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GENERAL ASSEMBLY

PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE FOURTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 23 September 1985, at 10.00 a.m.

President: Mr. DE PINIÉS (Spain)
later: Mr. HEPBURN (Bahamas)
(Vice-President)

- Address by His Excellency Mr. José Sarney, President of the Federative Republic of Brazil
- Opening of the general debate [9]

Statements were made by:

Mr. Shultz (United States of America)
Mr. Guissou (Burkina Faso)
Mr. Dhanabalan (Singapore)
Mr. Ramirez Ocampo (Colombia)

- Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations [122] (continued)

This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the Official Records of the General Assembly.

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

ADDRESS BY HIS EXCELLENCY MR. JOSE SARNEY, PRESIDENT OF THE FEDERATIVE REPUBLIC OF BRAZIL

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): This morning the Assembly will hear an address by the President of the Federative Republic of Brazil.

Mr. Jose Sarney, President of the Federative Republic of Brazil, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations the President of the Federative Republic of Brazil, His Excellency Mr. Jose Sarney, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President SARNEY (spoke in Portuguese; English text furnished by the delegation): I still have before my eyes the suffering that Mexico has just undergone. I landed there to see for myself the tragedy, to see what had happened and to affirm to the people of that country Brazil's solidarity. In so doing, I dare to hope that I conveyed the feelings of the rest of the world, and I begin my statement here today by assuring Mexico of the solidarity of the entire world.

This tribunal instills respect and dignity. It is the loftiest in the community of nations. Here, both the mighty and the weak are diminished, so much greater is the burden of mankind's history in the exercise of the task which is the essence of the Organization's work - namely, the preservation of peace, tackling the problems that beset it and the efforts to transform divergencies into solidarity.

For 40 years my country, Brazil, has been privileged to open the general debate of the General Assembly of the United Nations. It is with profound emotion that I now exercise that prerogative.

(President Sarney)

Grave problems and immense responsibilities weigh heavily upon me. In expressing my feelings I turn to the greatest poet of my land, and I do so because I believe that poetry is neither inappropriate nor anachronistic in the scenario of great debates. The poet wrote:

"What rare dream could be
More pure or more beautiful
And more profound than this
Living machinery of the world?"

It is with this feeling about the world that I speak on behalf of one of the largest nations of the globe, a complex and dynamic society, the eighth largest economy in the Western world, a country of contrasts and of greatness - the Brazil made up of several Brazils, in which affluence and poverty, aridity and fertility, drought and flood create a geography of contradictory features and, in so doing, enclose in a vast continent a unified people who have known how to construct a racial democracy and a cultural unity that are the invincible force of their destiny.

I am a simple man. I was born and have lived in one of the most severely tested regions of our land, the heavily populated and poverty-stricken Brazilian north-east. I have followed a political career for 30 years, but it was in the midst of tragedy and awe, in an abrupt and unexpected way, that I was called upon to lead our nation.

As President of the Republic, I am proud to be a writer for whom a taste for words has not restricted the spirit to mere aesthetic expressions. From words I forged an element of profound identification with the people, sharing in the aspirations of individuals and of society as a whole.

Literature and politics force on us a social and humanistic vision of the universe. I cannot conceive of the pursuit of material gain without a spiritual

(President Sarney)

substratum that endows human adventure with the dimensions of the eternal. I have faith, and woe unto the man who thinks of the world without the company of God.

Brazil has just lived through a long night. Its eyes are not reddened by nightmares. Its lips display an open gesture of confidence and sing of its love for freedom. He who is a prisoner of the past cannot see the future. Moses never turned his back on the Promised Land.

The instrument that worked our transition from authoritarianism to democracy was our capacity to reconcile and understand, without violence or traumas. Our determination, courage and resilience were so strong that we managed to survive the loss of our hero, Tancredo Neves, on the very night in which our skies were lit up with the fireworks of victory. Our suffering then was transformed into strength and a resolve to make his dream our dream and to remain united.

