continue to be important constraints on the advancement of the developing countries. The situation is most acute in Africa.

The external debt of Africa as a whole has been growing by about 2.5 per cent yearly and for sub-Saharan Africa the annual debt growth rate has been estimated to be as high as 7.7 per cent. This is equivalent to \$199 billion, while debt-servicing arrears total some \$45.8 billion, which is equivalent to over 20 per cent of the total debt stock. For sub-Saharan Africa, therefore, the ratios of debt to gross national product and debt to export are almost three times the registered average for all developing countries, making it the most impoverished region in the world. There is more than ever before an urgent need for the international community to find a lasting solution to this problem.

Against the background of such difficulties, it is regrettable to note that, in real terms, aid flows to Africa as a whole have also been on the decline in spite of the substantial increase by a few countries in their levels of aid to Africa. Equally noteworthy is the failure of direct foreign investments to increase appreciatively enough to relieve Africa's financial crisis and stimulate economic growth.

Let me, *en passant*, recall that the Tokyo International Conference on African Development served as a forum to raise international public awareness and renew commitment to Africa's development. The successful implementation of the Tokyo Declaration will depend largely on the common political will of African Governments and their development partners.

From a global perspective, it is predicted that the conclusion of the Uruguay Round will link economies more

strongly through an increased flow of trade and finance based on trade liberalization and a strengthening of the multilateral trading system. While the liberalization of trade as a result of the Uruguay Round may lead to a substantial increase in world trade and income, the impact on developing countries could be less noticeable. Many African countries may find themselves among the least to benefit, partly as a result of the removal of certain preferential trade arrangements.

On a different but more positive note, it is gratifying to note that the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for the elaboration of an international convention to combat desertification in those countries experiencing serious drought and/or desertification, particularly in Africa, has completed its mandate and that a Convention has been adopted. The three regional implementation Annexes have also been concluded. The cumulative effects of drought and desertification on our environment as well as on the socio-economic development of our countries have been amply demonstrated. But if this Convention is to make a difference, it must be provided with the necessary resources to ensure its effective implementation.

The correlation between drought and desertification and rapid population growth is well known. That is why we welcomed the International Conference on Population and Development that has just ended in Cairo. It demonstrated the importance of population policy as an essential ingredient of social and economic development. We fully support the Programme of Action adopted by the Conference and will continue to work closely with international, regional and national agencies, including non-governmental organizations, to implement it, taking into account our national priority strategies on population policy. Similarly, the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action which issued from the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction constitute a clear reflection of our collective determination to develop and strengthen our existing capacity for natural disaster prevention, reduction, preparedness and mitigation.

We very much welcome the World Summit for Social Development to be held in Copenhagen in March 1995. While the Conference will address three core issues - enhancing social integration; alleviating and reducing poverty; and expanding productive employment - it will none the less attract a number of social and developmental issues of relevance to world social progress and global development. For those of us in the developing world, the Conference will afford the

opportunity to address once more our socio-economic development needs while drawing attention to existing social ills in our societies and finding solutions to these problems.

In the same vein, the Fourth World Conference on Women to be held in Beijing will give us the opportunity to evaluate the advancement of women in light of the objectives of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women to the year 2000. It will also provide fresh guidelines to ensure that the targets set are achieved. Indeed, the twenty-first century holds many challenges for mankind, but the most important and pressing will be the elimination of gender discrimination.

It is now clear that the resolve to employ international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples is gaining ground, and that, in the process, the United Nations provides the most appropriate forum. In order to fulfil this purpose efficiently, the ongoing consultations for restructuring and revitalizing the United Nations system, notably that of the General Assembly, should be vigorously pursued. My delegation will continue to lend its unwavering support to these laudable efforts. The creation of the Office of Internal Oversight Services confirms once more the importance of the effective management of the Organization's limited resources. Urgent attention should also be given to strengthening cooperation and coordination between agencies of the United Nations system, the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions.

Finally, I should like to reaffirm my Government's commitment to the work of the United Nations and the preservation of international peace and security. Gambia will continue to give full support to the international effort to address the social, economic and environmental problems facing mankind. The joy we share with other nations as Members of the United Nations is matched only by our respect for each Member of this commonwealth of nations.

The President (*interpretation from French*): I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Comoros, His Excellency Mr. Said Mohamed Sagaf.

Mr. Sagaf (Comoros) (*interpretation from French*): At the outset, I should like, on behalf of the delegation of the Islamic Federal Republic of the Comoros, to extend to Mr. Essy my warmest congratulations on his election to the presidency of our Assembly. I am convinced that his wealth of experience in international relations will be for us the best guarantee for the success of our work. Through

him, the Assembly has also paid resounding tribute to his country, Côte d'Ivoire, and to one of its illustrious departed sons, the late President Houphouët-Boigny, a great statesman and acknowledged visionary whose wisdom and intelligence made a great contribution to the advent of a world of peace and progress.

I wish to join previous speakers in expressing profound gratitude to his predecessor for the effectiveness with which he presided over the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session.

I also take this opportunity to convey to Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, our Secretary-General, our high esteem and fraternal gratitude for his tireless efforts to reduce pockets of tension and strengthen international peace and security. His devotion and talent reinforce the role of our Organization.

These past five years, the world has seen great upheavals that have put an end to the cold war and ideological blocs. Despite the emergence of certain conflicts, the world is on the threshold of a new, more promising era in which dialogue and joint action seem to be prevailing over confrontation.

We are one year away from the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations, and in the present circumstances we must think about defining the new missions our Organization has to carry out, in addition to those bestowed on us by history. Even if the goal of a peaceful world society has not yet been reached, it is acknowledged that our Organization has contributed broadly to decolonization and the progressive development of international law. Of the positive results achieved by the United Nations, the definition and promotion of human rights is inarguably the most important. This world forum has made it possible for developing States to make the international community more aware of their difficulties and to express their demands. Thanks to the United Nations, some global problems, such as those of population and environment, have become priority concerns for all nations, small or large, rich or poor.

The climate of *détente* and the easing of tensions in international relations undoubtedly made it possible to resolve the conflict that beset South Africa for so long. The first non-racial, democratic elections held in South Africa, resulting in the election of President Nelson Mandela, are the best evidence of the positive development of law there. My country is particularly

pleased to see the Republic of South Africa occupying its seat in our great family. All Africa places its hopes in South Africa, whose leaders have demonstrated wisdom and determination. We earnestly hope South Africa will be able to pass peacefully and harmoniously through its new stage of transition.

One of this year's felicitous events is clearly the concretization of the peace process that started with the Washington agreements between the Palestinians and the Israelis. Their mutual recognition has provided fresh impetus, and it heralds an era of peace in that part of the world, which has for so long been bloodied by war. I take this opportunity to congratulate President Arafat and the Palestinian people on their tireless efforts to give Palestine a sovereign, independent State within internationally recognized boundaries.

