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President: Mr. Diogo FREITAS do AMARAL (Portugal)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 9 (continued)

General debate

The President: The first speaker is the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, His Excellency Mr. Yohei Kono, on whom I now call.

Mr. Kono (Japan) (*spoke in Japanese; English text furnished by the delegation*): I should like, on behalf of the Government of Japan, to begin my statement at the General Assembly by extending my felicitations on the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. I also wish to offer my sincere congratulations to Your Excellency, Professor Freitas do Amaral, on your assumption of the presidency of this commemorative session of the General Assembly.

Half a century has passed since the United Nations was founded. When we recall that its predecessor, the League of Nations, endured for just a little over 20 years, we should consider the very longevity of this Organization a blessing. But that is not the end of the story. As we look ahead to the future, the mission of the United Nations will become increasingly important. I am thus particularly moved to have been given the honour and privilege of representing the Government of Japan at this historic and significant session of the General Assembly.

Although during the past 50 years confrontation between the super-Powers at times paralysed the peace-

keeping functions of the United Nations, the structure of the international community has recently undergone tremendous change. Within this span of time, the world population has more than doubled, and this explosive increase has resulted in serious problems on a global scale. Moreover, with the rapid proliferation of regional conflicts in the years since the end of the cold war, there are an estimated 30 million refugees in the world today. And, as Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali pointed out in his recent statement in Geneva, as we approach the end of the twentieth century, 1.3 billion people are living in absolute poverty and more than 1.5 billion do not receive even the most basic health care. Needless to say, there remain the increasingly grave problems of environmental degradation, including global warming, deforestation and marine pollution.

The United Nations is the only universal international organization that exists to cope with these grave problems to ensure that the international community enjoys peace and prosperity. Thus it is necessary at this time for the United Nations genuinely to strengthen its functions and to take concrete action for reforms in the financial, economic and social, and political fields. Cooperation with the United Nations has always been an important pillar of Japan's foreign policy. I should like at the outset to state that Japan is resolved hereafter to strengthen further such cooperation and to contribute actively to the strengthening of the Organization's functions.

The first point I wish to make with regard to the crucially important international challenges in this new post-cold-war era is that the development of developing countries should be pursued from a new perspective. The achievement of greater economic self-reliance by developing countries through development is conducive to the growth of the global economy as a whole and will, in turn, help stabilize the new international order.

Development issues have until now tended to become politicized in the context of East-West confrontation and have not been addressed from the essential perspective of development. Today, however, an environment is emerging in which the problems of the economic and social development of developing countries can be squarely addressed from a perspective of cooperation and partnership. On this occasion, I should like to reaffirm the need to formulate a more comprehensive development strategy for achieving peace and prosperity throughout the international community.

In addressing development issues, I believe that official development assistance will continue to play an important role. Japan, recalling the assistance it received from other countries in the past, and now as the world's largest aid donor, will continue its efforts to expand its official development assistance.

On the other hand, however, the development strategy that we are to pursue hereafter cannot be concerned simply with development assistance. For example, when one considers the extraordinary economic performance of the East Asia region, one cannot but clearly recognize the importance of fostering the market mechanism and of promoting the liberalization of trade and investment. I should also like to emphasize once again the need to maintain and strengthen the multilateral open-trading system, at the centre of which is the World Trade Organization, established earlier this year.

In this connection, I wish to refer to the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) as a good example of open regional cooperation that rejects exclusive regionalism. As the presiding nation at this year's APEC conference, to be held in Osaka in November, Japan intends to contribute actively to the further promotion of such regional cooperation under APEC.

The concept of social development is increasingly important in ensuring that economic development and growth will lead to the enhancement of individual welfare and the security and prosperity of society as a whole

through the promotion of education and training, respect for human rights and the advancement of the status of women. Japan is working to enhance its international cooperation in all of these areas. It attaches particular importance to the role of women in development and thus, at the recent Fourth World Conference on Women, in Beijing, it announced a new policy to expand its development assistance in the three priority areas of raising the educational standards, improving the health and promoting the economic and social participation of women.

In the formulation of the new development strategy which I proposed earlier, a comprehensive approach is needed. Such an approach would include not only official development assistance, but a variety of policy measures in such areas as trade, investment, macroeconomic policies, technology transfer and building social infrastructure. In addition, it is also important to take a differentiated approach which applies the best policy mix according to the respective country's stage of development.

Based on this fundamental philosophy, I should like to present the following three concrete guidelines.

First, realistic development targets which clearly indicate the anticipated results of development should be established, and developing countries and donor countries should work together to achieve those targets. I should like, for example, to propose that the United Nations, with the cooperation of such bodies as the United Nations University, undertake a study to establish development targets. These targets would combine indices measuring the economic growth of a developing country by, for example, an increase of its gross national product to a fixed level within a certain time-frame, with indices showing the degree of social development according to, among other things, literacy and infant mortality rates.

Secondly, it is important to promote participatory development that involves, in addition to central Governments, new development actors such as non-governmental organizations and local governments.

Thirdly, South-South cooperation should be further promoted. I would propose that necessary financial measures be considered, including the establishment of an effective mechanism for this purpose within the United Nations Development Programme.

While there is a diminished likelihood of a large-scale confrontation or conflict between nations today, as compared with the cold-war era, regional conflicts which stem from religious or ethnic rivalries are of increasingly serious concern. Because poverty is in many cases a cause of these conflicts, it is essential that development issues be urgently addressed. At the same time, it is also the case that a conflict itself poses a major obstacle to the achievement of development, resulting in a vicious circle.

The efforts of the countries concerned, as well as those of other countries in the region, are, of course, basic to the settlement of regional conflicts. But, in addition, the international community too must seriously address itself to the resolution of conflicts, and for this purpose the functions of the United Nations should be strengthened.

Peace-keeping operations, building upon the efforts of the parties concerned, are an effective means of helping to settle disputes. Their deployment can also play an important role in preventing conflicts. It is thus essential that the international community continue to support such operations and work for their further reform. Japan actively cooperates with United Nations peace-keeping operations and intends to participate in the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force in the Golan Heights. Moreover, responding to the rapidly expanding refugee problems resulting from these numerous conflicts, Japan continues to support the activities of such organs as the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

It is also important that the United Nations, as well as its Member States, place greater emphasis on conflict prevention. Japan supports the strengthening of United Nations efforts in the area of preventive diplomacy, including the dispatch of fact-finding missions and the offer of political support through its good offices or mediation efforts.

It is for the purpose of promoting conflict prevention and settlement that Japan, with the United Nations and the United Nations University, is co-sponsoring the High-Level Symposium on Peace and Development: Problems of Conflict in Africa, which will be convened next month.

Of all the regional disputes being witnessed in the world today, particular reference should be made to the conflict in the former Yugoslavia. Peace will not be achieved in that conflict through the use of force by the parties concerned; it must be sought through negotiation. And now there is a window of opportunity for the parties to engage in peace talks. It is essential that that opportunity

not be lost but that all concerned spare no effort to achieve peace. Japan continues to support the efforts towards peace being made by the countries concerned as well as the activities of the United Nations. It is also extending appropriate cooperation, including humanitarian assistance. Once the conflict is brought to an end and peace is restored, Japan intends to cooperate in the rehabilitation of the region in conjunction with other concerned countries and relevant international organizations.

I turn now to the situation in the Middle East. Japan has been actively contributing to efforts towards a peaceful settlement. Japan welcomes the agreement reached on 24 September in the negotiations on the expansion of Palestinian interim self-rule and believes it will be a major step forward in the peace process.

Promoting disarmament and strengthening the regime for the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction are essential to the maintenance of international peace and stability. As countries curtail excessive military spending through arms-reduction efforts, the resources thus saved can be allocated to development objectives. Conversely, progress in economic development must not lead to arms build-ups, and for this reason too it is necessary to redouble disarmament efforts.

In this year that marks the fiftieth anniversary of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan welcomed the decision to extend indefinitely the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which is an important contribution to strengthening the basis of the non-proliferation regime and represents significant progress towards the ultimate elimination of nuclear weapons.

As an important step towards nuclear disarmament, renewed efforts should be made to complete negotiations on a comprehensive test-ban treaty by next spring and to sign it by the autumn of 1996, at the latest. Japan, with firm political will and together with other countries, will do its utmost to attain this crucially important goal. As for the scope of the treaty's provisions against nuclear testing, we deeply appreciate the announcements made by France, the United States and the United Kingdom indicating their support for a total ban on all nuclear testing and we hope that the other nuclear-weapon States will likewise adopt that position without delay. I should like to reiterate here the proposal which I made in my address to this body last year that, once the treaty is concluded, the signing ceremony be held in Japan.

I cannot but deeply deplore the nuclear tests conducted by certain countries immediately after the indefinite extension of the NPT was approved unanimously by the States Parties to the Treaty and just as the international community has begun to make further progress towards a nuclear-free world. I should like on this occasion to reaffirm that the nuclear-weapon States, which are accorded a special status under the NPT, have an obligation to respond to the trust shown in them by non-nuclear-weapon States by engaging in genuine nuclear-disarmament efforts. Japan has consistently called for the cessation of nuclear testing and at this session of the General Assembly intends to sponsor a draft resolution calling for the cessation of nuclear testing. I hope that it receives the support and cooperation of all Member States.

In addition, I would appeal to all States to work vigorously for the reduction and control of conventional weapons. The United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, the purpose of which is to enhance the transparency of arms transfers, has proved a great success, recording more than 90 per cent of the transfers of conventional weapons that have taken place throughout the world. I strongly encourage many more States to participate in the Register. The prompt establishment of an international mechanism for controlling the export of conventional weapons is also an important issue.

The problem of uncleared land-mines is not only a humanitarian issue but one that poses a serious obstacle to economic rehabilitation. International cooperation and the development of technology for clearing these mines are urgently required. As we look to the future, it is equally important to consider and strengthen the framework of international regulations with respect to the use, production, transfer and so on of anti-personnel land- mines.

Another serious problem facing the international community is that of the proliferation of small arms. It is Japan's intention to submit to the General Assembly at this session a draft resolution on the establishment, under the Secretary-General, of a panel of experts to address this issue.

As I stated at the beginning of my remarks, we should seize the historic opportunity presented by the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations to realize concrete reforms aimed at strengthening the functions of the Organization, the importance of which continues to grow. I should like on this occasion to present my views concerning reforms to be undertaken in three areas, namely,

financial reform, reforms in the economic and social fields and reform of the Security Council.

Unless the efficiency of its bodies is enhanced and its financial base is made sound and strong, a genuine strengthening of the functions of the United Nations will not be achieved. At present the unpaid contributions of Member States to the United Nations amount to well over US\$ 3 billion. It is imperative that we as Member States recognize this situation as an impending crisis and face up to it. I call upon all Member States to make every effort to pay in full and as soon as possible their assessed contributions that are in arrears. At the same time I should like to stress the need for a comprehensive review of the method by which the financial burden is shared among Member States, in a manner that does not place excessive burdens on any of them. As the second-largest contributor to the United Nations, Japan, despite its severe financial situation, has assumed considerable responsibility for United Nations financing. On this occasion I wish to emphasize that serious discussion of the fundamental reform of United Nations financing and the realization of a fair and equitable system of burden-sharing are key to the strengthening of the functions of the United Nations.

Now, with the situation more conducive to addressing development issues from a new perspective, it is imperative that we tackle global issues more effectively, particularly those relating to the environment, but also human rights, refugees, population, AIDS and narcotics.

In so doing we must work with greater earnestness to strengthen the United Nations system in economic and social fields. Specifically, it is necessary to improve the efficiency and review the mandates of the various organizations and agencies active in these fields and to promote more effective coordination between them, including international financial institutions.

From this point of view, Japan attaches great importance to the discussion on "An Agenda for Development", and by contributing actively to that discussion it is endeavouring to promote reform in economic and social fields. In particular, there is an urgent need to revitalize the functions of the Economic and Social Council, including the further utilization of its various functional committees.

The reform of the Security Council is of the utmost importance in strengthening the United Nations in the political field. The primary objective of Security Council

reform is to strengthen its function by enhancing its legitimacy and effectiveness. Towards this end, Japan believes it is necessary to expand the Security Council by adding to its permanent membership countries in a position to assume global responsibilities, and also to increase by an appropriate number the non-permanent membership.

As I stated here last year, Japan, with the endorsement of many countries, is prepared to discharge its responsibilities as a permanent member of the Security Council, in accordance with its basic philosophy regarding international contributions, including the non-resort to the use of force prohibited by its Constitution. On this point, I should like to take this opportunity once again to express my appreciation to the many countries that have indicated their support for Japan's permanent membership on the Security Council.

