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President: Mr. Alex QUAISON-SACKY
(Ghana).

ITEM 9 OF THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA

Opening of the general debate

1. Mr. LEITAO DA CUNHA (Brazil): Mr. President, allow me to offer you the warm congratulations of Brazil on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly. The unanimity of the choice made by the membership of the Organization in selecting you for this high office has particular significance. It testifies to the wide renown in which your name is held in the United Nations and the certainty that your statesmanlike qualities will enable you to guide the Assembly to the best advantage in this hour.

2. It is no coincidence that a distinguished representative from Africa presides over this session. In your person, the General Assembly looks with hope and confidence to the contribution that the young States of Africa bring to the grave issues that trouble the world.

3. I heard with great appreciation the inspiring words of your acceptance speech, reflecting how very well you grasp your duties and the duties before us. You mentioned the voices of Africa. In my country, this has a very familiar sound indeed. One of the classics of Brazilian literature is a poem entitled "Voices of Africa", composed by Antonio de Castro Alves, a champion of the cause of African freedom. It bears witness to the imprint left by your people in the blood and in the soul of our people.

4. Now, as in every previous year, we are meeting to examine the vast field of activities of the United Nations and to attempt to arrive at favourable solutions for the great problems for which answers can be found through international co-operation. The honour I have in opening this debate is even greater as I can recall those days in a distant past when I took part in the work of the Preparatory Committee and at the first session of the General Assembly, in London in 1945-1946. It is thus very clear in my mind how much the international scene has changed during those nineteen years and how much has been accomplished by the United Nations in that span of time.

5. One thing has not changed, however, the main principles which guide us and which are embodied

in our Charter. The loyalty of Brazil to these principles has not been altered either, for they are part of the political philosophy of our nation. The unswerving loyalty of my country to the aims and principles of the United Nations I reiterate here today with firmness and renewed confidence.

6. Brazil has now resumed the broad path of its genuine traditions, after a brief attempt had been made to divert it from them. In a great surge of national renewal, my country has regained all its possibilities for progress and order, allowing us once more, without denying the past, to face the future with confidence.

7. The corner-stone of both our international and national policies is the fullest possible exercise of our right to self-determination, by means of which the Brazilian people made a basic choice, which they uphold—that of spiritual and political loyalty to the system of representative democracy.

8. The President of the United States of Brazil, Mr. Castello Branco, in a recent speech defined the governing lines of our foreign policy as follows:

"We should not shape our attitudes on the basis of a homespun Machiavellism or on a policy of extortion. On the other hand, we should not give a priori support to the attitudes assumed by any of the great Powers—not even by those Powers which form the bulwark of the Western world—for, in the foreign policy of the latter, a distinction must be drawn between the fundamental interests of the preservation of the Western system and the specific interests of a great Power. In short, a foreign policy is independent in the sense that the policy of a sovereign State must perforce be so. An independent foreign policy in a world increasingly characterized by the interdependence of problems and interests means that Brazil must have its own way of thinking and its own course of action, without subordination to any interest external to Brazil. The interests of Brazil coincide, in many cases and in widening circles, with those of Latin America, of the American continent and of the Western community. Acting independently, we shall not fear to lend our solidarity to other nations. Within the context of this independence and this solidarity, our foreign policy will be active, timely, and adjusted to the conditions of our times and the problems of our day.

"Regarding Africa and Asia, our purpose is not trade alone. Every element is present for brotherly co-operation and a broad understanding between Brazil and the peoples who have just recently attained their freedom and are prepared to maintain

it. Co-operation, understanding, and harmony of interests, this is what we seek, with all countries and all peoples, with all due respect for the hierarchies compatible with national interests. These are basic principles of the Organization of the United Nations in which we participate so actively. Despite its shortcomings, the United Nations is, in today's world, the essential tool for the maintenance of peace. Without it nothing is possible."

9. Our position is clearly defined: the ties that bind us to the brotherhood of the Latin American republics form our first line of international solidarity. We are united with those nations by enduring links of geography and history, by common traditions and aspirations, and we shall do everything in our power to bring our continent ever closer together. Secondly, we can never act counter to the Western roots of our culture and of our institutions. This leads us to affirm our state in the preservation of the democratic way of life which the West seeks to uphold. Nor can we neglect our ties with so many other nations in Africa—which has contributed so much to the formation of the Brazilian people—as well as in Asia, whose needs for development are similar to our own, and with which we share ideals of liberty, progress and justice. All the new nations—and I consider as new nations all the developing countries—need to avoid being held back by ideas and systems of sheer conservatism; they have an overwhelming urge to achieve social and political evolution. As we on the American continent are doing, they are setting up regional communities which can contribute a great deal towards harmonizing and strengthening the efforts of individual nations, being at the same time a factor for world peace.