If peace is to be established in the Middle East, there must be a comprehensive settlement of the differences between the State of Israel and the Arab States of the region. The Islamic Federal Republic of the Comoros, an Arabic-speaking and French-speaking African State, will spare no effort in sincerely encouraging all the parties concerned to strive for peace. We therefore welcome the agreement reached between the Kingdom of Jordan and Israel.

My country has always respected our Organization's principles, and therefore has always advocated dialogue and concertation in the settlement of conflicts. In that spirit, it endorsed the General Assembly's recommendations on the question of the Comorian island of Mayotte. Need I recall that in this regrettable dispute, which started 19 years ago, [between the Comoros and France], in 1975, the Comorian authorities have always expressed a willingness to negotiate with France on the legal and practical modalities for the return of the Comorian island of Mayotte to its natural community. Unfortunately, France has always opposed concertation on this issue. Quite the contrary: that great country, an unchallenged defender of human rights, is prolonging its administrative and military presence in Mayotte. It has also undertaken in this part of our small territory reforms and socio-economic development plans whose clear aim is to separate for all time the four sister islands that geography, history, race, religion, language and economy had joined together with ties that were both identical and complementary. For Comorians, faith and dignity have made this problem a cardinal point of our sovereign existence.

While we take note of the tangible results of the rebirth of democracy in Eastern Europe, the opening up of Africa to multiparty politics and the easing of tensions between Powers, we cannot be but concerned at the appearance of conflicts that are undermining world stability and equilibrium. The case of Bosnia and Herzegovina is a constant and striking reminder that we still have a long, long way to go on the road to lasting peace. My country calls on the Serb and Bosnian parties to comply with the relevant Security Council resolutions and to accept the plan for territorial division proposed by the Contact Group. Nothing would be more tragic than allowing passion and pride to prevail over reason and take precedence over the lives of thousands of women, children and old people, who are the daily victims of this incomprehensible conflict.

We are equally at a loss when we look at the genocide that has ravaged Rwanda. We still wonder how all the macabre events that have torn Rwanda apart could have taken place. Fortunately, peace has been restored and normalization seems to be gaining ground. I take this opportunity to express our deepest gratitude to France for "Operation Turquoise," as well as to all the States that supported that operation, for without it Rwanda would have ceased to exist. We express our gratitude to the neighboring States for the very African hospitality they showed in saving the lives of human beings in distress. I urgently appeal to the new Government of Rwanda to spare no effort to bring about national unity, without which the reconstruction of Rwanda cannot be assured.

In addition, we salute the courage and determination of the political authorities and the people of Burundi for their avoidance of another tragedy with incalculable consequences.

The international community must assist Africa - particularly the Organization of African Unity, which has never remained indifferent to the various conflicts that have embroiled certain Member States - to prevent conflicts and manage them better. It is imperative that we finally wake up to Africa's economic realities and understand that its instability and destitution are a standing threat to society throughout the world.

While we recognize that the world political situation has eased considerably, we must also take note that the international economic situation shows us no glimmer of hope. Political stability will be fragile if there is not a clear improvement in the economic sphere and, in particular, if growth is limited to the wealthy countries.

The developing countries are bearing the full brunt of the ill effects of the crisis, in the form of deteriorating terms of trade, rising protectionism, decreasing net flows of external resources and, on top of all that, the debt burden, which nullifies the efforts of the developing countries.

The widening gap between wealthy and poor countries reduces the effects of the economic recovery in the industrialized countries in recent years has seemed to be clearly appearing on the horizon. In this context, it is our collective responsibility to combat poverty, famine and destitution in the developing countries.

Given the distress of the developing countries and an international economic system in crisis, we must devise a new and constructive vision, one capable of restructuring the world economy while reflecting the interests of both parties within the framework of sincere cooperation.

We place our hopes in a renewed United Nations that will take concrete action to establish more balanced international economic relations.

In the opinion of my country, the Federal Islamic Republic of the Comoros, cooperation between North and South is vital to the balance of the world economy. The Federal Islamic Republic of the Comoros also believes that cooperation between the countries of the South is imperative; indeed, we have made cooperation with the developing countries an essential element in our relations.

For us, the development of South-South cooperation is a bounden duty in order to insure the continuation and strengthening of development assistance. We have chosen a policy of regional solidarity and integration as an effective tool for economic and social progress. Our commitment to the Indian Ocean Commission, and our membership in the African Economic Community, as well as our participation in the preferential trade area, ZEP, demonstrate the importance the Federal Islamic Republic of the Comoros attaches to the General Assembly's recommendations on the need for the developing countries to cooperate on a regional level in order to better confront their own problems. It is in this spirit that our regional institutions have adopted a strategy aimed, first and foremost, at strengthening trade and industrial cooperation, and at improving transportation, telecommunications and so forth.

Since the democratic election of His Excellency Mr. Sáíd Mohamed Djohar to the Supreme Magistrature, the Federal Islamic Republic of the Comoros has committed itself to working for a democratic, dynamic and open

society and to combating corruption, in order to definitively bring about economic and financial recovery. In this effort, the Comorian people adopted a new constitution and, last December, democratically elected a new Parliament composed of all the country's main political parties.

The Federal Islamic Republic of the Comoros understands that international cooperation alone cannot eradicate the evils of underdevelopment. Thus it has signed a programme of structural adjustment with the international financial institutions, with the aim of achieving economic recovery and of improving public finance. It is a trial that the Comorian people is enduring with courage and sacrifice. But the recent devaluation of the Comorian franc has exacerbated the crisis by seriously undermining the Comorians' purchasing power. In such a difficult socio-economic context, how can one convince starving people and demoralized State workers that democracy brings hope? The measures taken as a result of the structural adjustment programmes do not facilitate the role the public authorities of a country must play in the context of social renewal.

While it is true that the easing of international political tension and of certain regional conflicts has reinforced hopes for peace, the gravity of the international economic situation is also creating doubt.

The victims of the world crisis are still the same: men, women and children of the African, Asian, Latin American and Caribbean regions.

Indeed, the same people are always the ones who are confronted with famine, poverty, natural catastrophes and desertification. Other modern scourges such as fundamentalism, terrorism, epidemics and drug-trafficking have been added to an already hostile socio-economic environment. The harsh reality of the poor countries is accentuated by their exclusion from the decision-making process concerning the international economic situation. As the twentieth century draws to a close, the long-cherished hopes of the third-world peoples are giving way to disappointment.

The special session of the General Assembly on economic cooperation, the Paris Conference on the least developed countries, the five years of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s and many other programmes and projects that have been drawn up and carried out over the last 20 years have not attained the goals set for them by the General Assembly

in the area of development. Specialists in development assistance and economic cooperation are unanimous in finding that the current trend is towards stagnation and even regression.