Building on the results of the discussions conducted in the Working Group over the past two years, particularly on the substantive progress made during the last session of the General Assembly, and also taking advantage of the momentum provided by the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, I would urge all Member States to redouble their efforts to reach an agreement on a broad framework for reform by the end of the current session, in September 1996.

This year, which marks the fiftieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War, Japan has looked squarely at its past history and has renewed its commitment to peace. Japan is among the countries that have benefited most from the peace and stability of the international community over the past 50 years. I earnestly hope that other countries throughout the world will likewise enjoy the blessings that have accrued to Japan as a result of international peace and prosperity.

I should like to conclude my statement today by reaffirming Japan's determination to contribute to the best of its ability to the building of a stronger United Nations for the future, as well as to establishing a new international order for peace and prosperity based upon the principles of freedom and democracy.

The President: I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Canada, His Excellency the Honourable André Ouellet.

Mr. Ouellet (Canada): It is a great honour to represent Canada here today as we celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations during this general debate.

Canada has always been among the strongest supporters of the United Nations, not only in word but also in deed. In 1945 we were, through Canadian Prime Minister Mackenzie King, an original signatory of the United Nations Charter. Ambassador John Humphreys helped write the 1948 United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Successive Canadian Ambassadors to the United Nations have distinguished themselves in the service of the Organization, as have countless Canadian negotiators in areas ranging from disarmament to trade to development. In addition, Lester B. Pearson won a Nobel Peace Prize for his contribution to the success of the United Nations in establishing the first peace-keeping operation, in 1956.

All these Canadians had a unifying purpose: to promote progress in implementing the United Nations Charter, which enshrines the commitment of the people of the United Nations to the advancement of humanity.

Of course, there have been criticisms of the Organization; many are legitimate and require attention. It is clear, however, that the international community remains committed to the goals of the Charter and to the United Nations as the primary instrument for global problem solving.

The United Nations deserves our continued support. If we look at the record of just the last few years, the United Nations has conducted successful peace-keeping operations in Cambodia, Mozambique and Haiti. Thanks to the United Nations, in this decade alone 5 million children will grow up normally, children who would otherwise have been paralysed by polio. This year the United Nations is working, as it does every year, to ensure a better life for the almost 23 million refugees in the world.

Global resolve to support the United Nations and to advance the interests of the international community has recently been underscored by such successes as the indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. At the Halifax Summit in June, chaired by our Prime Minister, Jean Chrétien, the P-8 (Political Eight) leaders reaffirmed their strong commitment to the United Nations system of international institutions and added their ideas for revitalizing it.

The central message is clear: we must take this momentous opportunity to confirm and renew our commitment to the United Nations. To do so, we require a renewed vision for the next 50 years. This vision must

be centred on not just striving for, but achieving, human security on the basis of the freedom of people everywhere to live in peace and without fear, to be prosperous and enjoy equality, justice before the law and knowledge. The Members of the United Nations must work together now to renew the Organization and its agencies and programmes and to help make this vision a reality.

In Canada's view pursuing this vision requires a focus on three interlinked objectives: preventing conflict; responding quickly when conflict occurs; and supporting peace-building efforts on an ongoing basis. I will address each objective in turn.

(spoke in French)

The first priority must be to help the United Nations better protect people from conflict. The United Nations has had important successes in the past few years but, unfortunately, there have also been set-backs. If the United Nations is to adapt to a changing world, if confidence in the Organization is to be restored, we must learn from the failures of Bosnia, Somalia and Rwanda and build on the successes of Cambodia, Namibia and El Salvador.

Preventive action, as the Secretary-General has laid out so well in "An Agenda for Peace", takes many forms, from economic development programmes to mediation, to the preventive deployment of personnel — as, for example, in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia — from the investigation of human rights violations to the conclusion of agreements limiting the spread of weapons of mass destruction. Prevention saves lives, forestalls untold human suffering and makes the best use of limited resources.

Last year I announced at this podium that Canada was providing a list of Canadian experts available to the United Nations for preventive diplomacy missions. We are also taking advantage of our membership in La Francophonie, in the Commonwealth and in regional organizations such as the Organization of American States (OAS) and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) precisely in order to work towards enhancing the ability of these organizations to prevent conflicts. Our Prime Minister, Jean Chrétien, is currently pressing for an expanded Commonwealth role in democratization and good governance, which are two key elements of conflict prevention. I recently convened a meeting of La Francophonie in Ottawa to generate recommendations for it to strengthen its role in conflict prevention, particularly in Africa. These recommendations will be presented to the

leaders, the Heads of State and Government, gathered at the Francophone Summit to be held in Cotonou, Benin, in December of this year.

Prevention also means deterring crimes against humanity. Canada strongly supports the early establishment of an international criminal court, which will, we hope, deter such crimes in the future but, should they occur, would punish the perpetrators. The recently approved Platform for Action at the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing lends further impetus in this area.

Our recent experiences in the former Yugoslavia and in Rwanda emphasize the link between security and human rights. The United Nations many human rights mechanisms produce a wealth of information that could help us identify and understand potential areas of conflict. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has a role to play in enhancing the early warning functions of the United Nations. The experience of the Human Rights Field Operation in Rwanda revealed the need for the more effective coordination of United Nations field missions. Canada has commissioned work on the human rights components of field operations and on stand-by arrangements for them. This work will yield recommendations on ways to integrate human rights into United Nations field operations, in a way consistent with the approach outlined in "An Agenda for Peace".

One of the priorities of Canada's foreign policy and one of the best ways to renew commitment to the United Nations consists of adopting a coherent approach to the prevention and management of complex emergencies. Averting crisis requires more flexibility and speed in decision-making and in implementation. In this regard Canada supports the proposal for a conference on security, stability and development in the Great Lakes region of Central Africa. We also reaffirm our strong support for the United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs.

(spoke in English)

Another major focus of Canada's preventive action is arms control and disarmament, especially concerning nuclear weapons. The historic decision to extend the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) indefinitely provides a foundation for further important gains on nuclear disarmament. We must now complete the comprehensive test-ban treaty negotiations as early as possible in 1996 in order to permit its

signature at the General Assembly next September. An agreement to begin negotiations on a treaty to ban the production of fissionable material for nuclear weapons is currently held up. We squander such opportunities at our peril. Canada calls on all members of the Conference on Disarmament to proceed urgently with the cut-off negotiations.

Regrettably our efforts to take preventive action are eroded by the continued global imbalance between spending on armaments and spending on human development. Multilateral institutions should take trends in military and other unproductive spending into consideration. All States Members of the United Nations should comply with the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms which will, we hope, be expanded soon to include military holdings and national procurement activities. Together, interested countries could develop criteria to identify excessive military expenditures and appropriate international responses. Canada has taken some initiatives in this regard in recent months and we look forward to productive negotiations with many Member States here.

When a United Nations preventive diplomacy operation stumbles and efforts to prevent conflict fail, Member States all too often criticize the United Nations. But much of the blame for the failures of the Organization lies with the Member States themselves who do not provide it with the tools needed for success. These tools are never needed more than when a crisis erupts.

Last year I discussed the problems the United Nations has encountered in mobilizing its peace operations to respond to crises. Canada's long experience with peace-keeping has convinced us that improvements are possible. The international community's slow response to the horrible and deeply distressing events in Rwanda was very much in our mind. It was in this context that I announced that Canada would examine ways to improve the capacity of the United Nations to react quickly to such events.

Today I have the honour of presenting to the Assembly Canada's report entitled "Towards a Rapid Reaction Capability for the United Nations" as a special Canadian contribution to the United Nations during its fiftieth anniversary year. It presents practical proposals for enhancing the United Nations rapid reaction capability in the field of peace operations. I believe the proposals will both help save lives and conserve scarce resources.

The report expresses the view of the Government of Canada, but considerable care was taken to consult with

other Governments, non-governmental organizations and intergovernmental institutions. We are also deeply grateful to the many experts from many countries who have lent us their time and wisdom.

The main proposal of the report is the "Vanguard Concept". This concept will permit the United Nations to assemble, from Member States, a multifunctional force of up to 5,000 military and civilian personnel, and, with the authorization of the Security Council, quickly deploy it under the control of an operational-level headquarters. This operational headquarters would be responsible for the advance preparations that are crucial if rapid reaction is to work. Forces will be provided under enhanced stand-by arrangements with Member States. Our other proposals seek to enhance training, to create more efficient logistics and transportation, and to strengthen the planning efforts of the entire United Nations system. Let me say that none of the 26 recommendations in the report requires Charter reforms.

But the search for immediate, practical solutions must not preclude more visionary possibilities. In this regard, the report looked at longer-term questions, such as advanced technology in support of the United Nations peace operations, the feasibility of a permanent group of civilian police, the idea of a United Nations Standing Emergency Group, a permanent force as has been considered by our colleague from the Netherlands; and the question of independent sources of revenue for the United Nations system.

(spoke in French)

I believe that the recommendations in the report, if implemented, will strengthen the United Nations capacity for more rapid, effective and successful peace operations. They will help restore confidence in the ability of the United Nations to respond to crises.

We are conscious of the fact that words are not enough. In the words of a former military adviser to the United Nations:

"We can't deploy studies."

For Canada this report is only the first step in translating ideas into action. To meet the growing need for civilian personnel during crises, Canada will offer the United Nations secondment or the loan of civilian personnel on a short-term urgent basis to help in the development of a fully trained capacity in the areas of

human rights, legal advice, humanitarian assistance, and other aspects of a rapid civilian response to crises.

Last week Canada sent the Secretary-General an updated inventory of Canadian personnel and equipment on stand-by to the United Nations, including technical information that would be crucial to rapid response. We are now prepared to negotiate with the United Nations a more detailed memorandum of understanding on stand-by arrangements, which would include more information on readiness and capability standards.

Our report devotes special attention to the creation of an operational-level headquarters as the heart of the "Vanguard" concept. Canada is prepared to help in establishing its headquarters should the United Nations decide to accept this recommendation. We have already made a significant number of military personnel available to the United Nations on secondment or on loan. We are prepared to make available additional personnel, both civilian and military, in order to bring this idea closer to realization.

The time for moving towards fundamental improvements in the way the United Nations responds to crises is now. A number of countries have advanced proposals similar to Canada's and there are many new and interesting proposals for change coming also from the non-governmental sector.

Follow-up is of key importance. We need to marshal our energies, to determine the most promising areas of action, and to move quickly towards putting words into action. Over the coming weeks and months, Canada intends to work closely with like-minded countries from around the world, and, of course, with the United Nations Secretariat to this end.

The ongoing work of peace-building must continue alongside preventive diplomacy and now rapid reaction operations. Indeed, peace-building involves a wide range of activities. Much of the work needed for articulating a broad vision of human security has already been done in the series of United Nations conferences in the economic and social fields, culminating in the Platform for Action recently adopted at the United Nations Conference on Women. It sets out a comprehensive view of sustainable development, which balances economic and social agendas for the purpose of promoting the well-being of society. This global consensus offers an opportunity to restore confidence in the work of the United Nations system in these fields, and to dispel the perception of aimlessness and drift. The

United Nations can continue to play an invaluable role in forging global agreements on development goals, in advocating core values, and in responding to humanitarian and development needs.

We must seek to anchor change in a commitment to people-centred sustainable development. A strong emphasis must be placed on the reduction of poverty and on the integration of the poorest countries into the world economy. However, no single country, or even group of countries, can achieve global results alone. We are, therefore, determined to work with all Member States to pursue these goals sufficiently and effectively. Let me take this opportunity to set out some ideas on the way to renew commitment to the economic and social work of the United Nations.

First, there is a need to achieve the right balance between wide-ranging debate and decisions on which programmes should be adopted. The justified breadth of debate does not mean that United Nations programs should be established to address every problem. There are many other actors who play important roles. The United Nations should focus on what it is uniquely equipped to achieve.

Secondly, there is a need for a fresh sense of the real goals of development. The outcomes of the major conferences are at the core, and their distillation and coordinated follow-up should be a touchstone for the United Nations in the economic and social fields.

The roles and functions of organizations and agencies should be examined and refocused to ensure that they are oriented to future needs. The Agenda for Development is an important opportunity to initiate the institutional change required.

Improving cooperation with and among specialized agencies is essential to give limited resources some impact. The Economic and Social Council must take more responsibility for policy coordination within the United Nations system. A start was made this summer in Geneva. The recent establishment of the United Nations Programme on AIDS is a promising example. There, the executive heads of agencies and programmes must demonstrate leadership, particularly in coordinating the follow-up to international conferences and ensuring that duplication, overlapping and needless spending are eliminated as far as possible.

We must effectively harness the complementary roles of the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions. To ensure a smooth transition from emergencies to rehabilitation, improved cooperation in crises must be an immediate priority. I urge the Secretary-General and the leaders of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to propose new arrangements for post-crisis assistance. They could also establish a high-level working group to consider how to strengthen cooperation, both at the Organization's Headquarters and elsewhere, in areas such as data collection, analysis and reporting. The World Trade Organization (WTO) should also participate in relevant aspects of this work.