The values of transformation proved stronger than death. We applied those values to all classes of society, and, in so doing, we abolished distances and barriers in a patriotic convergence of all schools of thought and in the quest for the effective ideals of justice, conciliation and the institutional consolidation of civilian power. We believe that social vision is the very life-blood of modern liberalism. Freedom concerns itself with actual living conditions, with the complete achievement of individual happiness, with universal franchise and with the right to be free.

I come to this rostrum to pay a tribute to the United Nations on its fortieth anniversary. Brazil was there at its birth; it is here today, and it will be here in the future, to defend the spirit of the Organization.

(President Sarney)

This spirit is not to serve as a mere instrument of the strong, but as the voice of the weak - of those who have neither armies, nor arsenals, nor a veto to impose in an effort to nullify decisions.

I am here to say that Brazil no longer wishes its voice to be timid. Brazil wants to be heard - without aspirations to hegemony, but with a clearly determined presence. We shall not preach to the world what we do not say within our own borders. We are at peace with ourselves. Consistency has become our strength. Our domestic discourse matches our international stance. We wish, as of now, to give new life, with renewed emphasis, to our presence in the debate of nations, by espousing an independent, dynamic foreign policy aimed at resolving international issues which have a social content.

We shall not be held captive by great Powers nor enslaved by minor conflicts.

Forty years ago, our founding fathers established, despite the death throes of war and the ruins of oppression, the very foundations for the building of peace and the concert of nations, as well as unlimited co-operation among peoples. The major Powers and the emerging countries were called upon to put an end to colonial exploitation. They proclaimed to the universe the worth of the democratic principles of equality and justice. They condemned racism and intolerance. They gave legitimacy to the universal right to health, well-being and education. They reaffirmed the dignity of labour and the enhanced power of culture.

At present, now that we have lived without a global conflict for twice the number of years allotted to humanity between the First and Second World Wars, we are in a position to state that the role played by the United Nations has not always been recognized; indeed, its performance has almost never measured up. Nevertheless, its role, far from being useless, has been, is and will continue to be necessary. Its founding fathers were quite right.

(President Sarney)

On behalf of Brazil, I congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the presidency of the fortieth session of the United Nations General Assembly. I also congratulate the representatives of the Member States assembled here to commemorate the four decades of active existence of this Organization. I address my sincere compliments to the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, of whose talent and diplomatic experience we Latin Americans are so justly proud.

It is only natural that the first topic I take should be that of Latin America. Latin America's extraordinary effort to create a democratic order is the most stunning and moving political fact of recent years, a fact that remains unacknowledged by the uncaring eyes of the centre of world power. Little attention has been given to the institutional maturation of our region and to its drama and triumphs. With neither assistance nor interference, tempered only by the force of conviction, we have confronted the threats posed by the temptations of totalitarianism and by the greed of those who see only through the eyes of exploitation.

We have emerged synchronized in a movement of solidarity towards the flourishing of free institutions. We have made our choice as one, irreversibly opting for the trinomial of open society, free institutions, dynamic economy. Using this threefold democratic definition as a basis, we shall pursue dialogue as a bridge between the East and the West, the North and the South, old and new cultures, régimes and ideologies.

Gandhi, the Mahatma, said that the true mission of the man of law is to throw a bridge across the abyss that separates adversaries. The United Nations is the law; we are the men of the law.

New winds are blowing over our continent and are breathing new life into our democratic tradition, as reflected in commitments that preceded the creation of the United Nations.

(President Sarney)

We therefore champion the principle of the self-determination of peoples and of the duty of non-intervention, of the peaceful settlement of disputes and of the relaxation of East-West tension. We reject the sharp antagonisms of bloc politics. We advocate the primacy of negotiation over perilous demonstrations of force.

In true democratic spirit, we have campaigned for many years on behalf of disarmament and we have shunned as precarious, violent and irrational the idea of a peace maintained by the parity of atomic arsenals. Brazil believes that there can be no quibbling over these ideals, nor can any concession be made to their suspension, at any level or for any reason whatsoever.