Our General Assembly must now find a solution to the problem created by the failure of international economic relations.

We must insist more strongly on our sense of solidarity and shared responsibility.

My country has always advocated strengthening the role of the United Nations in all areas of international relations. But it also believes that the structures of the United Nations system must correspond to the new world scene. We are among those who believe that the victors of the Second World War do not have a monopoly on the maintenance of peace and on the socio-economic development of nations.

The General Assembly must be the central body where the relevant decisions of our Organization are taken.

It is difficult to understand why there is no connection between the political determination expressed here by States, the essential components of the protagonists of international life, and the international financial institutions.

On behalf of His Excellency Mr. Sáíd Mohamed Djohar, President of the Federal Islamic Republic of the Comoros, and on behalf of the Government and the people of the Comoros, I should like from this rostrum to make a solemn appeal to the international community to provide effective support to the Comorian people in its efforts at socio-economic recovery and in its irreversible commitment to democracy.

I should like to request that the Security Council reconsider the sanctions adopted against Libya, because, as a result of sanctions condemning inadmissible acts, an entire people is being penalized. It is in this spirit that the relevant resolutions adopted by the League of Arab States, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the Organization of African Unity should be taken into consideration, so that this fraternal country may enjoy its sovereignty.

We welcome the imminent return of President Aristide to Haiti. May the peace-keeping operation there bring stability and security so that Haitians, in their renewed

unity, can work together to rebuild a free and prosperous nation.

We also extend these wishes to our brothers in Liberia, Somalia and Angola, so that, as in Mozambique, they may resume dialogue and lay down their weapons.

We also wish to encourage the Algerian authorities in their efforts at national reconciliation in the greater interest of the Algerian nation.

According to several sources, it seems that there has been a significant movement of Iraqi troops towards the Kuwaiti border. We venture to hope that these manoeuvres are intended for a purpose other than aggression against Kuwait. Indeed, our Organization will never accept a repetition of Iraq's aggression of 1990.

It is difficult for us to believe that Iraq has not learned the lessons of that famous, much-covered Gulf war, from which the Iraqi people, the ultimate victims, are still healing their wounds.

The aggression against a sovereign State and the attack on its territorial integrity are a clear violation of international law. It is an act that goes against the fundamental principles of the Charter of this Organization.

That is why, on behalf of the Government and people of the Comoros and in the name of the sacred principles of Islam, I appeal to the Government and people of Iraq to halt any attempt to invade Kuwait. It is up to the Security Council to use all peaceful means to spare us a second Persian Gulf war. If it does not, mankind will not be able to understand why each time peace seems to be established another war looms.

May I conclude by repeating my delegation's fraternal congratulations to the President of the General Assembly on his election. We are at his complete disposal to assist him in any way in his discharge of that lofty, noble mission.

The President (*interpretation from French*): The next speaker is the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Marshall Islands, His Excellency Mr. Phillip Muller, on whom I now call.

Mr. Muller (Marshall Islands): Allow me at the outset to congratulate the President of the General Assembly on his unanimous election. It is indeed a great

honour for his country. I can assure him of my delegation's willingness to assist him in his duties.

Let me also congratulate His Excellency Ambassador Samuel Insanally of Guyana on the exemplary manner in which he carried out his duties. His innovative use of expert hearings on the question of development were followed closely by the Marshall Islands delegation.

My compliments are also extended to our distinguished Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, whom we thank for his tireless efforts on behalf of this Organization.

On a more sombre note, I wish to extend the condolences of my Government, delegation and people to our neighbours in the Pacific, Papua New Guinea and Japan, which have both recently experienced devastating volcanic eruptions. Our prayers go out to the peoples of both countries in the hope that they will be able to make a speedy recovery.

Further grim descriptions and graphic pictures of the terrible loss of life on the high seas in the sinking of the "Estonia" have been occupying the air waves and television screen. We should like to express our deepest sympathy and condolences to the affected families and Governments over this tragic accident.

We now wish to join other delegations in welcoming South Africa to this Organization. The struggle of its people with racial inequality resulting from apartheid was long and difficult, often resulting in the loss of precious lives. We share their excitement in finally joining the concert of nations.

We also wish to congratulate our neighbour the Republic of Palau on attaining its independence on 1 October this year.

The aftermath of the cold war has made it necessary for the United Nations to take on many challenges. The Organization itself has become involved in several ambitious undertakings in innovative international relations and multilateral actions. We hope that these new endeavours of partnership will produce lasting solutions to many of our global problems.

That very partnership is evident by the work being undertaken on the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, which is viewed with great interest in the Marshall Islands. Currently, we are working together

with the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), of which we are a founding member, in introducing a new protocol to the Convention. We commend the Chairman of the Alliance of Small Island States for her coordinating work in the International Negotiating Committee. In addition, we welcome the urgent call made by the German Foreign Minister for more immediate reductions in carbon dioxide emissions. The German Government's support for the AOSIS protocol is most gratifying. We hope that the Conference of the Parties will adopt the proposed protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change on Greenhouse Gas Emission Reduction next year in Berlin.

As an island nation, the Republic of the Marshall Islands regarded the adoption by the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session, earlier this year, of the Agreement relating to the Implementation of Part XI of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea as historic and of great importance. We view this Agreement as a positive step in bringing order to the exploitation of marine resources. In this vein I am happy to announce that we will sign that Agreement at this session. We are also happy to note the imminent entry into force of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, in November this year.

In the months leading up to the Barbados Conference last April, we were very confident that at last the international community would try to do something positive for the small island developing States, a group of countries that we feel has been neglected. We are pleased that we now have a Programme of Action, and we will do our utmost to seek its successful implementation to enhance our island economic development.

As a country with one of the highest population growth rates in the world, the Republic of the Marshall Islands has followed with great interest the International Conference on Population and Development. It was a shame that this process was nearly derailed by semantic disagreements. Fortunately, the Conference, in Cairo, after arduous and intensive negotiations, saw fit to adopt an expanded international population strategy, as a result of which we now have a well-thought-out Plan of Action. It is of concern to us that so much of the cost involved in the implementation of the Plan of Action will be borne by individual countries. We will, however, make every effort to maximize our participation in this Plan of Action.

The United Nations Conference on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks recently completed its third round of discussions here in New York. We all owe a great deal to its distinguished Chairman for his masterful stewardship. For the Marshall Islands, this Conference is particularly important as we seek to build our capacity to utilize our marine resources responsibly. Unlike distant-water fishing nations, our geographical location compels us to ensure the sustainable exploitation of our fisheries resources for future generations, whether within or outside our exclusive economic zone. This is a matter of survival, one that transcends economics.