We have all come to understand the extent to which human security is indivisible from environmental security. More and more conflicts are arising following disagreement over the use of finite natural resources. The United Nations therefore has a key role to play in promoting sustainable development. Canada welcomes the recent success of United Nations conferences in some areas of international resource-management operations, such as the United Nations Conference on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks. Our goal is concrete, internationally sanctioned conservation measures. The same objective applies to our efforts to ensure the sustainable management of forests and arable land.

The Rio Summit achieved landmark agreements on climate change and biodiversity. Canada welcomes the progress made by the Commission on Sustainable Development and by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), in clarifying their respective roles in following up these agreements in collaboration with Member States.

(spoke in English)

In speaking about the three elements — preventive action, rapid reaction and peacebuilding — I wish to emphasize the need to see them as mutually reinforcing. United Nations Member States must be committed to all three in order for any one to be successful.

To ensure a renewal of the United Nations vision through these actions, we must also reassert our commitment to assuring the effectiveness of its key bodies. Although I could speak of many United Nations agencies in this regard, because of its critical role in promoting the vision of the next 50 years, I will limit my remarks to the Security Council.

The Security Council's mandate to help prevent disputes and to resolve conflicts confer on it unique responsibilities. The binding nature of some decisions adds further weight to its deliberations.

In recent years the Council has experienced a period of intensified activity. It has also experienced setbacks from which we can all learn. One lesson of particular importance is that members of the Security Council, especially the permanent five, need to demonstrate a firm commitment to the implementation of their own decisions.

For Canada, the need for more open, transparent and collegial decision-making is crucial. There must be closer consultations with countries contributing personnel and equipment in order to help implement Council decisions. Here, real progress has been achieved of late, which Canada warmly welcomes. This progress needs to be institutionalized.

The credibility and effectiveness of the Council in promoting international peace and security is also a key element. Although we do not regard expansion of its membership as a panacea, it is clear that composition plays a role in fostering credibility and effectiveness. The Council is no longer as representative as it once was. Its legitimacy, and perhaps also the quality of its decisions, would be greatly enhanced by more representation from those countries that contribute the most to the maintenance of international peace and security and to the broad purpose of the Organization — that is, the key criterion for non-permanent membership enshrined in Article 23 of the Charter.

Perhaps it is time to reflect together on those purposes to which Article 23 refers. They would surely include participation in United Nations peace operations, commitment to arms control and disarmament, support for good-neighbourly relations, humanitarian assistance, human rights, development cooperation and the promotion of civil society. An understanding among Member States along these lines would help in the selection of non-permanent Council members, whether on the existing basis or on a modified basis.

A recurring theme throughout my remarks has been the need for the United Nations to marshal its scarce resources more effectively. There is simply no other option if we are to restore confidence in this Organization and in the specialized agencies. As the Secretary-General has stressed, the Organization's financial crisis is

crippling its effectiveness and its credibility. We cannot allow this to happen.

The answer lies in addressing both expenditure and revenue. Many Governments, including Canada's, are facing difficult budgetary decisions. We have had to live with expenditure reductions in real terms while maintaining priority programmes. International organizations must respect the same pressures as domestic Governments. The United Nations and its agencies must focus on key objectives and reduce overhead spending in order to protect priority programmes. In fact, there are many steps that chief executive officers can take to increase efficiency and to reduce costs without impairing programmes, and we should all insist that they do so. Similarly, many agencies' budgets should be held at present levels, wherever possible, if not reduced. Member States must work collectively to this end. Canada strongly supports the proposal put forward by the Secretary-General for an efficiency task force to address these issues. We are prepared to contribute both expertise and personnel to get it started soon.

While the United Nations needs to do more to limit spending and to promote efficiency, its financial crisis would be significantly alleviated if its Member States were to meet their financial obligations in full, on time and without conditions. Canada calls on all Member States to do so. We cannot accept that Member States, some of which rank among the richest countries in the world, fail to meet their financial obligations to this institution. This is even more difficult to accept when we consider that a number of the poorest countries in the world meet their payments in full and on time. Indeed, among the merely 60 Member States that had met their regular budget obligations to the United Nations fully by 31 July of this year, 32 were developing countries. Unfortunately, 71 other Member States had made no payment at all. Almost 100 countries still owe money from previous years, including, I have to say, several members of the Security Council. The majority of Member States appear content to approve programmes, appropriations and assessments without honouring the obligations to which they are committed. This is unacceptable and cannot be allowed to continue.

The General Assembly's High-level Working Group considering the United Nations financial plight should begin looking at the establishment of incentives to pay. It should also agree on an equitable method of sharing the burden, free of the distortions that characterize the present scale of assessments.

In conclusion, let me say that I have sought to pay tribute to this Organization's achievements, and to emphasize that Canada strongly supports the United Nations. We are prepared to contribute concretely and actively to its revitalization and renewal. But confidence will be restored and commitment renewed only through a partnership in which Member States live up to their commitment and focus on key priorities that respond to human-centred goals for sustainable security and development. If we are successful, and frankly I truly believe that we will be successful, I have no doubt that 50 years from now our successors will be able to praise, without hesitation or qualification, the record of our Organization's first 100 years.

The President: I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Peru, His Excellency Mr. Francisco Tudela van Breugel Douglas.

Mr. Tudela (Peru) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Mr. President, on this important occasion, allow me to extend the congratulations of the people and Government of Peru upon your distinguished and well-deserved election to preside over the work of the fiftieth session of the General Assembly. We are confident that your broad experience and ability will make Portugal's presidency a high-water mark in this exceptional anniversary marking half a century of the United Nations Organization.

Peru, like all the nations gathered here, is facing a time of awesome changes in social, political and economic practices and in international equilibria as this century draws to a close. Those changes have altered our vision of the world and introduced positive elements of cardinal importance, but have also left questions and shadows that cause the greatest concern. Moreover, the shared approaches that have characterized these last few years do not in themselves resolve many of the substantive problems of the international system, such as those pertaining to collective security, economic and social development and the defence of the perennial values that guarantee a worthy and peaceful life for peoples and individuals.

During the space of a decade my country experienced the worst social, political and economic crisis in its 174 years of history as an independent nation. A painful and futile internal conflict, brought on by intransigence and ideological utopianism, added to the waste of public resources and Governments overwhelmed by the nation's problems, led Peru into a deep internal crisis with grave international consequences. Over the last

five years, the Government of President Alberto Fujimori has succeeded in overcoming the internal confrontation, restoring a healthy and vigorous economic order and re-establishing Peru's international ties. In this context, it is very important to stress that we have set forth on the way to turning external difficulties into patterns of normalcy and the potential consolidation of our relations with neighbouring countries, with which we wish above all to cultivate cooperation.

All of us here are aware that threats to international peace and security arise from the deterioration of the social, economic and institutional fabric of States, and that their worst effects, such as internal armed conflicts, drug trafficking, corruption and the inevitable sequel of those ills, poverty, are the seed-bed in which international conflicts tend to germinate. And all sensible people also know that the antidote to those ills is to be found in the permanent values common to all of mankind's great civilizations, the values that should guide the effective effort of the international community to overcome those acute evils.

We have left behind the international system dominated by the cold war between the super-Powers and the absurd faith in philosophical and political determinism. If we wish to build a world of justice and peace, we must dispense with the rhetorical exercises to which we became accustomed during that fortunately bygone era. We need objective points of reference for the international system that will avoid unilateral interpretations or interpretations that disregard the principles in force to bring about civilized coexistence among nations. And this requires us to refute the cynical idea that the values of the international system do not exist, or that they are entirely subordinate to relations of force between nations.

All of this implies taking initiatives to enhance and defend objective principles of international law, as the only possible foundation for the present international system. We see with great concern how ethnic, geographical and utopian myths and revisionisms are becoming a boundless source of suffering for millions of men and women in our time, gravely disturbing fragile international balances.

The struggle of the Cold War undermined the legal principles concerning avoidance of the use of force, respect for international treaties and the principle of non-intervention. Today, we have a duty to look upon international law with a new gaze; we must understand that, although international law does not in itself resolve the world's problems, it will make this world safer and more

habitable, and ensure that its points of reference are more stable. We have before us the intellectual challenge of clarifying the content of the central rules of international law in order to strengthen their legitimacy, and we also have the obligation to improve the effectiveness of international law, in both bilateral and multilateral relations.

At the same time, we must not overlook the fact that the security and development of nations rests, today more than ever, upon respect for the social and intellectual features that are peculiar to each culture, unquestionably falling within a universal conception based on respect for individual freedoms. We must resist attempts to impose uniform "models" that prejudice and discriminate between the world's varying cultural forms. We must seek unity in diversity and must not accept conditionalities that are often advanced by groups foreign to the democratic representation of States, whose effects upon our cultures are negative.

There are those who argue that, having overcome the ideological conflict that divided the world for 45 years, we are now entering into a conflict of civilizations as the last phase in the evolution of the modern world's conflicts. Without accepting the determinism implicit in that view, we cannot fail to observe that a lack of respect for the cultural diversity of the human species could indeed become a source of profound disputes.

There has also been talk of the vanishing sovereignty of States as a *fait accompli*, and it is claimed that this would legitimize asymmetrical intervention by some nations in the lives of other nations. The word "sovereignty" evokes armies, ships and cannons and has an ominous ring to it. However, if we take an objective view of the matter, we cannot affirm that this is so. In its essence, sovereignty is above all plenary legal and political competence within a constitutional order. If we are today actively seeking integration in many regions of the world and if States, through various multilateral treaties, are diminishing their jurisdiction over certain aspects of their economic and social life, that is taking place because States, in the exercise of that plenary competence known as sovereignty, are voluntarily delegating the exercise of specific jurisdictions to an international organization for the greater good of a particular international space. In so doing, States do not derogate from their constitutions nor do they lose their capacity to conclude international treaties as they see fit or to legislate on countless other matters. And so we believe that those who are seeking new legal and political

definitions of sovereignty should take care to respect its essence, which is nothing other than respect for the constitutional independence of the various countries of the world.

Peru opted for a republican and democratic regime based on a division of powers and officials elected by free and universal suffrage. Its government is a limited government that leaves broad areas of social, political and economic life open to the free choice of its citizens. However, this limited Government is not a minimal State without social functions, for it has active responsibilities and an important agenda to pursue in order to free the poorest citizens from a culture of dependency and integrate them fully into the life of the country. Peru seeks to harmonize transmission of the valuable cultural traditions of its people with the imperative needs of an open regionalism and the defence of a coherent, legitimate and just international order.

Basing itself upon those principles and aspirations, Peru welcomes the thinking that is taking place during this fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations and believes that the Organization should give serious thought to its future and to the course which international society is taking, so as to achieve a more complete vision encompassing different international realities based upon mutual respect and fairness among Member States. We must take into account the new regional realities and seek machinery that is functional, economical and efficient, not hampered by secondary issues or limited to powerlessly denouncing the contradictions of the international system, in order to ensure that the United Nations can be faithful to the purposes and principles that inspired its creation.

We believe that we must discard the pragmatism that styles itself realism and defend the fundamental principles of a balanced and just international order. Peruvians believe in defending the perennial values of mankind, individual freedoms, international law as an objective benchmark for international order, respect for the world's cultures and the constitutional independence of all the world's nations. With these beliefs, we pledge ourselves anew to the renewal of the international system.

The President: I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, His Excellency Mr. Hans van Mierlo.

Mr. Mierlo (Netherlands): It is a great pleasure for me to see you, Sir, presiding over this very important session of the General Assembly. As a politician with a

long and distinguished career, you are eminently qualified to guide us ably through the crucial coming months.

It goes without saying that I fully endorse the intervention by Minister Solana on behalf of the European Union. At this fiftieth anniversary session of the General Assembly, I would like first of all to affirm the deep attachment of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the United Nations. The United Nations is the expression of the relatively new notion that nations and people anywhere in the world have the same rights and are bound by the same duties. For 50 years, this Organization has provided the basis for building a civilized international community and we cannot afford to be cynical about the United Nations.

There is no alternative to the United Nations in dealing with global challenges. It is up to us, the Member States, to make use of the Organization and to make it work. This anniversary should be an occasion neither for self-congratulatory speeches nor for despondency. Rather, it should inspire us to unite in a renewed effort to bring the Organization into harmony with the demands of the times.

In this age of instant communication and televised images, respect for human rights and solidarity among nations can no longer be applied selectively. Aggression, war crimes and massive violations of human rights, such as those in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, trigger an immediate and massive response throughout the world. It is impossible for people to remain indifferent to the fate of their fellow human beings anywhere — unless, of course, they should be denied access to these means of communication. However, the revolutionary growth of communications has also created a gap between people's demands for action and the limited ability of Governments and organizations to satisfy these demands.