10. Inspired by its inter-American, Western and universalist calling, Brazil wants peace, along with security and freedom. In order to free our generation, and those generations to come, from the threat of the scourge of war that atomic terror renders even more awesome, Brazil lends its full support to the concept of a rational and controlled disarmament, which may give us the security that weapons cannot provide.

11. Brazil wants human dignity to be respected and guaranteed in all spheres. We should like the United Nations to contribute to the establishment of universal respect for the fundamental rights of man, eradicating once and for all every manifestation of racial discrimination which still afflicts some areas of the world.

12. Precisely because of this respect for human dignity, we desire for the whole of mankind minimum standards of material comfort and social well-being. To this end we regard it as indispensable that the more developed nations, in their own interests as well as in the interest of all humanity, participate in those measures intended to establish a higher degree of justice on the international economic level.

13. In our time, there is a well-defined awareness of the urgency of promoting a more equitable pattern of international trade to meet the needs of the developing countries. Brazil has co-operated actively with the countries of Latin America and with the other

countries whose shared aspirations united them in the "Group of 75", and will do everything it can to ensure the continuity of the programme of action outlined in the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. The present session of the General Assembly, in our view, has sufficient perspective to take up the revision of the Final Act of Geneva. Brazil believes, however, that the best way to perfect the decisions contained in that Final Act is to begin to carry them out. With regard to the Conference on Trade and Development, it is imperative not to allow a repetition of the historic failure of the 1948 Conference on Trade and Development. We must at all costs prevent the Final Act of Geneva from becoming a mere declaration of good intentions, as has been the case with the Havana Charter.

14. The Assembly will devote its attention to other equally important economic issues. Among those considered paramount by my delegation, on which we will be prepared to put forth suggestions in the Second Committee, I should like to mention the establishment of a United Nations capital development fund and an agency of industrial development. Both these organs will address themselves to the vital needs of developing countries.

15. I venture, however, to say that the solution of the question of unfavourable terms of trade affecting those countries is quite as important as the maintenance of world peace. The former concerns the development of at least two thirds of humanity; it is a matter of justice in international relations, which is one of the aims of the Charter of the United Nations. We would not be in step with the great world expectations of our time if, in this forum, we failed to deal forcefully with the serious question of the struggle for better and more equitable terms in international commercial relations.

16. We should like to see the exercise of the right of self-determination assured to all peoples by the elimination of the vestiges of colonialism, which is in its death throes.

17. The San Francisco Charter has already been called "The Charter of Decolonization". The epithet is an exact one, but it would be even more exact and richer in meaning if qualified by the adjective "Peaceful". Posterity will most certainly refer to Chapter XI of the Charter as the political instrument of liberation of colonial peoples through peaceful means, and will pay tribute to the wisdom, prudence and foresight shown by the statesmen who drafted that document. Through the gradual, orderly and peaceful implementation of the Charter and of the relevant resolutions of the United Nations, more than half of mankind has attained independence, thanks to the application of the principles of self-determination. In its wisdom, the Organization not only has become the propulsive force of the march of the colonial peoples towards independence, but also has provided a legal and political framework for the negotiations and agreements required for its peaceful evolution. Exceptions to this rule serve only to enhance the foresight and wisdom of the Charter. It is our duty to preserve and improve upon the experience acquired by the United Nations in the realm of decolonization. This experience enabled the United

Nations and its Member States to carry out their obligations without increasing international tension. On the contrary, the pacific method of decolonization has generally served as an instrument for the maintenance of peace.

18. For these reasons, my delegation views with apprehension and strong misgivings the initiatives which would bring an element of violence to the application of the decolonization procedures provided in the Charter.

19. The exercise of the right of self-determination is, in our view, a broad concept which transcends the issues of colonialism. It is a right that all peoples should be able to exercise—and I am thinking particularly of the German nation, cut asunder by a demarcation line which has no justification, and subjected to restrictions inconsistent with the spirit of the Charter.

20. All these are matters of substance, incorporated into so many of the items of the agenda of the nineteenth General Assembly, and yet I have the impression that, at this moment, we all share a fundamental feeling of concern—a concern of an instrumental nature. It regards the very future of our Organization, of its existence and the means which it must employ to attain its objectives. I refer to the veritable institutional crisis which faces us, owing to the opposition of some Member States to acknowledging the validity of their financial obligations in the question of peace-keeping operations.