I submit, however, that large-scale commercial fisheries are a new concept for our people. That being so, we are interested in modern methodologies for the commercial exploitation of fisheries resources. We must familiarize ourselves with them. In this regard, the active assistance of the developed countries is needed to train our people in the modern techniques of commercial fishing. In this context, it is essential that we gain preferential access to international markets. We have brought this matter up many times, and we urge the Assembly to promote trade as well as training. While we are not asking for much, we do hope that assistance for self-help will continue to be forthcoming.

The development of human resources is probably the most important factor in improving the economic situation in the Marshall Islands. We are grateful to New Zealand and to the current Chairman of the South Pacific Forum - Australia - for their efforts in this field. We encourage others to follow their example. Thus, together with other Forum countries, we will aspire to develop a strategy that will prepare the way for the World Summit for Social Development.

We recognize that further improvement of our relationships with the various United Nations agencies in our region is essential. Furthermore, because of their increased responsibilities and workloads, we would encourage an increase in the number of representatives of the United Nations Fund for Population Activities, the United Nations Children's Fund and the United Nations Development Programme in the region, and we would also support an increase in their funding.

I also wish to associate myself with my colleagues from the region regarding the application by the South Pacific Forum for observer status at the United Nations. I urge the General Assembly to seriously consider this request, as it would be of great value to our region

inasmuch as it would strengthen our ties to the United Nations.

Of equal importance is the World Conference on Women in Beijing next year. As a matrilineal society, we have long recognized the wisdom of including women in our decision-making process, and we look forward to participating in the Beijing Conference.

During the World Hearings on Development earlier this year, many of the expert witnesses spoke of the high proportion of United Nations expenditures earmarked for peace-keeping, much to the detriment of overall development efforts. This is a matter of ongoing concern to the Marshall Islands as well as to several other small countries. We feel that the sheer number and cost of these operations are getting out of hand. The preservation of global peace is of the utmost importance, but in relative terms the costs that fall on smaller developing States is very large. The Marshall Islands will actively participate in this matter in the Fifth Committee, and we hope to work together with others for a more equitable apportionment of expenses and assessed contributions. We are fully supportive of the views put forward by the President of Latvia regarding the concept of the "capacity to pay".

The people of the Marshall Islands regard with abhorrence the numerous human rights abuses that are occurring around the world. We shall be very vigilant in the discussions following on the Vienna Declaration on this matter. We believe there is no statute of limitations to human rights abuses, as clearly they are crimes against humanity. The prevalent lack of common decency, which the President of Bosnia and Herzegovina so painfully described in his recent address, must be eradicated.

We note that His Excellency President Boris Yeltsin of the Russian Federation stated that the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations should also commemorate the victims of the Second World War. My delegation fully supports this concept, particularly since the fate of many Pacific Island people during the Second World War remains an unwritten chapter in the history books. For example, the atrocities carried out against the people of Mili Atoll in the Marshall Islands have not been fully addressed. We trust that moral restitution will be made to the memory of these victims.

The President returned to the Chair.

The consequences of recent geo-political events have amply demonstrated the need for the expansion of the Security Council. With 184 Members, the United Nations must ensure that the Security Council reflects the realities of the changed situation. My delegation supports the proposal for increased membership. Moreover, there is an acute need for increased transparency in the work of the Council. In this context, it is appalling to note that the Security Council, whose decisions affect all Members, does not involve more States in its decision-making process. As a positive remedial solution, the suggestion by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of New Zealand in this regard is of great significance and should be considered.

I should like to remind the members of the General Assembly of the continued presence in the Marshall Islands of dangerous residual radioactive contaminants from United States nuclear- weapons-testing programmes. Members will no doubt recall that it was during the relatively brief period of the United Nations-approved trusteeship that 67 atomic bombs were detonated on islands that had been inhabited peacefully and productively by the people of the Marshall Islands for centuries. This must be regarded as a matter of more than historical interest, in view of the resulting legacy of horrific environmental degradation and tragic human suffering - a legacy that threatens to haunt the Marshallese people for centuries to come.

Documents recently declassified and released confirm that the full extent of the radioactive contamination resulting from these tests was not disclosed to the Marshall Islands by the United States during the negotiation of the Compact of Free Association. Accordingly, neither the compensation provided nor the remedial measures undertaken or contemplated for the clean-up of some of the contaminated islands and the treatment of the affected human population can now be regarded as adequate.

My Government lacks the huge sums required to ensure the proper clean-up and disposal of the radioactive contaminants and the treatment of the radiation-induced illnesses and birth defects caused by the nuclear-weapons tests. Notably, the containment facility that was established for the radioactive materials gathered from some contaminated areas is wholly unsatisfactory by any reasonable environmental standard.

What, then, is my Government to do? We may hope for the unreserved cooperation of the former administering Power in fully cleaning up and disposing of its nuclear waste and in adequately aiding our afflicted people. However, as a country that every day continues to suffer

the consequences of the failure by that Power to meet its obligations, we must look to such alternatives as we may find. In short, we must do more than simply hope.

It is with this unhappy dilemma in mind that we ask the General Assembly to consider sympathetically our efforts to attend to the restoration of our lands and the treatment of our people. The clean-up and disposal of nuclear contamination in the Marshall Islands will require very large sums of money indeed. The effective disposal of those contaminants will require their permanent isolation from the human biosphere. An international facility on a remote, uninhabited atoll of the Marshall Islands for the safe, permanent disposal of nuclear materials would, if technically feasible and politically acceptable, meet these requirements. My Government wishes it to be understood that such a facility would also serve the global interest in securing the safe and permanent disposal of a portion of the world's dangerous nuclear materials, an interest that, at present, is by no means accommodated anywhere in the world. Consequently, my Government has resolved to conduct a preliminary feasibility study for such a facility and to consult closely with interested members of the international community as we proceed.

In this regard, I wish to commend the remarks made by the Foreign Minister of Norway in calling on the International Atomic Energy Agency to convene an international conference on the management of nuclear wastes. We look forward with interest to such a conference, and we pledge our support.

My Government recognizes that the establishment of a nuclear materials disposal facility in the Marshall Islands may upon detailed analysis be found to be unfeasible or otherwise unacceptable. In that event, my Government will look to the Members of this Organization for their support in the effort to secure the complete removal from the Marshall Islands of all residual radioactive contaminants and of the existing storage facility. We expect that the party responsible for the radioactive contamination of the Marshall Islands will provide the funds and the technical means required to effect this removal promptly and completely, as well as to ensure the restoration of all the affected islands to their full economic viability. We expect that this Organization, which placed our islands under trusteeship in the first place, will ensure that justice prevails.

At this time, my Government requests the sympathetic support of the General Assembly as we

continue with the effort to secure a commitment to adequate treatment and full compensation of all the victims of the nuclear-weapons-testing programme. My Government attaches the utmost importance and immediate urgency to this matter.

The issues I have mentioned are of high priority. It is my sincere hope that when we gather together next year, our efforts will indeed have yielded concrete results, visible and meaningful to our peoples. To accept anything less would be a disappointment.