The same observation applies to national decisions touching on the security concerns of people in countries around the globe; and nowadays, these concerns include environmental, ecological and all other aspects of human security. Sovereignty has become restricted and circumscribed because of new global interdependencies.

It is an illusion to think that in this age States can continue to conduct their business in splendid isolation without regard for international public opinion and sensitivities. Again, as sovereignty becomes less formidable a barrier and people organize themselves freely and globally in various ways, the need for global

regulation becomes more pressing. For this purpose, people look to the United Nations. But can the United Nations meet these new demands?

Mr. Traore (Mali), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The crises in Bosnia and Rwanda illustrate the types of conflict that at present pose the biggest threat to the international system. In many parts of the world ethnic, racial and religious divides are resurfacing with a vengeance. Where State structures are weak or disintegrating, those divides may become battlegrounds for struggles over land, water and other scarce resources.

The response of the international community to these political and humanitarian emergencies has often been inadequate, slow or hesitant. Lack of resolve in the early stages of a crisis has forced Member States to scramble later to close the gap between their acts and their words and to restore lost credibility. There is a certain tendency to take words for deeds and to be satisfied with words alone. Language is a currency whose value depends on corresponding behaviour. For the United Nations to be credible, its language must be credible, and its language can only be credible if it is matched by its deeds. These are simple, basic rules, not only in banking but also in politics. Unfortunately, it can be convenient to forget these rules for reasons of political expediency. In such cases a higher price must be paid at a later stage.

The war in former Yugoslavia is a tragedy for its people, but it also exemplifies the dangers threatening the international order. The fatal practice of "ethnic cleansing" has been unanimously condemned by the international community. Those warnings have not been heeded, and the mad dream of ethnic purity is still being pursued. The practice of "ethnic cleansing" has, moreover, set in motion a cycle of revenge and further violence.

The end of the war may now come into sight, thanks to forceful international intervention and a shifting balance on the ground. The current diplomatic initiative is designed to exploit this opportunity and finally to create conditions for true peace. We should do everything in our power to assist the negotiators in their mission. But for the international community, represented by the United Nations, the question also remains of whether it should have intervened earlier, and with greater decisiveness.

Members of all the parties to this conflict have at various times committed crimes and breaches of

international law. But there is a difference in the scale of human rights violations and criminal responsibility.

The Bosnian Serb side has from the beginning resorted to "ethnic cleansing" and acts of terror against the civilian population as a systematic tool in its campaign, and therefore its leaders carry prime responsibility for initiating these practices.

The latest and perhaps largest single crime was committed against the population of the former Bosnian enclaves of Srebrenica and Zepa. The victims were living in areas declared safe by the Security Council. The Serb behaviour has been condemned by the Security Council, but the United Nations and its Member States cannot escape sharing some of the blame for not living up to the United Nations commitment. We, the Member States, had convinced ourselves — and what is more, our Bosnian protégés — that a largely symbolic United Nations presence would be sufficient to deter aggression. It did not. We have been proved cruelly wrong, and as a result the populations of the enclaves paid a terrible price in terms of human life and displacement at the hands of the Bosnian Serbs. The Netherlands, whose small contingent of Blue Helmets was powerless to prevent the onslaught on Srebrenica, is deeply shocked by the massive violations of human rights which were committed by the Serb aggressors.

We share the Security Council's deep concern about the fate of the former inhabitants of Srebrenica who have not been accounted for. There are strong indications that thousands were murdered in cold blood. It is a disgrace that the Bosnian Serbs have not honoured their commitment to give immediate and full access to representatives of international organizations to investigate the situation of those who are missing. In the interest of the credibility of any future peace agreement, we cannot acquiesce in the Bosnian Serb refusal to cooperate on this and other human rights issues. We expect the same kind of cooperation from the Croat and Bosniac authorities with regard to verification of reports about human rights violations in areas under their control.

If similar calamities are to be prevented in the future, we, the Security Council and the troop contributors, must ensure that the operational aspects of the Council's resolutions have a solid foundation in military planning and available capabilities. This includes the political will to use those capabilities when needed. Therefore, in the future no mandate should be given

before the means and the readiness for implementation are assured.

Srebrenica and Zepa have also shown that humanitarian action can never be a substitute for decisive measures against a party which perpetrates aggression and massive human rights violations. Humanitarian assistance, important though it undoubtedly is in itself, risks being tainted in the eye of the public if it is perceived as a substitute for decisive action going to the root of the problem.

In order to avoid the repetition of violent outbursts, the seeds of future wars must be eliminated. These seeds often lie in the ruthless exploitation of situations of potential conflict by unscrupulous politicians and local warlords. To deter such action, justice must be done and be seen to be done.

The establishment of the international criminal Tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda may prove to be an important step in the right direction, and in more than one respect. For the second time in history, after Nuremberg and Tokyo, the international community is holding individuals responsible for their actions during wartime and in the initiation of war. So, hopefully, the blame for atrocities will not be put on entire peoples, which would call for massive revenge in the future, but on those who are personally and directly responsible. We hope that the creation of these Tribunals will prove to be a catalyst for the establishment of a permanent international criminal court.

The question of United Nations credibility in Bosnia and Rwanda points to a broad range of issues related to United Nations reform in the domain of peace operations, the structure and work methods of the Security Council, finance and the economic and social area. Let me comment briefly on each of these.

At last year's session of the General Assembly I noted that a more rapid response by the United Nations might have prevented the genocide in Rwanda. My suggestion was that in order to deal with emergencies like these we should consider creating a permanent brigade which could be deployed almost instantly once the Security Council had taken a decision. In the months thereafter this idea was explored in a series of consultations in New York and at an international colloquium organized in the Netherlands. These discussions resulted in the Netherlands non-paper on a United Nations rapid deployment brigade, which was distributed to all Member States last April.

But the idea of a United Nations brigade should be seen as a contribution to the wider debate on United Nations peace operations. The most logical manner to address the problem of rapid response would be, in my opinion, a small, standing United Nations force which could fill the time lag between a Security Council decision and the deployment of national contingents. However, the Netherlands will support and actively contribute to any proposal that represents an intermediate step towards the longer-term objective of a United Nations force for rapid deployment.

Against this background, we applaud the Canadian study on a United Nations rapid-reaction capability. Among other things, it recommends, as our colleague Mr. Ouellet pointed out, setting up a United Nations planning cell, which could function as a mobile headquarters and be part of the vanguard concept. That is, it could be the nucleus of a force composed of national contingents under the United Nations stand-by arrangements system. We fully endorse this recommendation, which partly realizes the idea I raised and in due course could lead to the creation of a standing United Nations brigade. We shall be in touch with other interested Member States in order to coordinate practical suggestions with a view to possible further political action.

The continued viability of United Nations peace operations ultimately rests on the preservation of their legitimacy. This implies that the Security Council should be made more responsive to the views of the United Nations membership at large. The transparency of the Council's decision-making concerning peace operations has already undergone noticeable improvements. Nevertheless, further adjustments are called for. Therefore, we support the creation of a mechanism for the discussion of all aspects of peace operations with troop contributors.

The Assembly should address with the utmost urgency the critical financial situation of the United Nations. Without early agreement on financial contributions, there can be no basis for the necessary broad reforms. It is unacceptable that responsible Member States should carry the burden of making up for other States' lack of financial discipline.

These States are in contravention of the Charter, which makes assessed contributions, once agreed, a binding obligation on Member States and, thus, of international law. I strongly associate myself with the European Union Presidency in calling upon Member

States to pay their contributions in full, on time and without conditions.

The problem can be solved only if Member States participate actively in the current negotiations aimed at strengthening and reforming United Nations financing and refrain from unilateral actions. The Netherlands, for its part, will participate constructively in efforts to arrive at a solution.

The provision of the necessary resources would also give the United Nations the possibility of dealing more effectively with the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples. But effective multilateral action on socio-economic issues is not a matter only of financial resources. It will require new thinking on the future of the United Nations. The Secretary-General indicated the right direction last year, in "An Agenda for Development", in his analysis of the five dimensions of development: peace, economic growth, the environment, justice and democracy. A number of initiatives, some from within the Organization and others, such as the Carlsson report, from outside, aim at strengthening, revitalizing and reforming the United Nations.

The Netherlands recognizes the need for a thorough debate and early decisions on ways to improve the performance and accountability of the United Nations. We welcome these initiatives, including the creation of the High-level Open-ended Working Group by the General Assembly. I could imagine that three years from now, in 1998, a ministerial conference could meet to agree on the basis for the implementation of the High-level Group's findings.

In the field of disarmament, the Netherlands attaches the highest priority to the conclusion next year of a comprehensive test-ban treaty. In order to ensure that the negotiations will reach this absolutely essential objective, they should be given a strong political impulse.

In this context, the Netherlands deplors the recent nuclear tests and fervently hopes that the other nuclear-weapon States will maintain their moratoriums. A decision not to conduct any further tests would be of great benefit to the creation of a positive climate for the resumption of the negotiations and their successful completion in 1996. Therefore, the Netherlands strongly urges the nuclear-weapon States to desist from all further testing.

Having said all this, I should like to close on a note of hope and appreciation for what the United Nations has done and can continue to do in a number of very important areas. I am thinking of the environment, the population problem, human rights, the status of women, democratization and social policy. In these areas, the United Nations is providing the infrastructure for the shaping and consolidation of a world-wide consensus and for the practical realization of what this consensus is about. Much of this happens through large-scale conferences, with elaborate preparatory processes involving the various regions of the world and a wide spectrum of both governmental and non-governmental actors.

The women's Conference in Beijing is clear proof of the crucial role of these meetings in bringing about a global awareness of the issues at stake. These conferences set norms and standards by which individuals and non-governmental organizations around the world can measure the progress made by Governments and by the United Nations as a whole towards well-defined goals. If properly implemented and monitored they can prove to be decisive for the quality of life of future generations, and even of our own, and for the credibility of our Organization.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*):
I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Algeria, His Excellency Mr. Mohamed-Salah Dembri.

Mr. Dembri (Algeria) (*interpretation from Arabic*):
Allow me first to say how pleased we are to see Ambassador Freitas do Amaral of Portugal presiding over this session of the General Assembly, a session that coincides with the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. His election to the presidency is a tribute that expresses recognition of his personal qualities. We welcome this unanimous election of a high-ranking representative of the friendly country, Portugal, whose skills and experience we value. I should like to assure him of the support and cooperation of Algeria.

I should also like to express Algeria's gratitude to his predecessor, Mr. Amara Essy, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Côte d'Ivoire for his outstanding efforts and achievements throughout his mandate. We are very grateful to him for the manner in which he has honoured Africa and wish him every success in his work in the service of his country.

I should also like to say how grateful we are to the Secretary-General of the Organization, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, and how much we appreciate his sagacity and resolve at a time when the role of the Organization *vis-à-vis* the call for peace, security and development, is becoming more urgent. I wish to renew to him assurances of our full confidence and continuing support.

This session of the General Assembly is truly exceptional in that it takes place at a time when the international community is at a historic turning-point. Never before has there been such a need for stability and security, nor has there been a more pressing quest for a fairer, more equitable and balanced world. Herein lies the symbiotic significance of this fiftieth session of the General Assembly. It comes as a timely reminder of the importance of world peace and security and of the need for our nations to organize their common future on new foundations.

Thus, when we take stock of the Organization's activities over the past 50 years in all areas of international life, the transformations and shortcomings such stocktaking reveals make it incumbent upon us to make a special effort to identify the stakes and the challenges we must face up to as the century draws towards its end.

How our world shapes up will depend on our doing so. Therefore, the ambition of the world Organization should be to give true content to collective security and to promote the creation of a new paradigm for development.

The United Nations must adapt to a changing and singularly complex world reality by going back to the source, to the principles upon which it was founded if it is to forge a new future for all.

At a time when the international order has lost its regulatory capability and the international community lacks the frames of reference that could help guide its action, it is up to the United Nations to regulate inter-State relations, to promote a stable and equitable order and to foster a model that would be acceptable to all.

At a time when it is becoming clear that trade globalization and market integration respond only partially to the growing need for justice, equity, stability and security, the United Nations must take its position at the forefront of the drive towards harmonization which is a must for conflict prevention, crisis management, *rapprochement* between peoples and the promotion of cooperation between States.

However, if the Organization is to perform its role, it must be given the means that would enable it to better organize international society and equip it to face up to the upsurge of intolerance, the escalation of terrorism, the exacerbation of tensions and conflicts, the aggravation of the economic situation of the most deprived countries, the social malaise in the industrialized countries and an overall decline. In short, the United Nations must be equipped with the means that would enable it to defend freedom, law, justice and equity.