21. The delegation of Brazil is fully aware of the implications of the problem. We know that it can threaten the very future of the United Nations as a universal institution and we are entirely prepared to lend our support to conciliatory arrangements conducive to settling the crisis, which might prove fatal.

22. My delegation, however, is not in a position to accept solutions which would entail forsaking those principles which are basic to the Organization since this would mean, in a different manner but with the same certainty, the end of the United Nations as we know it; that is, as a democratic institution, where rights and obligations are the same for all. The difficulties with which we are faced encompass more than a mere financial problem, more than a question of contributions which should be paid.

23. The peace-keeping operations which are at the root of this crisis constitute one of the most effective forms of United Nations action. Not foreseen by the Charter, their need was demonstrated by the realities of international life and they have become, little by little, a powerful tool in the achievement of the aims of our Organization.

24. It was in 1956, when an international force was set up in the Gaza Strip, that this type of operation was undertaken for the first time, subsequently to be developed with the United Nations action in the Congo and in Cyprus. In all these instances, the purpose of the troops, acting under the aegis of the United Nations, was not to punish or to repel aggressors, but, by their presence, to prevent the outbreak of armed warfare and to ensure respect for the cessation of hostilities. Much more than a simple unit

of observers, much less than an international army drawn up for battle, the Force never had the mission of making offensive use of its weapons, nor of assuming control of the region in which it operated. That control remained in the hands of the sovereign local authority whose consent was sought and obtained for the stationing of the troops. The objectives of the Force were not ordinary military objectives, but only those of assuring the maintenance of conditions of peace, which would pave the way for the necessary peaceful solutions by means of the implementation of the recommendations of the competent organs of the United Nations.

25. It is possible to acknowledge that the peace-keeping operations have emerged as a new and vigorous concept, altogether different from the enforcement measures contemplated in Chapter VII of the Charter. As a living instrument the Charter was not incompatible with this development, but the difficulties which have so far arisen, and of which the question of financing is merely one aspect, seem to indicate that this new concept should be incorporated into the Charter as soon as possible.

26. This could be done by means of the inclusion of a new chapter entitled "Peace-keeping operations", which could be placed between the present Chapter VI and VII. We would thus have a graduated crescendo: "Pacific settlement of disputes", "Peace-keeping operations" and "Action with respect to threats to the peace, breaches of the peace, and acts of aggression".

27. Peace-keeping operations would thus be conducted on the territory of one or more States, members of the United Nations or not, at their request or with their consent. They would be undertaken by military contingents, preferably designated in advance and supplied chiefly by medium and small Powers; their only objective would be to preserve peaceful conditions, in contrast to operations falling under Chapter VII to be undertaken against the will of one or more States, transgressors of international order, to impose the will of the international community represented by the United Nations. This certainly does not exclude, during peace-keeping operations, recourse to coercive action in given circumstances and for a limited period of time. Such an amendment of the Charter could provide, in more precise terms, for a method of financing for both coercive and peace-keeping operations.

28. I am well aware that the ideas which I have just put forth are not easy to implement. We well know the difficulties encountered so far in attempts to adapt the Charter to the new requirements of the world. But the grave nature of these problems points to the absolute need for global political and constitutional solutions to be pondered. In this way it would perhaps be even easier to solve the immediate problems which face us and which, as I said, seem to threaten the very life of our Organization.

29. In that respect, the position of my country could not be more clear or more categorical; the people and the Government of Brazil see in the United Nations a form of international relations essential to the contemporary world. We do not even dare to think of the alternatives to the system of coexistence and

negotiations which the United Nations represents. What we wish to see is the consolidation and strengthening of its structure and machinery, since it is only through the United Nations that we can activate our ideals of peace, progress and development.

30. This is what Brazil thinks, and I cannot convince myself that other Powers—particularly those which hold a privileged position among us because of their economic and political importance—can or could insist upon courses of action which may lead to disaster.

31. May coming generations never be in a position to say that our actions were dictated by immediacy when it was our duty to be men of vision; may they

never say at the crucial moment we lacked the courage and the wisdom to build the happier world which was almost in our grasp.

32. The PRESIDENT: I have no other speakers on my list for this morning, but I would invite representatives who have not yet inscribed their names to do so immediately if they desire to participate in the general debate.

33. Our next plenary meeting will take place tomorrow morning at 10.30 sharp in order to continue the general debate.

The meeting rose at 11.10 a.m.