Mr. Seydou (Niger) (*interpretation from French*): Your election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session, Sir, is a source of pride for the whole diplomatic community, for Africa and for your country, Côte d'Ivoire, and constitutes a just reward for your dynamic guidance of your country's diplomatic activities. Those of us who already know your work at the United Nations and at other international meetings can already foresee the success of the work of the forty-ninth session; we know your enormous talent, wisdom and patience. Your election also reflects the international community's confidence in your country, Côte d'Ivoire, a country with which Niger maintains diversified relations solidly rooted in the history and geography of West Africa.

Finally, your election is a posthumous tribute by the international community to the work carried out over half a century by the late President Félix Houphouët-Boigny in the service of human dignity, peace and social progress. Permit me, therefore, to congratulate you, Sir, and through you the people of Côte d'Ivoire and its President, Mr. Henri Konan Bédié, on your election as President of the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session.

I wish also to congratulate the other Assembly officers; I am sure they will spare no effort to rendering valuable assistance as you carry out your tasks.

Niger thanks your predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Samuel Insanally, for his tireless work; he fulfilled his mandate methodically and ably during one of the Organization's busiest years.

I also convey my greetings to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, and thank him for the dynamism and far-sightedness with which he is carrying out his mandate in this period of important change; we hail him for his firm commitment to international peace and security.

The annual convening of the General Assembly gives Niger the opportunity to renew its faith in the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, signed at San Francisco nearly half a century ago. On 28 September 1993, the President of the Republic of the Niger, His Excellency Mr. Mahamane Ousmane, here outlined the views of Niger and its people on the problems of our time. In his statement he stressed that the solution to some of those problems lies first and foremost in the establishment of democracy. Indeed, it is through democracy that mankind will find the path of freedom, the path of the love of work and the path of the shared happiness of citizens.

Niger is firmly committed to this path of democracy; it has already found the path of freedom for its children. Today in Niger, no one is molested because of his philosophical or religious ideas; since the establishment of the Third Republic, freedom of the press is complete and is guaranteed by the Constitution. Freedom of association too is complete and guaranteed by the Constitution, and a number of political parties, associations and trade unions now play to the full the role that is properly theirs in every democratic society.

It is in that context that the people of Niger is engaged in rediscovering the path of the love of work, which alone can generate wealth. Many non-governmental organizations have been founded and are working in close cooperation with foreign organizations.

The Government of Niger is aware of its responsibilities in this area, and is doing everything it can to ensure that every man and woman of Niger feels fully involved in development issues and can make even a modest contribution to building a society founded on prosperity, justice and freedom.

Niger is a Sahelian country confronted with the inexorable advance of the Sahara Desert; we welcome the conclusion at Paris last June of the International Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa. Niger invites all Member States to sign that important Convention so as to permit it to enter into force as soon as possible. We hope that the international community will finally be able to act on its commitment to give countries suffering from this scourge the ability to lay the foundation for genuine, sustainable development.

Like other developing countries, Niger is facing numerous difficulties, the most important and most formidable core issue for us is rainfall, whose capriciousness is feared by our authorities and our people alike. Sometimes too meager, sometimes excessive, the rainy season is an ongoing concern in Niger. Last year there was not enough rain; this year, however, there were rains such as Niger has not witnessed in more than two decades. They caused considerable damage but did not gratify our people or our Government with an adequate harvest.

Niger wants to free itself from the vagaries of the heavens in order at last to save its children from hunger and thirst. That is why our Head of State, His Excellency Mr. Mahamane Ousmane, has initiated a major campaign in which the people are participating in building the first-ever dam on the Niger river.

To this end he called on all the citizens of Niger to mobilize the resources needed to build the Kandadji Dam.

From this rostrum, I should like to invite all organizations and countries which wish to aid my country, to give particular attention to this project. For Niger, this is a question of ensuring the conditions necessary for the survival of the present and future generations.

My country has accorded food self-sufficiency top priority in its campaign for economic development. It keenly hopes that with the assistance of the international community it will achieve this objective before the end of the present decade. Here, Niger hopes that the nations which share the same ideal of prosperity and happiness will extend it the same solidarity.

Since he took office in April 1993, President Mahamane Ousmane has vowed to devote his full energy to the return of peace in the troubled regions in the north of our country. He has made that question a constant matter of concern for the Government of Niger.

By the grace of God, and following the recent negotiations held in Ouagadougou in Burkina Faso, the Government of Niger signed a peace agreement with the Coordination of Armed Resistance, thereby opening the way for a cease-fire and the drawing up of legislative texts designed to provide more harmonious management of the regions.

On behalf of the Government of Niger, allow me here to extend our warm gratitude to Algeria, Burkino Faso and

France, whose mediation made it possible to arrive at this fortunate conclusion.

The Ouagadougou Agreement, which was signed last Sunday, 9 October 1994, and which entered into force today, 11 October 1994, will allow the people of Niger to devote itself to the critical issues of development in a calm atmosphere. It opens the way to national reconciliation among the sons of the same geographical region, united by history and inspired by the same will - that of living together.

The Government of Niger will, for its part, engage in implementing this Agreement by submitting a draft law to the National Assembly as soon as possible.

It hopes that the international community will assist by providing material and financial resources to ensure the return and integration of the refugees.

Niger is also expecting consistent support from the international community to ensure its economic recovery. Thus, since the devaluation of the CFA franc, my Government has been continuing negotiations with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

It has concluded an agreement with the Bretton Woods institutions on economic recovery, and negotiations are now under way for the conclusion of an agreement on the facility for strengthened structural adjustment. The Government of Niger has taken the necessary preliminary measures to ensure that the present negotiations lead to the signing of this agreement at an early date.

On the eve of the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations, it is gratifying to be able to note all that has been accomplished, in particular over the last few years, in areas as complex as peace-keeping, disarmament, security, the establishment of democracy, and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The development of the situation in the Middle East which led to the establishment of the Palestinian authority in Gaza, like the logic of peace and dialogue which now prevails between Israel and the other Arab countries, is part of this new dynamic.

We cannot fail to mention here, with legitimate pride, the process which led to the establishment in South Africa of a democratic regime which is being guided with wisdom and determination by President Nelson Mandela

and which has allowed this founding Member of the Organization to regain its rightful place in the community of nations.

How can we fail to be gratified that President Jean-Bertrand Aristide will soon arrive on Haitian soil after three long years in forced exile?

These are indeed major events which encourage us to hope that we will see a rapid return of peace wherever it may have been shattered or wherever it is threatened.

The recent negotiations held in New York between Cuba and the United States, the negotiations between the American and North Korean authorities, as well as the withdrawal of the last foreign troops from Germany and some of the Baltic States, show how much we have accomplished in the five years since the collapse of the Berlin Wall.