It is also because of our loyalty to the universalist creed of democracy that we are anti-racist - profoundly, viscerally and intransigently anti-racist.

Brazil is a great melting pot of a nation - one that is proud of its identity. Some of the most highly creative expressions of our culture come from racial mixture and from ethnic cross-fertilization. The greatest, most sensitive author we have produced, Machado de Assis, was a mestizo, as were also, in the plastic arts, the great baroque sculptor Aleijadinho, and in music, the world-renowned Villa-Lobos. I wish to remind the Assembly how much Brazil's popular culture owes to the genius of the blacks and to the spirit of the American Indian.

Brazil has determined that racial discrimination is not only illegitimate, but illegal; it is a crime covered by the penal code. We consider repulsive the upsurge of racial conflict dictated by racist intolerance or the persistence of colonial configurations. I solemnly reiterate our total condemnation of apartheid and our unreserved support for the immediate emancipation of Namibia under the aegis of the United Nations.

(President Sarney)

We cannot conceive of the United Nations commemorating its age of reason without an all-out offensive against all the vestiges of racism on earth.

As President of my country, I reconfirmed few weeks ago the ban on exports of oil and its by-products and of arms and ammunition and on licences and patents to South Africa and I suspended all cultural, artistic or sports activities with the Government in Pretoria.

Racism is against humanity and against the future. Racism, a different version of colonialism, which is both amoral and perverted, must not besmirch the golden page of decolonization.

Decolonization will rise above the hecatombs of world conflicts and the sterile confrontations of the cold war as the greatest contribution of the twentieth century to the history of mankind.

(President Sarney)

The success of decolonization was the result of the common international will. A similar search for consensus solutions will pave the way towards overcoming the frustration which we currently experience and which has been caused by the challenge of the arms race and the proliferation of tensions and conflicts.

Human rights have a fundamental dimension which is intimately linked to the very practice of coexistence and pluralism. The world that the creators of the League of Nations did not live to see, the structuring of which we still await, is a world of respect for the rights of the human person, such as the United Nations seeks to promote in the international covenants on human rights.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is undoubtedly the most important document signed by man in contemporary history, and it was born in the cradle of the United Nations.

It is with pride and confidence that I announce to this Assembly Brazil's decision to accede to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. With these decisions the people of Brazil take a step towards the democratic affirmation of our State and reiterate to themselves and to the entire international community a solemn commitment to the principles of the Charter and the promotion of human dignity.

In this task, I wish to stress the promotion of women's rights, which has gained new impetus in Brazil through the creation of the National Council for the Rights of Women, as well as the decisive participation of women in the transformations which are occurring in Brazilian society. This in turn is interrelated on the global level with the extraordinary movement of self-affirmation by women, the impact of which is causing a profound reappraisal of human relations as the century draws to a close.

(President Sarney)

We are at one of the many crossroads that have marked the 40 years of existence of the United Nations. The peoples are aware that concessions made to the realities of power are a one-way process. Only the united will of the majority to adopt a new attitude can remedy the scenario created by confrontation and by the mechanisms of power.

"Not all is East or West in the United Nations ... The world has other cardinal points." (A/PV.1208, para. 6)

So said Ambassador Araujo Castro, who was representing Brazil at the eighteenth session of the General Assembly. Brazil recognizes many negative aspects in international relations, but we have always sought to view the world from a generous, multifaceted perspective.

Let us use our time for co-operation and for science; natural differences should not now endanger coexistence. Celestial space has always been the purest image of peace. Let us preserve the infinite sky as a frontier that weapons must never violate.

Brazilians believe in such values as respect for the individuality of each country and a united responsibility in the face of the impasses and dilemmas of this waning century.

We witness with dismay the innumerable conflicts that affect the developing countries, paralysing their efforts towards progress. These conflicts aggravate the difficult conditions created by the persistence of an unjust international order and place us at an even greater distance from the attainment of the ideal of peace and security. The transposition of themes from the East-West confrontation to the scenes of many of these conflicts adds a weighty element of exacerbation and disguises their true causes. We are surrounded by examples.