This means that nothing could be done in the absence of the political will of States that bear the responsibility of dispelling doubts and remedying the disaffection that is noticeable today *vis-à-vis* the United Nations by giving true meaning to the Organization's invaluable and multifarious contributions towards the promotion of an international society that is more just, better organized and better structured.

Whether it is a matter of democratizing international relations, completing the process of decolonization, upholding human rights, strengthening the disarmament enterprise or ensuring the continuity of international efforts to promote development, the contributions of States and their awareness of their responsibilities remain indispensable if the United Nations is to be able to perform the ever-developing role it has to play in this context.

Proceeding from this, it is only by improving the collective capabilities of the international community to face up to the urgent and most intolerable injustices that a true meaning could be given to preventive efforts of diplomacy, to peace-keeping operations and to the elaboration of a genuine structure of international cooperation.

It is only with a new vision, a new thinking and new modalities of action that the international community would be able to surmount obstacles and ensure future success.

As we approach the end of the century, it is important to rethink our practices with a view to elaborating long-term complementarities that would rise up to future challenges, spare the world new crises and establish the regulatory rules our world needs.

It is this vision that inspires Algeria in its thinking of the need for international action that should be made more palpable in order to ensure greater consultation

among nations, and greater understanding among peoples as well as greater courage in striving to achieve peace and development.

It is this vision that guides Algeria's national renewal endeavour which aims at establishing on firm foundations the rule of law, promoting economic reform and strengthening the democratic process.

The democratic presidential elections, the first round of which will take place on 16 November 1995, will translate into actual political reality, the will and desire to promote the sense of responsibility of all Algerians and to hasten the laying of firm foundations for an open, free and democratic society.

This democratic process, an ever-renewed experiment, is bound to contribute to the achievement of stability, the concretization of democratic freedoms and development in our region, and, as it truly expresses the aspirations of our peoples, it will be the appropriate retort to all attempts at subversion, of which terrorism is the most abhorrent manifestation. To us, combating terrorism is a battle in defence of democracy. As any complacency *vis-à-vis* terrorism would be an absolute negation of democracy, it follows that we cannot remain indifferent to this scourge which poses a really serious threat to international peace and security. Thus, the struggle against terrorism does not allow of any laxity but must be pursued most vigorously in the context of decisive international action whose aim should be the total eradication of this scourge from all our societies.

If we are to rise up to this challenge, there is a need to accord a high priority to economic and social development. This is a need that is more urgent than ever before. Its relevance has been recognized today by all the Governments of one region. Awareness of the threat of the scourge of terrorism and the interest shown in the Algerian proposal regarding the need for a response in solidarity within the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean region demonstrate fully the strength of this conviction.

In the context of the newly emerging political, economic and social realities, Algeria has accorded special priority in the context of its immediate environment, to the problems of security and development and to the sort of contributions required in resolving such problems.

Proceeding from this, Algeria is convinced that the unitary Maghreb project is necessary, not only for the security and stability of the Maghreb region, but also for

the prosperity of the Euro-Mediterranean region, as well as the Arab and African regions.

It is precisely within the context of the need to establish a unified, strong and stable Maghreb region that Algeria makes its contribution towards the achievement of a just and lasting settlement to the question of Western Sahara. Part and parcel of this policy is Algeria's support of the efforts of the United Nations Secretary-General aimed at a transparent and credible implementation of the settlement plan through a genuine referendum, which would ensure the free exercise by the people of the Western Sahara of its right to self-determination and independence.

Any violation of the settlement plan, especially through the moving foreign populations to the Western Sahara, would have very serious consequences for the peace process. All obstacles that impede the implementation of the settlement plan should be dealt with through direct dialogue between the two parties to the conflict, the Kingdom of Morocco and the Polisario Front, with the aim of creating the proper conditions for a peaceful settlement to the conflict that would realize the aspirations of the peoples of the region. A just and lasting settlement to the question of the Western Sahara would contribute to the strengthening of the Maghreb unitary edifice, thus making it a fundamental element of success for medium- and long-term cooperative strategies in both the Sahelian-Saharan and Mediterranean regions.

In this connection, to lift the sanctions which continue to severely afflict the brotherly Libyan people and to search for urgent solutions to the relevant differences, is an urgent need that acquires particular significance and should make part of any forward-looking strategy. Here, as elsewhere, political will underscores the need for an intelligent understanding of the situation and for a positive dialectic that would contribute to the building of a community of stability and progress. It is in this spirit that we continue to deploy efforts that aim at consolidating cooperation in the Sahelian-Saharan region, an enterprise which we shall endeavour to pursue to success at the forthcoming Euro-Mediterranean conference in Barcelona.

In the Middle East, where the building of peace requires from all parties sincerity, determination and respect for the commitments undertaken, Algeria continues to make its contribution towards the establishment of a lasting peace based on a just and overall settlement consistent with the rights of all the

region's peoples. That is why, while supporting the peace process, Algeria has continuously underscored the need for withdrawal by Israel from all Arab territories occupied since 1967, including Al-Quds Al-Sharif and respect for the national inspirations of the Palestinian people. In this context, Algeria welcomes the conclusion of the agreement on the extension of Palestinian national autonomy in the west bank of the Jordan as a new positive step and calls for its translation into concrete reality.

The search for a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East calls for full awareness of the fact that the challenges which face the peoples of the region require more wide-ranging and more efficacious solutions. From this standpoint, since Iraq is fulfilling its commitments which arise from the Security Council resolutions, the sanctions which severely afflict the people of this country should be lifted.

By the same token, Kuwait's internationally recognized borders must be fully respected. Finally, the restoration of the sovereignty of the United Arab Emirates over the islands of Abou-Moussa, greater Tumb, and lesser Tumb must be reaffirmed. By meeting these conditions, new prospects for stability and security in the region can emerge.

The alarming situation in Africa, where instability and uncertainty are symptomatic of a protracted crisis and where the fundamental elements of a new solution are being sought against a backdrop of disorder, the hotbeds of tension that persist in Angola, Liberia, Burundi, Rwanda and Somalia must now be quenched. However, any return to stability will only take place through economic recovery and escape from the economy of indebtedness that has severely damaged social cohesion, to a new type of economic organization that would foster growth and guarantee the modalities of international integration.

As of necessity, this calls for dealing, as a matter of urgency, with the social costs of structural adjustment and implementing the new United Nations programme for Africa in order to avoid the tragedies and sufferings that beset the peoples of Africa and to put an end to the marginalization of the African continent. This is the price-tag on stability and peace in Africa and security in the world.

We are equally concerned at the latest developments in Bosnia and Herzegovina where an entire people, whose very survival is threatened, face hatred, exclusion and the insanity of ethnic cleansing. It is no longer possible to

tolerate this savage onslaught on the conscience of humanity. It is the international community's duty and responsibility to put an end to this situation which is politically unacceptable and morally intolerable. From this rostrum, I would like to reiterate Algeria's solidarity with and support for Bosnia and Herzegovina in exercising its right to defend its unity and territorial integrity and to protect the dignity and values of its citizens. In this spirit, Algeria has supported the current peace initiatives aimed at a just and lasting solution that would ensure respect for the constitutional principles that the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina wish freely to choose.

In addition to these concerns, Algeria has commitments relating to peace throughout the world, as entered into in the framework of United Nations peace-keeping operations in Angola, Cambodia and Haiti, and participation in the election monitoring process that led to the birth of the new South Africa.

All this reflects Algeria's posture and its commitment to the maintenance of international peace and security. This is reflected in the comprehensive and coherent policy Algeria has always pursued with regard to disarmament issues, a policy that has led to its accession to the major disarmament instruments. Its recent accession to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), its effective contribution to the promotion of consensus solutions in the negotiations on the Treaty's extension, and ratification, several weeks ago of the Chemical Weapons Convention, are significant moves that reflect Algeria's desire to play an active role in achieving general and complete disarmament.

The need for a viable international order based on solidarity has never been as urgent as it is now at a time when the world is in the throes of a phase of systematic transition.

If it acknowledges how far we are interdependent, the international community will be able to usher in an orderly world society of solidarity that respects the diversity it enjoys.

That is the reason why we must reduce the widening gap between North and South that, in the long term, are anathema to both international peace and security, and put our minds to the establishment of new balances based on renewed international relations. Such relations, if they are based on consultation and openness to the solidarity interests of the international community, will promote credible solutions to development problems. They must

validate the efforts of developing countries to regulate domestic adjustment processes, restore social balances and ensure all the conditions for meaningful integration into the new international order.

In the face of rapid changes that threaten social fabric across the board, it is essential to promote a stable, predictable international economic environment that would be conducive to development efforts. In this context, more equitable financial, monetary, trading and technological relations must provide the basis for re-establishing trade as an effective instrument for mutual development, for reconciling peoples and strengthening the international community.

In the face of these challenges, the United Nations, with its experience and credibility in terms of global issues, can provide inspiration, encouragement and help to elaborate and follow up future strategies. It is therefore our duty and responsibility to ensure that the United Nations Organization reasserts its authority, makes its structures more democratic and rationalizes its working methods.

Such an endeavour should be founded on the reaffirmation of Member States' commitments to the kind of renewal that is based on and inspired by the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

This means that any restructuring of the United Nations system must meet the requirements of true democracy in international relations and should focus on the revitalization of its bodies, improving coordination between them, rehabilitating the General Assembly and ensuring transparency in reforming the Security Council. Whether it is a matter of establishing order among the essential elements of action or global decision-making, the prerequisite of democracy is now at the very heart of the problems of peace and development. In this context, "An Agenda for Peace" and "An Agenda for Development" are of the utmost importance.

Thus, if we look clearly at the international situation and what is really at stake, this adaptation process will lead to new hope for humanity and ensure a lasting foothold in history for international peace and security.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): I call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Denmark, His Excellency Mr. Niels Helveg Petersen.

Mr. Petersen (Denmark): It is a sad irony that while we are celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the United

Nations, the Organization finds itself in serious financial crisis. If not redressed, this crisis will threaten the very goals of our Organization.

Denmark gives top priority to a strengthening of the United Nations. Hopefully, we can make headway during this session of the General Assembly as regards the financial situation of the United Nations and the "Agenda for Development". We hope that the High-level Working Group under the chairmanship of the President of the General Assembly will keep up the momentum of the reform process.

I wish to concentrate on eight points.

The first is social development. The World Summit in Copenhagen identified new approaches for action. States have the primary responsibility to attain the goals of the Summit. In this endeavour, we need the full support of the international community, the United Nations, the multilateral financial institutions, regional organizations, local authorities and the civil society. All partners must participate fully and must increase their efforts.

We also need specific efforts to keep the Summit issues on the agenda. To stimulate the implementation of the Summit results, Denmark would like to see established an independent forum on social development issues. This forum should supplement the work of international organizations and of intergovernmental cooperation. In particular, it should compile and analyze data on social development issues, thus providing the basis for dialogue. I hope that agreement on the creation of the forum can be reached at this session of the General Assembly.

Sustainable economic and social development requires a collective effort. It requires a substantial transfer of resources, concessional as well as unconcessional, private as well as public, from the developed world to the developing world.

The total volume of assistance to developing countries has declined over the past few years. We must change this sad pattern. A first, necessary step would be for all industrialized countries to live up to the United Nations target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product (GNP). Three years ago, Denmark reached 1 per cent of GNP. We intend to continue that policy.

The need for emergency relief is greater than ever. It is a short-sighted solution to finance emergency relief out of funds set aside for development. We must find additional financing.

Improving the condition of women throughout the world is of vital importance. We, the Member States of the United Nations, have the responsibility to implement the Platform for Action adopted at Beijing. This platform must be pursued at all levels. Let us start right now.

The second point is the "Agenda for Peace". The ideas expressed therein on preventive diplomacy and a rapid reaction force must be implemented, followed — after a conflict has ended — by confidence-building and humanitarian measures.

Many of these tasks can be carried out by regional organizations. Giving more responsibility to regional organizations would in Europe mean strengthening the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

We have seen an increase in the number and complexity of peace-keeping operations. Successful operations such as those in Namibia, Cambodia and, most recently, Mozambique and El Salvador should not be forgotten. As noted by the Secretary-General, the problems posed by several of today's conflicts are unprecedented. We must learn to tackle these new problems. United Nations peace-keeping forces have proved to be an invaluable tool. We all have an interest in improving peace-keeping as a unique instrument in international crisis management.

We must react strongly against deliberate attacks against United Nations personnel. Such attacks are absolutely unacceptable. I appeal to all Member States to adhere to the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel so that persons committing attacks against United Nations personnel are brought to justice.

Denmark attaches great importance to the United Nations stand-by forces arrangement. We were among the first to assign troops. We are currently, together with like-minded countries, exploring practical ways to a further shortening of United Nations reaction time.