Throughout the world - in Africa, in Asia and in America and in Europe - the last vestiges of the cold war are fading away to open the way for a fruitful partnership among nations.

The United Nations has made its contribution to the achievement of this new atmosphere but here and there hotbeds of tension continue to exist which attest to the fragility of the present balance.

Among these conflicts, some of which are ravaging Africa, I would mention first of all the conflict in Rwanda, where a fratricidal war has caused the deaths of hundreds of thousands of men, women and children, left thousands wounded and sent millions of refugees into exile.

How can we have allowed such a tragedy to take place without having used all the means and resources available to the international community in time to prevent, if not limit, the unprecedented massacres which were perpetrated?

Because it is aware that nothing lasting can be conceived and realized in Rwanda without peace and unity among its sons Niger made its modest contribution to the restoration of peace in Rwanda by participating in the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR).

In this country which has been torn apart, Niger hopes to see the provisions of the Arusha Agreement enforced so that the hardworking people of Rwanda may be able at last, and once and for all, to turn its attention towards the tasks of reconstruction and development.

Niger expresses the same hopes for peace and stability in neighbouring Burundi and welcomes the significant progress made recently, which has resulted in its acquiring authorities who can pursue the work of consolidating the peace.

Quite close to Rwanda, peace is making great strides also in a country which has been engaged in war and suffering since its independence, namely, Mozambique. Niger keenly hopes that the changes which took place recently in South Africa will have a very positive effect on the elections to be held there on 27 and 28 October.

The situation in Angola is a matter of concern for my delegation. Niger welcomes the fact that, thanks to pressure from the international community and the efforts made by President Frederick Chiluba of Zambia and President Nelson Mandela of South Africa and thanks also to the joint actions of the special representatives of the Secretaries-General of the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity, UNITA has finally agreed to the signing of a peace agreement, a prelude to a general cease-fire and the establishment of a lasting peace in Angola.

Nor must the international community and, in particular, the United Nations turn its attention away from Somalia, that other fraternal country that has been ravaged. Indeed, it must do all in its power to maintain a significant United Nations presence, which alone can guarantee lasting peace in Somalia.

The process of settling all these conflicts has revealed the need for greater coordination between the efforts of the United Nations and those of the regional organizations within the framework of safeguarding peace and international security.

Niger thanks all the countries which, on a bilateral basis, made their valuable contribution to the resolution of certain African conflicts and appeals to the international community for continuing support for the machinery of prevention - machinery established by the Organization of African Unity for the management and settlement of conflicts - to allow it to be more operational.

My country is gratified that, after 46 years of hostilities, Jordan and Israel agreed to sign a peace agreement on 25 July 1994 - this less than a year after the signing of the agreement between the Israelis and the Palestinians.

Niger hopes that the logic of peace which has been established in this region will lead to the signature of similar agreements between Israel and Lebanon on the one hand and between Syria and Israel on the other, so that once and for all fraternity will prevail between the sons of this part of the world, the cradle of centuries-old civilizations.

Niger thus appeals to the Iraqi authorities to ensure that the actions they undertake fit within the spirit and letter of the Security Council resolutions, that they recognize the international borders of Kuwait and refrain from any action likely once again to inflame the Gulf region in a fratricidal conflict with incalculable consequences.

Clearly, the world today has gone from a period of confrontation to one of cooperation.

It is clear that our Organization over the years, with its present membership of 184 States, is aspiring towards the ideal of universalism enshrined in its Charter. However, it is up to the United Nations to devote particular attention to other regions and other peoples which, through their vitality and economic dynamism, could also contribute to the implementation of the ideals of the Charter.

It is moreover in this spirit that Niger regrets that the General Assembly was not able to put on its agenda the item entitled "Consideration of the exceptional situation of the Republic of China in Taiwan in the international context, based on the principle of universality and in accordance with the established model of parallel representation of divided countries at the United Nations".

Niger is keenly concerned at the continuation of the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina despite the efforts and the patience of the member countries of the Contact Group and the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the numerous resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly, and the many actions undertaken by the international community.

The most recent events in this conflict have demonstrated to those who still had doubts that the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina is deliberate and is supported by the leaders of the Serbian community who have made force the primary basis for their actions.

That is why, while welcoming the political courage demonstrated throughout this crisis by President Izetbegovic, Niger supports the proposals which he made here on 27 September of lifting the arms embargo which is

preventing Bosnia and Herzegovina from exercising its right to legitimate self-defence in accordance with the Charter of the Organization.

At the risk of seeing many States lose their faith in the system of collective security, the Security Council should make the Serbs respect the relevant resolutions which it has adopted. It is high time for the Security Council to take the measures required by the situation concerning the Serbian aggressors.

The end of the cold war and of the East-West conflict has not yet fully liberated mankind from all its anguish; nor has it allowed it to remove the heavy burden posed by the build-up and improvement in arms. While it is true that risks of armed confrontation between the super-Powers have today disappeared allowing unimaginable progress in the area of disarmament, this has not led to that strengthening of security which we were entitled to expect.

A producer of uranium, Niger has ratified the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and will support, during the negotiations to take place next year, its extension and the universal nature it must acquire.

The signing last year in Paris of the chemical weapons Convention, as well as the unilateral moratoriums proclaimed by the nuclear Powers are today also important constructive steps.

Other efforts should also be made to control conventional weapons and, in a general fashion, to establish confidence-building measures among States.

It is indeed horrendous to see colossal sums absorbed in the manufacture of ever-more sophisticated weapons of destruction and in mortgaging the security of outer space while in vast regions of the world millions of men, women and children are languishing in the most abject misery, engaging in a daily battle against hunger and illness. How many savings could have been made from the resources allotted to peace-keeping if the minimum had been allotted to development?

I am tempted to say here: give economic and social development that which is its due and there will be less to worry about concerning peace.

Indeed, as you so eloquently pointed out on 20 September last after your election, Mr. President, the economic and social situation at the international level is

experiencing alarming developments marked by the stamp of uncertainty and adversity for the developing countries, and for Africa in particular.

In the course of this century that is coming to an end, mankind has experienced unprecedented turns that improved the conditions of the lives of individuals. However, in several regions of the world peace is threatened not by armed men but by millions of hungry human beings in distress who see no prospects for improvement of their living conditions.

In this regard, Africa for two decades now has seemed a desperate case, despite its abundant natural wealth. To be sure, progress has been made economically and socially, but in comparison with the rest of the world such progress seems insignificant, and in certain respects entire areas have become settled in a situation of non-development.

Thus, while certain countries in Asia are experiencing expansion with trends of accelerated growth, Africa's economic prospects continue to remain mediocre. Today, more than 350 million Africans are living in abject poverty, more than half of them women and children.

Paradoxically, Africa also shows the signs of a vibrant continent capable of the greatest economic prowess, as long as the international community gives it the opportunity and the means to achieve its potential.