Brazil associates itself with other Latin American countries in proclaiming the urgent need for a political, lasting and stable solution for the conflicts that

(President Sarney)

are tearing Central America apart. It is for this reason that Brazil fully supports the Contadora initiative, which reflects the feelings of all Latin America in seeking a solution that will preserve peace and understanding on the continent in keeping with the will of the peoples of Central America.

My Government joined with three sister nations in the creation of the Contadora support group in an effort to translate the broad backing that Contadora has been receiving into concrete initiatives.

The political and deeply ethical character of the Contadora Group is the Latin American response to theories of confrontation; it supports dialogue rather than radicalization; it is an invitation to substitute negotiations for the threat of the use of force; it is a vigorous defence of self-determination and non-interference against attempts to internationalize the conflict.

Brazil feels linked to all peoples in the Middle East by bonds of great friendship. The Brazilian society is greatly concerned about the disheartening atmosphere in Lebanon and recognizes the right of all peoples of the Middle East, including Israel, to live in peace within internationally recognized borders. Brazil wishes to see the creation of a national State of Palestine, this being the aspiration of that great people which has suffered for so long, withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories and acceptance of United Nations resolutions concerning the region.

Brazil, which is linked to Iran and Iraq by growing ties of friendship and co-operation, exhorts those two countries to take a peaceful, negotiated route toward resolving their differences.

We are very concerned about Afghanistan and Kampuchea. There will be no end to the violence in those countries as long as foreign troops remain there and as long as the right of their peoples freely to express their will is not explicitly recognized.

(President Sarney)

It is also incumbent upon us to press for constructive vision and stance with regard to the question of the Malvinas. Since 1833, Brazil has given its support to the just Argentine claim to sovereignty over the Malvinas Islands, stressing that a negotiated settlement is the only way to resolve the problem.

Brazil will make every effort within its power to ensure that the South Atlantic is preserved as an area of peace, shielded from the arms race, the presence of nuclear arms and any form of confrontation originating in other regions.

In keeping with its firm commitment to the effort to ban nuclear weapons from the continent, Brazil signed and ratified the Treaty of Tlatelolco, whose pioneering goal is to transform Latin America into the first denuclearized zone on territory inhabited by mankind. The denuclearization of Latin America should be the first step in a new movement to deter the vertical and horizontal accumulation of nuclear arms, thereby releasing the \$1.5 million squandered every minute on the arms race to be used to combat hunger, disease, ignorance and poverty.

(President Sarney)

The marathon arms race is a symptom of the evil which threatens lucidity and is a sombre hiatus on the human conscience.

We are experiencing a new scientific revolution which is moment by moment transforming the world under our very eyes. Control over the advances which occur at dizzying speeds in state-of-the-art sectors of science and technology has become a vital matter of survival. The programme of work of the United Nations in the next few years must contain a strategy to prevent the world from becoming fragmented into closed technological blocs; it must place scientific and technological knowledge at the service of the basic needs of all humankind.

Those are the visible problems. But there is another, greater problem, one which permeates international relations and which insidiously threatens all, poor and rich alike - the poor, through destabilization; the rich, through insecurity; and everyone through the possibility of total collapse should we persist in our posture of immobility.

I should like to address the economic problem, which concentrates its virulence in the third world, and in particular in Latin America. Crushed under the weight of an enormous foreign debt, the countries of the region are living through a scenario of severe difficulties with domestic repercussions resulting in recession, unemployment, inflation, increased poverty and violence. Ensnared in a vicious network of economic factors - namely, the rise in international interest rates, falling prices of commodities and the selectivity of markets in the developed countries - we are confronted with a crisis comparable only to that which assailed the market economies in the early 1930s.