There is also a clear need for minimum standards as regards troops and equipment. Denmark supports action taken by the United Nations in the field of training. The

United Nations must be given the right to set quality standards for troops made available to the Organization.

The insufficiency of funds is putting the United Nations into an almost untenable operational situation. We must soon reach consensus on reforming and stabilizing the financial foundation of the Organization.

As regards reimbursement for equipment put at the disposal of the Organization, agreement on a new system must be reached during this session of the General Assembly.

The third point concerns the former Yugoslavia. More than two thirds of the total number of troops under the United Nations serve in the former Yugoslavia. The international community has made a substantial contribution towards settling the conflict. We have kept negotiations going, sometimes against all odds. We have sustained what may be the most difficult peace-keeping operation the United Nations has ever mounted. We have rendered extensive humanitarian aid.

We hope that we are now closer to peace. Still, many obstacles will have to be overcome. The conflict remains a huge challenge to the international community.

The basic principles for a settlement in Bosnia agreed upon in Geneva early this month form a good basis for further negotiations. Pressure on all parties for a negotiated settlement must be upheld. Lasting peace can be achieved only through negotiations.

Denmark continues to give full support to the international negotiating efforts, including the efforts of the Contact Group. Denmark has provided a substantial number of peace-keepers and given sizeable contributions to alleviate humanitarian suffering. This commitment stands.

But it is absolutely unacceptable when United Nations peace-keepers are used as pawns in military confrontations. It is intolerable to see them exposed to surprise actions and direct attacks with loss of life and casualties as the tragic consequence.

The international community must be prepared for action to be taken when peace is finally achieved. Denmark stands ready to contribute. The present situation presents a window of opportunity; we must seize the moment.

I would like to express my congratulations on the interim agreement between the Greek and the Macedonian Governments and to pay tribute to the untiring efforts of Mr. Cyrus Vance.

My fourth point relates to the Middle East peace process. The strong determination to reach results manifested itself in the peace treaty signed last autumn between Israel and Jordan and in the latest agreement between Israel and the Palestinian Authority on the second stage of Palestinian autonomy. Unfortunately, we see less progress in relations between Syria and Israel and between Lebanon and Israel. But we welcome the clear political will to engage in efforts that may bring progress. All parties stand to gain if they realize that there is no real alternative to negotiations and to a just and lasting peace for everybody.

My fifth point is that there is now hope in the field of disarmament, arms control and confidence-building measures. We see positive trends, in particular the agreement reached on indefinitely extending the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. The implementation of this Treaty has also become more effective. The end of East-West confrontation has led to dramatic reductions in nuclear stockpiles. But as long as these weapons exist, the risk of their use remains. Denmark supports the conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty no later than 1996. In particular we support the efforts made to negotiate a true zero-yield test ban.

At the same time, we deeply deplore the nuclear tests carried out by China and France. We urge all nuclear-weapon States to refrain from further testing.

The Conference to review the 1980 Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects is now taking place at Vienna. We need progress at the Conference towards the ultimate goal of the abolition of anti-personnel land mines.

The sixth point is that the Security Council needs to be enlarged to reflect the world of today. There must be additional seats for non-permanent members on the principle of equitable geographical representation. Denmark also supports an enlargement of the Security Council with Germany and representatives of the Asian, African and Latin American regions as permanent members.

My seventh point relates to human rights. The international protection of human rights must be improved. International cooperation on monitoring respect for human rights must be strengthened. Additional resources to carry out this work must be found. In particular, we must strengthen the Centre for Human Rights and the office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. Denmark will serve as a member of the Commission on Human Rights as from 1 January 1996. Our key priorities as a member of that Commission will include the fight against torture, the furthering of the right to development and the rights of indigenous peoples. The establishment of a permanent forum within the United Nations is a major political aspiration of indigenous peoples around the world. Denmark shares that aspiration.

The General Assembly should decide to call a diplomatic conference on the establishment of a permanent International criminal court to try cases of serious international crime.

With my final point I wish to draw attention to the statement issued today by the Nordic Foreign Ministers on the financial situation of the United Nations. In that statement the Nordic countries call on all Member States to fulfil their financial obligations towards the United Nations by immediately paying all outstanding contributions. Imagine how much more could be done if the United Nations had its present outstanding contributions — \$3.5 billion — at its disposal. It is a paradox that those criticizing the United Nations for a lack of efficiency are often those who do not honour their financial obligations. They are in this way holding the Organization hostage. They continue to criticize the United Nations as if the Organization were not their organization.

Denmark sees no alternative to international cooperation to solve global problems. The will of Member States determines the strength of our cooperation. Much more can be done, provided Governments are willing.

The United Nations has experienced much turbulence. The United Nations needs renewal. The United Nations needs resources. The United Nations needs commitment. Denmark remains as dedicated to the United Nations today as we were 50 years ago.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*):
I call next on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Belgium, His Excellency Mr. Erik Derycke.

Mr. Derycke (Belgium) (*interpretation from French*):

“[Today more than ever we should realize that we are delegations of many countries] to the same Assembly which collectively represents the interests of the world. [We must be] conscious, over and above the interests of our own country, of the interests of the world and of mankind.

“Each of us must first of all make an effort to sink our preferences, to put aside our particular sympathies and our particular antipathies.

“The fact is that ... we did not succeed in forming a real international spirit. ... If we can create that kind of spirit, and if we can practice what I regard as the two cardinal virtues ... that is to say, good faith and good will, if we are able to apply certain simple but important rules ... we shall succeed.

“[In an Assembly like that of the United Nations, we must make a great effort to bridge our various views.] Naturally, we must all watch over the interests of our respective countries, but we shall not succeed unless we are convinced that those interests must take their place in the wider setting of the general interest.” (*Official Records of the General Assembly, First Session, Part One, Plenary Meetings, 2nd meeting, p. 48*)

What I have just said was not written recently. It was not written when we drafted the Belgian statement for the fiftieth session of the General Assembly. It was an extract from the official statement delivered by the President of the General Assembly at its first session, Mr. Paul Henri Spaak, then Minister of Foreign Affairs of Belgium. His appeal, issued at London on 11 January 1946, is as pertinent today as it was then.

The United Nations was long paralysed by geopolitical problems posed by the East-West rivalry, but in recent years the Organization has been able increasingly to focus on all aspects of universal society. This is a philosophy that marks a change in global attitude. Human rights, sustainable development, the environment, social change, population questions and the rights of women, to name but a few, have been on the agenda of the major international conferences successfully organized by the United Nations. A precondition for the success of this international approach is that we have the courage to break away from the old taboos and dare for the first time to discuss issues as never before.

It is impossible for me here to discuss each and every one of these items, and I shall limit myself to highlighting two of them. I realize that in doing so I may be ignoring so many other problems which are important for the immediate future of our United Nations.

I will start with the question of disarmament. In May this year 180 countries agreed to the extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The five nuclear Powers pledged to reduce further their already greatly reduced arsenals, and all other participants solemnly promised indefinitely never to acquire these weapons, which jeopardize the very existence of the Earth. Belgium urged other non-nuclear-weapon States to accept the indefinite extension of the NPT; I detected the firm will of all signatories to respect the Treaty in letter and spirit.

We expect nevertheless that nuclear arsenals will be further reduced. In this context we pin great hopes on the prompt ratification of the START II treaty. Nuclear non-proliferation should be strengthened as soon as possible by the signing next year of a comprehensive test-ban treaty and by a treaty prohibiting the production of fissile material for military use. Those two treaties will provide an indispensable complement to the NPT on the path towards the total nuclear disarmament which Belgium has always desired.

The coming negotiations on a comprehensive test-ban treaty will show whether or not the nuclear Powers are willing to accept the zero option, which to my mind is the most important question for the future. In this context Belgium deplores the recent nuclear tests and fervently hopes that the other nuclear-weapon States will maintain their moratoriums. A decision not to conduct any further tests would strongly promote the creation of a propitious atmosphere for the resumption of the negotiations and their successful completion in 1996. On behalf of Belgium, I strongly urge the nuclear-weapon States to desist from all further testing.

I have just spoken about what are called weapons of mass destruction, and obviously the threat posed by nuclear and biological weapons is enormous. But we should remember that in fact it is conventional weapons that claim by far the most victims. In cooperation with the European Union, Belgium will play an active role in this field, as we have done in recent months with regard to anti-personnel mines. In this regard my country has been a pioneer, including through the adoption by its Parliament of forward-looking legislation prohibiting the

production and use of such weapons in Belgium. In the United Nations we joined in the initiative to hold a special conference in Geneva, over which my country had the honour to preside. Belgium is also aware of the dangers posed by new laser weapons and their horrendous consequences. My country is prepared to adopt an activist policy in this sphere.

To my mind, the next priority of the United Nations is social and economic progress. The promotion and protection of human rights are an essential element of this. Our own history shows that respect for human rights and the existence of a State based on law and of political institutions elected and functioning democratically and following the principles of good management are absolute conditions for sustainable development.

Yet we cannot say that the results of international cooperation have been altogether positive. Countries both of the South and of the North must ponder this. It makes no sense to speak of peace on Earth if at the same time we cannot pursue the planet's social and economic development. World-wide overall wealth has increased sevenfold in the past 50 years and international trade has grown even more. But at the same time poverty has never been greater. Furthermore, economic recession and the debt crisis have affected certain sections of the population in developing countries more than others. The inequalities in the distribution of income and wealth have therefore become even greater. To combat this we need to act internationally, if only because of the globalization of the world economy. Intensive multilateral cooperation, including cooperation between the international financial institutions, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the World Trade Organization will be necessary. We must also consider how the population can be involved in the preparation and implementation of reforms.

Of prime concern are basic needs. Real social development is impossible if those are not cared for. Belgium is ready to participate in this effort, as it has long done. The Belgian social security system too is marking its fiftieth anniversary. That system is now being questioned, for the unemployment rate has increased dramatically, threatening the financing of the whole system. However, this system remains the best guarantee for preserving the balance between economic development and social development. The State should remain responsible for the provision of the basic needs for all.

Belgium therefore calls for the development of a mechanism which allows economic development to go hand

in hand with social development. Governments must respect the rights of workers and improve working conditions and the security and health of the workers. The five basic social conventions of the ILO — relating to minimum age for employment, the abolition of slavery, freedom of trade unions, freedom of negotiation and non-discrimination — should be internationally recognized as fundamental conventions, which would provide a concrete impetus for this.

The major international conferences organized by the United Nations have proven a useful means of studying basic questions relating to the goal of social emancipation and genuine sustainable development in all countries. In Rio de Janeiro, old concepts of development were replaced by that of sustainable development, which has functioned as a common theme throughout all the other conferences.

At the World Conference on Human Rights, in Vienna, a Declaration was adopted which underscored and enriched the universal consensus on the respect due under all circumstances to human beings. It called on all Member States not only to prevent human rights violations, but also to promote those rights. For its part, Belgium was the first country in Europe to adopt a law, in February 1994, linking respect for human rights to development cooperation.

The International Conference on Population and Development, held at Cairo, recognized the relationship between the individual's reproductive and sexual health and the development of every individual and every country.

The importance of the World Summit for Social Development, held at Copenhagen, lay above all in its integrated approach to linking the fight against poverty, the creation of jobs, and the promotion of social integration, and in the adoption on that basis of coordinated national and international strategies. It is gratifying also to note the universal consensus on the concepts and issues that will deserve our attention in the future.

Finally, the Fourth World Conference on Women, recently held at Beijing, stressed the role of women as full participants in the decision-making process and in economic affairs, by recognizing that genuine sustainable development and true democracy will be impossible without women.

The United Nations should make economic and social development its highest priority. It should involve world public opinion in these decisions and should ensure their follow-up and resolutely implement them in the field. Belgium is prepared to reflect the programmes of action of all these conferences in its future policies in the spheres of development cooperation, foreign trade, international finance and in its foreign policy in general.

I have laid stress on two areas where the United Nations will play a decisive role. It will be a challenge to us all; the results will not be assessed until the hundredth anniversary of the United Nations. To meet our goal, it is vital for us to strengthen the tool that is the United Nations. The United Nations and its specialized agencies must maintain — and strengthen and adapt — their resources and activities so as to give effect to the decisions and achievements of these conferences. Specifically, duplication must be avoided; rationalization and the possible merging of bodies working in the same field are inevitable.

The Economic and Social Council must be rehabilitated; its role could be reviewed. It should be the most suitable body for staging international conferences and, through the United Nations system, should coordinate and supervise the implementation of conventions and programmes. It should also spur interaction among the major agencies and institutions of the United Nations system.

The agenda of the General Assembly must be reviewed so that the Assembly can regain its original role as the Organization's supreme decision-making, deliberative and policy-making body.