Indeed, how can we speak of a continent on its way to ruin when along with its natural resources Africa has a young generation determined to meet the challenges of history? How can one sideline Africa when its contribution to the global economy throughout past centuries has allowed for the industrialization of the other continents?

Here the industrialized countries bear a heavy responsibility. I should like to recall Niger's position on a particular aspect of this responsibility, namely, the debt. As long as the developing countries, and in particular those of sub-Saharan Africa, continue to devote the greater part of their income to paying off the foreign debt they will never be able to lay down the basis for a genuine economic recovery. Thus, Niger urges the developed countries to cancel the debts of the developing countries and if necessary to give priority to the least developed countries. In so doing the industrialized countries will have answered their own appeal as made by the Group of Seven most highly industrialized countries at the Naples Summit in July 1994.

Along with the debt the continued deterioration of the terms of trade is a subject of great concern for Niger. The purchase price of the products these countries offer on the international market is falling year by year while the prices of manufactured products which the same countries are buying are continuing to rise.

To be competitive, some of these countries have devalued their currency by half, despite the difficult economic, social and political consequences. Quite recently in Morocco the developing countries renewed their faith in the rules governing international trade through their active participation in the agreement establishing the World Trade Organization. We hope that, in return, this organization will be able to fill the gaps in the text of the agreement by taking courageous decisions and adopting measures in favour of the developing countries, in particular those of Africa.

For many of the developing countries international trade is, first of all, trade in commodities. That is why Niger attaches great importance to the establishment of the commodities Fund and, in so doing, appeals diversification to those countries still reluctant to do so to become involved in the dynamic process under way in this area.

But what the developing countries, and especially the least-developed countries, need most is the establishment of a genuine fund for development assured of lasting resources. It is recognized today that the Bretton Woods institutions have reached their limits in development matters. The conditions attached to World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) loans are often a genuine impediment to attaining the developing countries' purpose in negotiating the loan agreements.

In his report "An Agenda for Development", the Secretary-General rightly notes that peace is the development; the economy is the engine of progress; the environment is a basis for sustainability; and social justice is a pillar of society.

My delegation hopes that the consultations to be held on this document will result in a fleshing-out of the initial outline and that the final report will take into account the vital concerns of the developing countries. We hope that it will put forward concrete ways and means to ensure implementation of the development programmes and strategies adopted by the General Assembly over the last few years.

The forthcoming major international conferences - the World Summit for Social Development, the Fourth World Conference on Women and the Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements - provide opportunities for us further to enrich this Agenda.

In conclusion, let me reaffirm Niger's faith in the ideals of the United Nations and in its ability to find, thanks to the solidarity of all its Members, the right answers to the new challenges we face.

Mr. Legwaila (Botswana): The Government and people of Botswana salute your elevation to the Presidency of the forty-ninth session of the Assembly. Your election by acclamation is a fitting tribute not only to your personal distinction but also to the African continent, on whose soil you were bred and nurtured. It goes without saying, therefore, that the confidence we repose in you as you guide our deliberations is beyond measure.

The Secretary-General's legendary tenacity of purpose at the helm of our Organization has continued to serve us very well indeed. He remains undaunted by the complexities of the problems he faces as the world's chief diplomat and peacemaker in an era marred by the continuing absence of peace. We salute him and his staff of dedicated international civil servants.

Let me also pay a deserved tribute to our dear brother, last year's President, Ambassador Samuel Insanally, whose tenure of office was most effective, productive and creative. We wish him a happy, hard-earned retirement from the service of our General Assembly.

The new world order remains a misnomer. Misery and wretchedness are the order of the day in many parts of the world. The post-cold war era was to be the era of democratization, peace and development, so we hoped. Yes, democratization has taken root in many parts of the world, including our own continent, Africa. That is to be celebrated, and should be celebrated. Unfortunately, the energies and resources that the international community could be deploying to help buttress and nurture emerging democracies have to be expended on the search for solutions to a multiplicity of intractable civil wars.

Tragically, some of these civil wars show no sign of amenability to solutions. They have become perennial; so is the United Nations mission to mitigate them. This places the United Nations in a terrible dilemma, both moral and material. Unfortunately, there is very little choice for our Organization. It would be absolutely unconscionable to

abandon a Bosnia or a Somalia to its own wretched devices.

Nevertheless, there is no doubt that the United Nations peacekeeping commitments are threatening to overwhelm the Organization's capacities. Financial resources to sustain these commitments may soon dry up, if indeed they are available, in tandem with the drying up of support for peace-keeping generally, particularly among the big contributors.

The past year has been a year of mixed blessings for Africa. The continent won a major victory with the liberation of South Africa from the shackles of apartheid and racism. Three-and-a-half centuries of white minority domination have ended, and the construction of a new non-racial society has begun in earnest in South Africa. We heartily congratulate all the people of South Africa, in their racial and cultural diversity, on the wisdom and courage they have shown in coming to terms with their common destiny. We welcome the new South Africa into our midst with open arms.

Southern Africa, the erstwhile cockpit of conflict, has suddenly found salvation and begun the process of reconstruction and regional cooperation and integration. Since peace and stability are universal prerequisites for orderly economic and social development, both of which we have begun to savour in southern Africa, there is every reason why we should be excited about the future of our region.

With the holding of multiparty elections in the sister Republic of Mozambique, the process of democratization in the region will have come closer than ever before to culmination. Increasingly, the region is being guided in the ordering of its political affairs by a set of common democratic values. Through the Southern African Development Community's economic fraternity, mechanisms are being developed to promote regional approaches to the protection of human rights and the safeguarding of the democratic milieu that the region has laboured so hard and shed so much blood to bring about.

As an example, I would mention the case of Lesotho, about which members will have heard. Recently, when democracy was placed in danger there, the region, through the good offices of three Presidents of southern African countries - Zimbabwe, South Africa and Botswana - sprang into action to engage the Basotho leaders in a dialogue, which happily culminated in the cherished Lesotho democracy being saved without a shot

being fired. It was regional conflict-resolution and diplomacy at their very best.

Yet we remain troubled and pained by the fact that not all is well in other parts of the African continent by any stretch of the imagination. Our south western sister Republic of Angola has never had a moment of tranquillity, peace or stability ever since it attained its independence 19 years ago. Blood has continued to flow in that tortured country in ever-increasing profusion, even as we are told the Lusaka talks are on the verge of a successful conclusion. This is the precious blood of innocent Angolans shed needlessly because the multiparty democracy demanded by UNITA and its supporters was won three years ago, only to be subjected to another round of brutal civil war. We remain hopeful, however, that the marathon talks in Lusaka, capital of the Republic of Zambia, will produce an agreement for the parties to implement without reservation.

The Somali tragedy remains intractable. The presence in the fractured country of 18,000 United Nations peace-keeping troops, including Botswanans, has not made much of a difference in the restoration of peace and tranquillity to the Somali people.