The burden of foreign debt imposes an economic policy geared towards achieving trade surpluses earmarked for interest payments. The international organizations propose policies involving inadequate adjustments. This approach leads to

(President Sarney)

recession, to unemployment and to giving up the capacity to grow. Such a policy weakens civilian leadership, renders the social crisis explosive, threatens institutions, jeopardizes order and, as a result, constitutes a threat to democratic structures. To add to our difficulties, the markets of the developed countries are being closed to our exports. Protectionist barriers are proliferating and we are unjustly accused of unfair trade practices. The protectionism that is sought to shield the obsolete sectors of the developed countries is even confused with the legitimate right of developing countries to create favourable temporary conditions for the installation of emerging industries incorporating modern technologies essential for sustaining growth in the exercise of our sovereignty and independence.

And the paradox stems from the fact that all our efforts are being made precisely in an effort to transfer foreign exchange credits to the very quarters that beleaguer us and discriminate against us. We are thus caught between the threat of protectionism and the spectre of default.

We are doing our utmost to compete. Our firms export with meagre profits and our labour force receives low wages. It is sad to have to confess that our minimum wage is \$50 per month.

To round out our difficulties, we are obliged to maintain a trade-balance surplus to pay, within four years, interest amounting to approximately \$50 billion.

That is the situation confronting a country which has potential, which has a broad and diversified range of exports comprising commodities and petroleum derivatives, manufactured goods, machinery and even aircraft. One can readily imagine the impact of these factors on other countries lacking our advantages.

(President Sarney)

It has been our tradition to honour our foreign commitments. However, we have the obligation to alert the world to the fact that the existing scenario must be changed. It must be restructured, for it is unfair. And anything that harbours the germ of injustice or of the absurd simply cannot survive.

Brazil has no desire to make an ideological issue of the matter of indebtedness, nor does it wish it to be transformed into a source of confrontation between North-South and East-West. Brazil is a country of ingrained Christian and Western ideals. We believe that wherever free enterprise has collapsed, freedom itself has likewise disappeared. Hence we believe in enhancing the world market through competition, and, in denouncing the present order, we are not moved by any political motivation. We wish solely and exclusively to defend our most sacred interests - the sacred interests of Brazil. And we shall fulfil this duty by urging the international community to join us in seeking a solution. Moreover, this solution cannot be based solely on the laws of the market.

At the end of the Second World War, the victorious Powers understood that to achieve peace it was essential to establish a new disciplined international order to govern economic and financial relations among nations.

Fundamental to the establishment of this economic order was the perception that rebuilding Europe was indispensable for stability and international security itself. The success of the programme for the reconstruction of Europe demonstrates the ability to carry out projects of co-operation amongst nations when they are conceived with a broad vision of the reciprocity of interests involved and a clear awareness of the connection between political and economic problems.

At present we are experiencing anew a situation which clamours for a creative vision for renewal. The pillars of the current order are eroded and obsolete. It is necessary for us to discuss concrete measures to adjust the international economic order to present-day realities.

(President Sarney)

Following upon the period of prosperity, with the advent of the recession, it was Hobbes's predatory jungle which began to reign rather than the harmonious, fruitful anarchy of Adam Smith.

The indebtedness of Latin America is no longer merely a regional problem, given the extent of its impact on the stability of the financial mechanisms of the Western world. Awareness of this problem led to the Cartagena consensus, a manifestation of solidarity amongst the Latin American countries most affected by the problem of foreign indebtedness, in an effort to devise a solution through dialogue and understanding.

From the Latin American point of view, it is imperative for the indebtedness crisis to be negotiated in terms of its political dimension. Today, just as was the case 40 years ago, the Governments of the creditor nations must be made aware of the fact that there is an exceptional situation the solution of which transcends the mere interplay of economic forces.

(President Sarney)

In calling upon the leaders of the industrialized nations to come forward with concerted political action to resolve foreign debt problems, I do so with the serenity of a country which has not spared any effort to meet faithfully its international commitments.

We have made gigantic efforts. Nevertheless, even if we were to maintain our current rate of growth, only in 1990 shall we have matched the per capita income level we had attained in 1980.