Security Council reform is the subject of intense debate. Without going into details, I would like to recall Belgium's view that such reform should strengthen, *inter alia*, the Council's capacity for action and its representativity. The Charter gives the Council responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security on behalf of all, and for the benefit of all. Belgium is convinced that the authority of Council decisions would be enhanced if troop- and equipment-contributing countries were more closely involved in the preparation of those decisions.

The Organization is facing numerous financial problems. The development of new activities is often hobbled by disagreements on the allocation of costs. There is a growing structural rift between the capacity for multilateral action and the increasingly frequent demands for intervention.

How can we prevent the United Nations from becoming a victim of its own success? One fundamental obligation is that every Member State must promptly pay the contribution it has been assessed based on its ability to pay. Non-payment is a serious violation of commitments, and is even more deplorable when certain delinquent contributors are also demanding a special role in the Organization's policy- and decision-making processes.

Finally, we must keep working towards the new international spirit to which I referred at the beginning of my statement. Without such a new awareness in society at large, we shall never be able to make the United Nations into the universal instrument for peace and sustainable development it must be. In that context, I want to close with another quotation from that great statesman, the first President of the General Assembly, Belgian Foreign Minister Paul Henri Spaak, who as early as 1943 said that

“The world will never be organized if each State retains its full national sovereignty and the absolute right to resolve its political and economic problems as it sees fit”.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): I call next on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Lithuania, His Excellency Mr. Povilas Gylys.

Mr. Gylys (Lithuania): It is with great pleasure that I join previous speakers in congratulating Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its fiftieth session. It is a great honour and a great challenge to be serving in that capacity at a time when the United Nations is marking its first 50 years of existence, and when people are hoping for a better world — as Mr. do Amaral noted in his statement last week — through peace, freedom, justice, education, health and development.

Fifty years ago, the United Nations was formed to bring all nations of the world together to work for peace and development based on the principles of justice, human dignity and the well-being of all people. The United Nations aim of promoting international cooperation is still alive half a century later, although it is facing more challenges than ever before.

Lithuania itself is facing, and meeting, new challenges. In the less than six years since the reestablishment of independence, Lithuania has enshrined

democratic values in its constitution, established the rule of law, promoted human rights and implemented free-market economic reforms. Our foreign policy is based on respect for international law, national sovereignty, human rights and peaceful coexistence among nations — especially our most immediate neighbours. The best testimony to our good-neighbourly relations is provided by the treaties we have concluded with all neighbouring States; they were a result of hard work and compromise. It is our view that they constitute a major contribution to the security of the region and of the entire world.

Our other foreign-policy goals are also clearly defined. Lithuania is striving for full integration into European political, economic and collective-security structures. As an associate member of the European Union, our ultimate goal is full membership in the Union. Membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and in the Western European Union (WEU) is also a high priority. We look forward to continuing our cooperation with and our active participation in regional organizations such as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Council of Europe.

The United Nations is facing new challenges today. A half-century later it is not only proper to assess the Organization's performance, but also necessary to prepare it for the new demands and problems resulting from the dramatic changes that have come about since the end of the cold war. The number and importance of the challenges that face the United Nations call for reforms. The United Nations is expected to solve many problems, such as armed conflicts, human rights violations, the poverty gap and humanitarian crises. The problems presented by conflicts such as those in the former Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, Liberia, Rwanda, Burundi and Somalia are in many ways unprecedented. The United Nations is expected to provide development assistance and emergency relief to refugees. It is expected to promote democracy and to safeguard the health and rights of women and children. The United Nations is expected to play a leading role in solving environmental and population problems and in securing sustainable development. It is expected to prevent the spread of weapons of mass destruction.

If the United Nations is to live up to these expectations, Member States will have to provide it with the necessary means to do so. For this reason, Lithuania attaches importance to the efforts aimed at the revitalization, strengthening and reform of the United Nations system, and will follow with interest the initiatives directed towards that goal. Good management in the

Secretariat is an important tool in achieving that goal. Better productivity and increased cost-effectiveness, as well as accountability and responsibility, can make a difference in creating a more mission-driven and result-oriented Organization. Energies and resources within the United Nations system need to be utilized in a more effective and coordinated manner if the Organization is to meet the challenges that lie ahead.

Likewise, there is a need for integrated policies to address these global problems, which too often are treated as separate questions. In that regard, we see a close connection between "An Agenda for Peace" and "An Agenda for Development", and are in full agreement that the quest for peace and security should not divert attention from other fundamental objectives of the Organization, especially in the fields of economic and social development.

Another priority for a revitalized United Nations is reform of the Security Council. Lithuania supports continued discussion on the transparency of the work of the Security Council. Recent informal arrangements to improve consultation on peace-keeping between the Secretariat, the Security Council and troop contributors should be further developed. The Security Council must be more representative of the greatly expanded membership of the United Nations, and it has to take into account the interests of small States and of all regions, including those of Central and Eastern Europe. We believe that an increase in the overall membership of the Council is needed and that an increase in the permanent membership should reflect current geopolitical realities. In this context, Lithuania supports an increase in the number of permanent members of the Security Council with new members to come from among countries that make an exceptional contribution to the activities of the United Nations. This would significantly strengthen the authority and capability of the United Nations as a whole. It goes without saying that reform of the Security Council should not decrease its effectiveness or its efficient functioning.

The tremendous increase in and complexity of peace-keeping operations in recent years clearly signals the need for change. We cannot ignore the financial consequences of this increase. The budget for peace-keeping operations currently amounts to approximately \$3.6 billion. We must strengthen preventive diplomacy in order to avoid overextending our capabilities in the area of peace-keeping. Nevertheless, Lithuania will continue to play its part in peace-keeping, as it is already doing in the United Nations Confidence Restoration Operation in

Croatia (UNCRO); it stands ready to do more. The third platoon of Lithuanian peace-keepers is now serving in Croatia within the Danish battalion. We are actively participating in the NATO Partnership for Peace programme and are moving forward on the formation and training of a Baltic peace-keeping battalion.

Lithuania also welcomes the growing interaction between the United Nations and regional organizations, such as the OSCE and NATO, in the field of peace-keeping operations. This approach enables regional organizations to share the common burden of peace-keeping functions and to contribute, together with the United Nations, to the maintenance of peace and security. OSCE missions are actively promoting peaceful political solutions to regional crises in Chechnya, Georgia, Nagorny-Karabakh, Tajikistan and elsewhere.

Although Lithuania believes that European countries should try to solve their own problems in the framework of the OSCE before turning to the United Nations, we hope that cooperation between the OSCE and the United Nations will be strengthened in areas of common concern, particularly on issues concerning stability and security in the OSCE area. Further work needs to be done in developing a standard set of principles for peace-keeping activities undertaken by individual States or third parties.

Any strategy for preventing armed conflicts should involve disarmament and non-proliferation objectives. The easy availability of arms contributes to the scale of suffering in conflict situations as well as to the outbreak of conflict itself. Lithuania wholeheartedly supported the indefinite and unconditional extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), because it views the Treaty as a crucial instrument for preventing the spread of nuclear weapons and for reducing existing stocks.

We recognize that, although the threat posed by nuclear weapons is of prime concern, the ongoing use of conventional weapons is equally dangerous. There is a need for States to exercise greater responsibility and restraint in their arms transfers. The United Nations Register of Conventional Arms has led to greater transparency, but a code of conduct for conventional arms transfers could set out common principles to be observed in this area.

Drug trafficking and associated international crime are another growing threat to the security and well-being of nations and peoples. We give our full support to the United Nations International Drug Control Programme, which has the responsibility of leading the global fight against this

scourge. In view of the continuous and growing rise in drug-related problems throughout the world, including in our region, we encourage closer cooperation in this area.

The situation in Rwanda and in former Yugoslavia is uppermost in our minds, as are other armed conflicts closer to home, which have resulted in bloodshed and systematic violations of human rights. Racial and ethnic hatred have led to particularly inhumane behaviour. These horrible lessons must never be forgotten; nor should these crimes against humanity go unpunished. This is why we are in favour of strengthening mechanisms to monitor and protect human rights by fully implementing the mandate of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, and by strengthening the Centre for Human Rights. In order to avoid duplication, we encourage further coordination of United Nations human rights activities with regional bodies carrying out similar mandates.

Mr. Kuller (Albania), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Lithuania also feels that the mandate for peace-keeping operations could include a human rights component with clearly established reporting and verification procedures. When terrible crimes are committed and when human rights are systematically violated despite all efforts, Lithuania believes that those responsible, including the actual perpetrators, should be prosecuted. We thus support moves to establish a permanent international criminal court which would have jurisdiction over serious crimes of international concern, wherever they occur.

Lithuania places great importance on the work of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) as the principal funding agency and coordinator of United Nations technical and development assistance. Since the establishment of the UNDP office in Vilnius in 1992, my Government, with support from UNDP, has launched programmes in such priority sectors as democratization and the development of civil society, public administration reform and the social impact of transition. We are especially grateful for UNDP assistance in the preparation of our 1995 national development report.

My Government reaffirms the need for the full integration of countries with economies in transition into the world economy and for continued United Nations support in achieving that goal. We see the concept of transition as a temporary one, which at this point in time identifies the special needs and immediate concerns of

countries undergoing fundamental political, economic and social transformation. We hope that these needs and concerns will be reflected in "An Agenda for Development". Lithuania recognizes the fine work done by the Economic Commission for Europe in diagnosing the problems of transitional economies and in preparing useful recommendations.

I also wish to take this opportunity to acknowledge the work of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in my country. UNICEF has provided much-appreciated technical and advisory services on meeting global objectives for the welfare of children.

Recent major international conferences in Rio de Janeiro, Cairo, Copenhagen and Beijing have addressed important strategies and goals for development. Coordinated follow-up and implementation of the recommendations of these conferences will require not only the commitment of Governments, but greater coordination in United Nations operational activities and improved coherence in programmes.

Fully recognizing and supporting the obligation of all Member States to pay their contributions in full and on time, Lithuania also believes in the principle of sovereign equality, that is the equal rights of all Member States. In our case, those rights were violated by the assignment in 1992 of inequitable assessment rates to the Baltic States and the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), which were above the capacity of those States to pay. We have participated in the work of the high-level working group on the financial situation of the United Nations and have followed the work of the working group on the principle of capacity to pay. We welcome the partial improvement in our rates of assessment due to the 50 per cent phasing out of the scheme of limits for 1995-1997.

Next month the Lithuanian Committee for the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations will commemorate this anniversary with an impressive programme. Emphasis is being placed on youth education, the main themes on the agenda of the United Nations and the achievements of the Organization over the past five decades. We must, however, remind ourselves of what the United Nations has not yet achieved. Let us hope that those unattained goals will inspire us to move forward with the same vision and commitment as the founders of the United Nations did 50 years ago.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): I call next on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Honduras, His Excellency Mr. Delmer Urbizo Panting.

Mr. Urbizo Panting (Honduras) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I wish to congratulate Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral on his election to the presidency of the fiftieth session of the General Assembly. His experience and proven diplomatic skills will guarantee the success of this important event. I wish also to congratulate his predecessor, Mr. Amara Essy, for the brilliant way in which he guided the work of the Assembly at its forty-ninth session.

I take this special opportunity also to acknowledge the extraordinary work of the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, to promote peace, development and understanding among peoples.

In conformity with the premises of the moral revolution led by the President of the Republic, Mr. Carlos Roberto Reina, today's Honduras is making a unique effort: to consolidate a State truly based on law; to fight corruption at all levels; to encourage active participation among all citizens in a framework of national convergence that will define the guidelines for a new country; to emphasize absolute respect for human rights; and, in the context of a dynamic process of modernizing the State, to adopt substantive institutional legal measures and changes, with a view to strengthening our democratic, pluralistic system of government.

Those changes include strengthening the judicial branch; placing the national police under civilian jurisdiction; transforming our compulsory military service into voluntary, educational and humanistic service; allocating 35 per cent of the national budget to health, education and social welfare, which reflects the interest of the State in combating poverty, overcoming social problems and establishing a system of government marked by justice, solidarity and participation; adopting fiscal correction measures to decrease the negative impact of serious long-standing macroeconomic imbalances; beginning the privatization of State-owned enterprises; undertaking financial reform; and taking the action needed to attract direct foreign investment and encourage joint investment.

Those are some of the most relevant actions taken by the Government of Honduras; they show that, although our democracy was painfully stricken by the Central

American crisis of the 1980s, it has had the courage to face up the unique challenges of today and of tomorrow.

Today, Central America is seeking true participation in the new international economic order with an agenda of integration firmly based on the Alliance for the Sustainable Development of Central America. This endeavour is rooted in history, tradition, solidarity and, above all, an awareness of the common destiny of our Central American homeland.