Now we are faced with a threat to abandon the country to its fate. The international community has every reason to be frustrated and exasperated by what looks like a total absence of any intention on the part of the warring Somali factions to reconcile and give their nation a chance to drag itself out of the quagmire of civil war. We understand this frustration and exasperation, and yet we would find it absolutely unconscionable for the United Nations simply to uproot itself from Somalia when it is abundantly clear that such a course of action would have catastrophic consequences. The decision to withdraw the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II) must be carefully weighed against the obvious consequences of the vacuum it will create.

There is also Liberia, whose agony clearly knows no limit. The madness that is being displayed by the warring factions there is surely beyond comprehension. Is the newly intensified fighting which has caused another exodus of refugees to neighbouring countries and wasted more innocent lives the way to thank the monitoring Group of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOMOG) and the international community for the cost in lives and material they have suffered and incurred in an attempt to save Liberia from self-destruction? The first world is already showing signs of extreme weariness about the cost

of peace-keeping. Soon even ECOMOG may run out of the means and the will to persist in its seemingly impossible mission to save Liberia from itself. And as long as Liberia is in the state in which it is there is the certainty that peace in the region at large will be and remain imperilled.

Although the carnage has ended in Rwanda, the tragedy that has befallen its people has not. The Rwandese nation cannot reconcile so long as chunks of it are languishing and dying in refugee camps in foreign lands. Rwanda cannot endure any more cycles of civil war and genocidal massacres. The tens or hundreds of thousands of refugees encamped at present in the neighbouring countries must be helped to return to their homeland lest out of the frustrations of exile in their squalid refugee camps they ignite another cycle of genocide.

On the perennial question of Western Sahara, Botswana shares the view that it is taking far too long to hold a referendum in the Territory to allow the Sahraoui people to decide their future. The Territory cannot and must not be allowed to mark time forever in a limbo of uncertainty as if the fulfillment of the aspirations of its people can be delayed until their final submission.

Beyond the African continent, the agony of Bosnia and Herzegovina has continued to outrage the conscience of mankind. The senseless bloodletting in that tormented region of Europe remains stubbornly impervious to solution. Peace plan after peace plan has failed to impress one side or the other, and the result is that the patience of the international community, which has to deploy enormous resources to maintain a massive peace-keeping presence in the area, is being tested beyond endurance. The question we ask is: How can the perpetrators of that cruel conflict ever make sense out of it? We appeal to them to stop the carnage. Meanwhile, we urge the International Tribunal set up to bring to justice the authors and perpetrators of that barbarous war to spare no effort in doing so.

We hope that in the Caribbean, the people of Haiti will take advantage of the massive assistance they are receiving from the international community to normalize the situation in their country. They have a golden opportunity to do so and to resume the journey they started three years ago towards a democratic future. There may be no second - or third - chance.

Botswana believes that the time has come for Cuba and the United States to negotiate an amicable end to their protracted estrangement. Intractable problems all over the world, are being resolved through negotiations, and we do not believe that the cold war between Cuba and the United States is beyond resolution by negotiation. Botswana values the friendship of both countries and cherishes the hope that soon there will be peace and reconciliation between the two neighbours.

The Middle East has broken out of the straitjacket of no war- no peace. We hail the agreement clinched last year between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and the *rapprochement* between Israel and Jordan symbolized by the signing of the Washington Declaration to bring to an end the state of war between the two countries, and we urge that no stone be left unturned in the quest for a comprehensive solution to the problems of that very important area of the world.

Unfortunately, the sound of the drums of war in the Gulf area are piercing our ears once again. We hope that this time the parties involved in the war dance are merely trying to exorcise the demons of the politics of brinkmanship, without any intention whatsoever of bringing world peace to the brink and beyond.

The arbitrary division of the island of Cyprus remains unrepaired. We urge the parties to reintensify their search for a mutually acceptable dispensation that will make possible the reunification of the island and its people.

The same applies to the two Koreas. The people of the North and South are Koreans in every sense and soon they must realize that, like the people of South Africa, who have just triumphed over racial division, they too can triumph if they try harder, over ideological division.

We live in the age of dialogue and negotiation, the age of reconciliation and forgiveness. No one will be excused for refusing to negotiate an end to a disagreement.

Over the past two decades my country has experienced an unprecedented period of economic growth. Between 1970 and 1992 Botswana achieved an annual real growth rate of 12 per cent per year in gross domestic product. After being viewed as one of the world's poorest countries, with a per capita income estimated at \$70, Botswana suddenly became Africa's success story, a success born out of a stable, democratic political system and a free-market economy. Our democratic system is now so entrenched that it has become our nation's second nature. The happy

result is that Botswana is free from any ethnic or tribal conflict.

Regrettably, we have not been spared the wrath of the world recession and have thus experienced dramatic declines in growth rates. Our economic growth, heavily influenced by the development of minerals, particularly diamonds, has experienced adverse effects arising from the fall in the price of diamonds. Our country has entered the most challenging period since independence.

Africa as a whole is engaged, in one form or another, in economic and political reforms that need the support and cooperation of the donor community and the multilateral financial institutions. Poverty is an underlying factor of underdevelopment that many African countries have to contend with today. Regrettably, implementation of the structural adjustment programme, welcome as it is in the restructuring of African economies, has in many instances worsened the social conditions of the poor in the short term. This is why Botswana looks forward to the forthcoming World Summit on Social Development, where we will have the opportunity to address these anomalies in a very serious manner.

Botswana is encouraged by the ongoing process of reform and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields. The adoption of General Assembly resolution 48/162 has brought about unprecedented changes in the working of the United Nations system, at the level both of the Economic and Social Council and of the Second Committee of the General Assembly; we welcome all of this. It is our hope that these changes will bring about efficiency and effectiveness in addressing the needs and concerns of developing countries at the policy-making and operational levels.

With regard to reform of the Security Council, I can do no better than quote the African Common Position Paper on United Nations Reforms:

"The expansion and equitable representation in the Security Council has become imperative because of the need to democratize and make the Council more

efficient and transparent. In this era, the democracy that is being preached at national level should pervade the international system. It is thus necessary to review both the composition and the decision-making process of the Council, in line with the above principles, and taking into account the relationship between the Council and the General Assembly. In implementing these ideals, it is necessary to bear in mind the need for equitable geographical representation, which emphasizes increased permanent membership for developing countries, particularly in Africa."

We are due to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of this Organization. The United Nations has amply vindicated its existence. It survived the distractions and ravages of the cold war with its sense of purpose relatively intact. Botswana's fidelity to the purposes and principles of the Organization's Charter remains unstinting. It is therefore our cherished hope that the next century will usher in an environment in which the Organization will thrive in the pursuit of these purposes and principles.

The meeting rose at 6.55 p.m.