Our people have reached the limits of what is bearable. It is impossible to demand additional sacrifices of a population as impoverished as ours. On the contrary, we must assure the Brazilian people that opportunities for employment will be increasing in the coming years.

Our vulnerability to rises in international interest rates is so great that all we have accomplished will collapse if exorbitant rates are renewed.

We shall face greater difficulties in shaping a liberal and pluralistic society if we do not maintain and expand our contacts abroad. However, the foreign debt crisis has been forcing our economy into a process of isolation and autarchy, resulting in minimal import possibilities and weakened and unsatisfactory ties with the international financial markets, we do not want isolation and autarchy; we have the right to expect of our international partners equitable and fair forms of co-operation and also that they will democratically accept a concrete share of responsibilities. We cannot rely merely on the rhetorics of economic adjustment, on the assumption that sacrifice is all that is required of a third-world debtor for the settlement of his foreign accounts. This narrow view disregards the fact that we are dealing with populations which have a right to a respectable standard of survival and with countries with legitimate national aspirations. Either we realize that the solution to the foreign debt problem is a joint task for creditors and debtors alike or we run the risk of setting fire to the powder-keg that threatens the whole continent.

(President Sarney)

This picture explains the social cauldron of Latin America, defenceless against Messianic and demagogic seductions and the call of totalitarian ideologies and trapped in an unfair situation resulting from accumulated errors of the past. It is a miracle that the glow illuminating Latin America at this time comes from the torch of liberty and democracy and not that of turmoil.

Brazil has taken its position. Debt does not lead to doubt. We have chosen to grow without recession, without submitting ourselves to those adjustments which would entail relinquishing development.

Brazil will not pay its foreign debt with recession, nor with unemployment, nor with hunger. We believe that in settling this account at such high social and economic costs we would then have to surrender our freedom, for a debt paid with poverty is an account paid for with democracy. I thus wish to affirm with all seriousness and firmness that there is no solution possible without a thorough reformulation of the international economic structures.

Lastly, I must speak of peace, the loftiest ideal of mankind. But what is peace? Is it merely the absence of war, of war between nations, of war between men? Or is peace something more transcendental which signifies the freedom of men from all forms of violence, from all forms of conflict? I believe it to be an inner state of mind projected by man as the conduct to be followed by all nations; but realistically we know that many generations will pass before this goal is actually achieved.

The reality that sustains us is quite different. The raw material of our work is provided by the harsh landscape of our times: one beset with violence, egotism, retaliation, dependence, awkwardness, servitude, nuclear war, the ills of starvation, cultural disparities, assaults on the ecology, pollution, terrorism, greed and exploitation.

(President Sarney)

The peace of today is not yet true peace. It is war in disguise. The first path leading to peace is freedom; and the political organization of freedom is democracy. Free peoples do not wage war; there will be no war between democratic peoples that decide their own destinies without submitting to personal tyrannies and to ideological fanaticisms. War and democracy, war and freedom are incompatible terms. As Clausewitz pointed out, war exists only when sovereign States exist. Likewise, we can affirm that peaceful, consensual solutions prevail when free and democratically developed nations exist, with permanent institutions, with fully operational powers, and with the people themselves making the decisions. Thus the best way for the United Nations to work for peace is to work for democracy. We Brazilians follow this example. We emerged from conflict through democracy. On the day the people felt they could decide, they did not choose violence. They opted for dialogue, for negotiation.

We are approaching the end of the century. The task of the United Nations has been to manage circumstantial conflicts. It is time for us to react vigorously against this marginal role, restoring to the Organization the prerogatives and rights deriving from its overall responsibility to all peoples in matters pertaining to peace and security.

The priority for the fifth decade in the life of the United Nations should be a programme of revitalization with the following objectives: to help defuse the tensions of the renewed confrontation between the two power blocs; to create a new economic order based on development and social justice; to explore the entire negotiating potential of the Organization to promote solutions for the regional conflicts which are proliferating in the third world; and to regain a major role in the negotiations for the reduction, control and elimination of arms, with emphasis on those with greater destructive power.