In that connection, we were pleased that last year the General Assembly recognized

“the importance of implemented, updated and pending programmes, and, in view of the fact that the resources assigned to the Special Plan of Economic Cooperation for Central America have been used up, request[ed] the agencies of the United Nations system, in particular the United Nations Development Programme, and international institutions to mobilize the necessary resources to set in motion new national and regional programmes in support of the content of the Declaration of Guácimo, the Alliance for the Sustainable Development of Central America concluded at the Managua Summit, and the Tegucigalpa Commitments on Peace and Development adopted at the International Conference on Peace and Development in Central America”. (*resolution 49/137, para. 23*)

We were grateful for the adoption of that resolution, and hope that its mandate will be renewed at this session of the General Assembly.

In pursuance of our efforts at integration, my country will host the next summit of Central American Presidents, where the central topic will be the establishment of a regulatory framework for the security of individuals and their belongings, and the signing of a treaty on Central American democratic security.

In our region we can no longer delay the creation of short-term programmes of direct investment, industrial revitalization, transformation of technology and foreign trade, with the necessary support of developed countries. That support can come through the alliance of States friendly to the Alliance for the Sustainable Development of Central America, as was the case initially with the Central America-United States agreement (CONCAUSA).

Central America supports open regionalism; as set out in the plan of action of the Summit for the Americas, we

believe that free trade is the most appropriate way to establish the world's most extensive free-trade area.

The Central American Integration System (SICA), which resulted from our own efforts and from important cooperation by the international community, hopes that the General Assembly will grant it the status of permanent observer in accordance with relevant provisions of the Charter of the United Nations. That status would facilitate and broaden cooperation between the United Nations system and the Central American Integration System; I am grateful for the support for the draft resolution that Central American countries have jointly submitted to the Assembly for consideration.

It is my country's tradition always to try to solve its international conflicts by peaceful, diplomatic means. I am therefore pleased to announce that, in compliance with the opinion of the International Court of Justice at The Hague concerning the boundary dispute between Honduras and El Salvador, a binational commission has been established to resolve the humanitarian implications of its implementation; its work is being carried out parallel to that of boundary demarcation. It is the honest wish of the people and the Government of Honduras to conclude these priority tasks without delay.

Nor is Honduras indifferent to the problems of our sister Republics, especially those of Guatemala. We wish to acknowledge the achievements and commitments of the Government of that country and of the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca (URNG) towards peace. We urge them to persist in a peaceful, negotiated quest for a solution to their internal differences.

My country endorses all the principles set out in the Secretary-General's "An Agenda for Development", which recognizes that equitable development removes many of the social and political conditions that result in threats to peace. Most important, it stresses that the human being is the ultimate beneficiary of all efforts towards development and international cooperation.

Clearly, "An Agenda for Development" must encourage the implementation of agreements reached in the economic and social sphere. In that context, my country has decided to endorse the principles and implement the commitments set out in the Declaration adopted by Heads of State or Government at the World Summit for Social Development, held at Copenhagen, Denmark, in March this year. We consider that implementation of the Programme of Action is urgent,

with a view to establishing a framework for economic growth and sustainable development, and a national and international climate favourable to social development, to the elimination of poverty, to increasing productive employment, to reducing unemployment and to fostering social integration.

Only by attaining these goals can we achieve lasting peace and security, economic progress and the social emancipation of all mankind. We therefore appeal to the international community, and especially to developed countries and international organizations, to fulfil their commitment to transfer significant economic and technological resources to developing countries.

Similarly, the Government of Honduras gives high priority to speedy compliance with commitments and recommendations made at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held at Rio de Janeiro in 1992. We note, however, the lack of adequate resources to implement the programmes and projects adopted as part of Agenda 21. We hope that developed countries will meet their commitments, to enable developing countries to meet their own.

Honduras reiterates its commitment to meet the goals of the World Declaration and Plan of Action adopted at the World Summit for Children. My country is a signatory of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and, as part of its national programmes, has adopted policies aimed at attaining the goals set in the Plan of Action. Our Government considers that all boys and girls must enjoy fundamental human rights such as access to education and to health services. One of our priorities is to eliminate family poverty, which is a principal cause of the exploitation of children and infant mortality.

The Government of Honduras also participated in the Fourth World Conference on Women, held at Beijing. We are convinced that the Declaration and Plan of Action adopted there will make a further contribution to women's participation in political, civil, economic, social and cultural life and in sustainable development.

The recent conference on review and extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) came at important time in history: when the international community is marking the end of the cold war, an event which eased international tension and strengthened confidence between States. My country reiterates its commitment to the principles and objectives adopted at the review Conference. We remain convinced that the ultimate

goal is the complete elimination of nuclear weapons and the adoption of a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict, effective international control.

The Government of Honduras attaches great importance to preventive diplomacy and to the peaceful settlement of international disputes. We believe it is better to prevent conflicts through early warning machinery and good-offices diplomatic efforts than to use political and military action to try to stop them once they have started. We attach equal importance to the building and maintenance of international peace and security, especially through humanitarian activities that involve the urgent solution of the tragedy of thousands of persons displaced and uprooted from their homes and land. Hence, we reiterate our support for the proposals and recommendations made by the Secretary-General in "An Agenda for Peace" and in the Supplement to "An Agenda for Peace".

The Government of Honduras considers that the strengthening of peace, the fundamental objective of the United Nations, can be achieved only through complete respect for the provisions of the Charter. For peace-keeping operations to be successful, they must be based on the principles of international law: non-intervention in the internal affairs of States, and the non-use of force except in self-defence. Moreover, they should be controlled by the United Nations; peace-keeping operations and their mandates must be clearly defined. They should be funded in a timely way and must above all have the consent of the States involved, which in turn must not raise obstacles and must cooperate fully with these operations.

In the context of the peaceful solution of international conflicts, it is vital to encourage greater cooperation and coordination between the United Nations and regional organizations. International crises can be resolved effectively if we strengthen the various mechanisms and procedures through which such cooperation takes place.

We know that the United Nations continues to face financial problems with a direct impact on peace-keeping operations. Hence, the current machinery for financing must be reformed, taking account of the capacity of States to pay and ensuring that the availability of resources for economic and social development is not endangered.

In January this year, with particular interest and in a constructive spirit, we began participating for the first

time in the work of the Security Council. Our participation is shaped by respect for sovereignty and for the principle of the self-determination of peoples, and by our commitment to the defence and promotion of human rights and peace.

Aware of its responsibilities and within its modest means, Honduras has from the outset contributed to the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO). We have also sent an infantry contingent to help with the humanitarian activities of the United Nations Mission in Haiti (UNMIH). We are determined to continue our participation in such missions in support of peace, security and international humanitarian law.

In the Security Council we have given our full support to the Middle East peace process. We hope that the ongoing negotiations will lead to the establishment of lasting peace in the region.

We are deeply saddened by the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina in particular, and in neighbouring countries as well. We condemn the attempts at "ethnic cleansing" and genocide against the civilian population. We therefore hope that recent peace efforts in the region will bear fruit, especially following the agreement reached at Geneva on basic principles for the peaceful settlement of the conflict.

Progress in Angola, Liberia and Rwanda makes us optimistic about peacemaking in those countries. United Nations participation has been vital in that progress, and we therefore unreservedly support it. We hope that in the end these countries will achieve the reconciliation that will enable them to begin their tasks of national reconstruction and development.

On 26 June 1945, 50 nations, including my own, with high hopes, signed the Charter of the United Nations at San Francisco. In 1995 we are full of joy at commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of an Organization that has unquestionably served the interests of universality through its gradual expansion. This is also an apt occasion to ponder why all the expectations and dreams of the founders have not yet been met, and to define the mission the United Nations must carry out on the threshold of a new millennium.

To address the question of the efficiency and effectiveness of the United Nations system with greater dynamism and realism, the international community has made unprecedented demands for redefinition of the tasks of the system in the areas of international security and the

promotion of the economic and social development of Members.

The end of the century approaches; a new millennium awaits us. We must therefore assess all that has come before; make an in-depth analysis of the weaknesses and strengths, the successes and failures of the Organization; and with realism and fairness set an agenda for the future that will topple injustice, exterminate poverty and throttle warlike tendencies and that will bolster the foundations of a truly unified, humanistic and fair world order.

It is painful to see the weakening of the high expectations created by the collapse of bipolar relations. There have been no substantive changes in the behaviour of highly developed countries towards the less developed areas of the planet. We note with concern a wish to replace the old order with a new, ominous bipolar world: a world of countries that enjoy plenty, and of countries that are enmired in poverty and destitution. We must not permit this fatal design to be carried out. Let us show that we can still imagine and create a different, prosperous world that will include us all.

Let us hope that the new millennium will see the miracle of international coexistence based on peace, brotherhood and universal well-being. Otherwise, there will be no further chance to see the light of hope for a better future; to use the words of the Honduran poet Roberto Sosa, we will live forever in "a world divided for all".

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): We have heard the last speaker in the debate for this meeting.

Two delegations have asked to speak in exercise of the right of reply. I remind members that, in accordance with decision 34/401, statements in exercise of the right of reply shall be limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and five minutes for the second, and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Samodra (Indonesia): My delegation would like to exercise its right of reply in response to unwarranted references to East Timor made by the Foreign Minister of Portugal in his statement to the General Assembly earlier today. The content of that statement has led us to question Portugal's sincerity and commitment in the ongoing tripartite dialogue under the auspices of the Secretary-General.

It is to be recalled that during the fifth round of talks, held in Geneva on 9 January 1995, the Foreign Ministers of Indonesia and of Portugal concurred on the need for both parties to exercise continued restraint in the interest of maintaining an atmosphere favourable to further progress. It must be emphasized that Portugal cannot on the one hand laud itself for its efforts to engage in constructive dialogue with Indonesia under the auspices of the Secretary-General and on the other hand continue to use every opportunity to launch campaigns of slander against Indonesia, including misrepresentations of the decolonization process of the Territory and of conditions prevailing in the province.

It is preposterous to speak of “the illegal occupation of East Timor” and “the denial of the exercise of the right of self-determination of the people of East Timor”, while the historical facts confirm that the problems in East Timor’s history can be attributed to actions of Portugal. In August 1975, Portuguese colonial authorities precipitously abandoned the territory to civil chaos, strife and bloodshed. In fact, they practically instigated the civil war by clandestinely turning over arms and ammunition to one minority group, the Frente Revolucionária de Timor Leste (FRETILIN). It would have been timely and appropriate for Portugal to have responded to the rights and primary interests of the East Timorese people at that time in history, to have heard their voices and to have implemented their wishes.

In the face of this, the East Timorese people rightly assumed their inherent right to decolonize themselves, considering themselves no longer bound to any decolonization covenant with the erstwhile colonial Power. This they did by choosing independence through integration with Indonesia in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 1514 (XV) and 1541 (XV).

We welcome the intra-East-Timorese dialogue, which has served as a forum for the leaders of the East Timorese to meet and contact each other in an atmosphere of peace and fraternity, after having been separated for almost 20

years. However, it should be pointed out that according to the terms of reference for the all-inclusive intra-East-Timorese dialogue, this will not in any way constitute a parallel negotiating track or be a substitute for the ministerial talks held under the auspices of the Secretary-General.

Finally, Indonesia remains fully committed to the people of East Timor, including in terms of the promotion and protection of human rights, and supports them in their efforts towards building a prosperous future for their children and for themselves.

Mr. Catarino (Portugal): I would like to reiterate here that Portugal has no interest in the question of East Timor other than its desire to see a recognition of the fundamental right of the people of East Timor to self-determination. It is our moral and historical duty as the administering State to work towards the achievement of that objective. According to resolutions of the General Assembly and of the Security Council, the process of decolonization was interrupted by the illegal invasion and occupation of the Territory by Indonesia. I would like to restate here our trust in the Secretary-General and in his mission of good offices, and our hope that the ongoing talks will lead not only to an improvement of the human rights situation in East Timor but also to the creation of a better atmosphere for the talks and to the ultimate goal of self-determination for the Timorese people.

Mr. Samodra (Indonesia): My delegation would simply like to reiterate that both parties to the dialogue under the auspices of the Secretary-General should abide by their concurrence on continued restraint in the interests of maintaining the favourable atmosphere very much needed if we are to make further progress. We believe that Portugal’s pattern of, on the one hand, claiming that it is committed to dialogue with Indonesia and, on the other hand, continuing to upset the atmosphere by waging a campaign against Indonesia is not helpful.

Mr. Catarino (Portugal): I would just like to recall that the present talks were undertaken on the initiative of Portugal. We are committed to the success of these talks. I reiterate what I have just said. Again, I wanted to say that the Secretary-General has our trust, and that we hope we will achieve progress in these talks.

The meeting rose at 6.50 p.m.