(President Sarney)

However, freedom is not restricted to the exercise of a political right. As a component of the well-being of each of us we have a great social debt, a moral debt to the poor of the entire world who are the human beings we call brothers but whom we treat as though they were not.

(President Sarney)

The meaning of freedom for contemporary man is not merely the absence of coercion or of interference. It is the prospect of a happy life for oneself and for one's own. Thence the concept of freedom which concerns itself specifically with the actual conditions of a free life and strives to promote the broadest possible equality of opportunity. Modern man is one whose life today reflects Jefferson's dream of the personal and collective pursuit of happiness.

Equality of opportunity is the mainstay of social freedom, enabling the market to serve mankind rather than mankind serving the market. Without a diversity of values and multiple ways of life, freedom does not flourish, but languishes in privilege and drowns in oppression.

Shortly before the creation of the United Nations, Churchill and Roosevelt held a dialogue at Hyde Park. Roosevelt asked how peace could be assured and Churchill replied, "By an Anglo-American alliance." But Roosevelt retorted, "No: by improving living conditions throughout the world."

I repeat, that for there to be peace there must be democracy and freedom: a freedom without hunger. The world cannot enjoy peace so long as there is a single hungry mouth anywhere on the face of the earth, a single child dying for lack of milk, a single human being suffering for lack of bread. The coming century will be the century of socialized food. The image of the mater dolorosa in the African desert is humiliating to us. Foodstuffs cannot continue to be mere speculative commodities on the exchange markets. Science and technology are here, announcing a new era of abundance through genetic engineering. Man, who has been able to break through the barriers of Earth and take off for the distant stars, cannot be incapable of eradicating hunger. What is required is a universal will to do so. That is a decision which must be taken without vetoes. It is urgent to have a plan of peace for the elimination of hunger.

(President Sarney)

Brazil, which experiences the paradox of being a major producer of food while struggling to eliminate pockets of hunger from its own territory, is willing to take part with enthusiasm in an effort to mobilize the international community to wipe out the scourge of hunger before the end of the century. This challenge may prove to be an opportunity for the United Nations and its agencies to rise above the present discredited state of multilateralism, thus demonstrating their effectiveness and validity.

In order to accomplish this, man must have a humanistic vision of politics, otherwise he may be able to think of nothing and produce nothing but nuclear missiles and warheads.

The conquest of the seas brought to man the humanism of the renaissance. The conquest of the cosmos broadens our view to an infinite solitude: The world has become larger and yet at the same time smaller. We must be united on this voyage where all men are condemned to face the greatest temptations of life. The new humanism must be centred on solidarity and peace. Peace can exist only hand-in-hand with freedom, freedom with democracy, and democracy when we provide for the segregated, for the starving, for the unemployed. It will exist when in the poor nations we love our poorer regions, when in the rich nations we love the poor people, and when in the poorer nations we love the poorest people.

Forty years ago we built upon the stark ruins of war. Today we must work to prevent the ruins of an anonymous war, which is hunger. Poverty is the very negation of life.

This is the great mission of mankind: to transform life by transforming the world. The twenty-first century is in sight. Let us look upon the new times with the eyes of the lover of nature, with the eyes of the pursuer of dreams. Let us have the courage to proclaim that freedom and peace will spell the end of poverty and hunger.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Federative Republic of Brazil for the important statement he has just made.

Mr. José Sarney, President of the Federative Republic of Brazil, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

AGENDA ITEM 9

GENERAL DEBATE

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): Before calling on the first speaker, I should like to remind representatives of the decision taken by the General Assembly at its 3rd plenary meeting, held on Friday, 20 September 1985, namely, that the practice of expressing congratulations in the General Assembly Hall after a statement has been delivered is prohibited. It is my firm intention to see to it that that decision is applied strictly and consistently in fairness to all delegations. I should like to appeal to all members for their co-operation in implementing that explicit decision of the General Assembly.

I should also like to remind representatives that, in accordance with the decision taken by the General Assembly at its 3rd plenary meeting, the list of speakers will be closed on Wednesday, 25 September, at 6 p.m. I request delegations to be good enough to provide the estimated speaking times as accurately as possible so that we can plan our meetings in an orderly way.

Mr. SHULTZ (United States of America): Let me start by joining the President of Brazil in conveying to the people and Government of Mexico our deep sympathy over the devastation wrought by earthquakes and our solidarity with them as they work to recover and rebuild. We admire the way the Government and people of Mexico are dealing with their problem. For our part, we are responding rapidly to Mexico's request for assistance with medicine, blankets and equipment to help in removing rubble, searching for survivors and fighting fires. But these are Mexico's short-term needs. The long-range impact and cost of the earthquakes are still being determined, but one thing is clear - they will be enormous. Here, too, the United States is prepared to respond to Mexico's plight.

(Mr. Shultz, United States)

As I look at the devastation - and, perhaps, as you do on your television screens and you see the pictures, you cannot help but be struck by the thought that Mexico City in some ways looks war-torn. Of course, an earthquake is not a man-made event. When the earth shook in Mexico there was nothing anyone could do about it. But our task here at the United Nations is to see to it that man does not cause the earth to shake. So let us devote ourselves to the cause of peace and freedom.

Three years ago, when I addressed this body for the first time, I stressed the need for realism. There is probably no other quality so appropriate and necessary for this Organization. But realism does not mean cynicism, or even pessimism. It means a clear-sighted appreciation of the opportunities we face, as well as of the obvious problems. It means remembering the many challenges that the world community has overcome, and drawing lessons from that. It means understanding that idealism and the yearning for human betterment are themselves part of reality, and thus have enormous practical significance.

The founding fathers of the United Nations are sometimes accused of naive Utopianism. Supposedly they ignored the realities of power politics in attempting to create a global system of collective security. I doubt it. The men and women who set up this Organization 40 years ago were among the great statesmen of the century. They drafted the Charter as a set of standards for international conduct - knowing full well that the world's nations probably would fall short of those standards, but knowing also that the setting of high goals is a necessary precondition to their pursuit and attainment.

The lofty goals of the Charter have a concrete, practical meaning today. They not only point the way to a better world; they reflect some of the most powerful currents at work in the contemporary world. The striving for justice, freedom,

(Mr. Shultz, United States)

progress and peace is an ever-present and powerful reality that is today, more than ever, impressing itself on international politics.

Our political thinking must catch up to this reality. The policies of nations must adapt to this basic human striving. This organization, too, must adapt to reality; it cannot afford to consume itself in political warfare and unrealistic posturing. There is work to be done. Let us do it.

The world community faces enormous challenges in three areas: in satisfying mankind's yearning for democracy, freedom and justice; in preserving and perfecting global peace and stability; and in spreading economic prosperity and progress.

First, the quest for democracy and freedom. Since the end of the Second World War, modern communication has opened the eyes of most of the world's peoples to the realization that they do not have to live their lives in poverty and despair; that, on the contrary, the blessings of prosperity and liberty known in the past only by a relative few can be theirs as well. The ideals for which the war was fought, and the spread of democracy and of prosperity in the industrialized world since, created an explosion of expectations.

The result has been in recent years a revolution of democratic aspirations sweeping the world. At the time of the San Francisco Conference in 1945, most of the nations represented in this hall today were not independent States but possessions - colonies of European empires. The vast number of languages, cultures and traditions that I can now see before me testify to the revolution in the world order. The old empires eventually had to accept the post-war reality of self-determination and national independence.

Much of the conflict in the world today stems from the refusal of some governments to accept the reality that the aspirations of people for democracy and freedom simply cannot be suppressed for ever by force.

(Mr. Shultz, United States)

In South Africa, these aspirations on the part of the black majority have, as never before, drawn global attention and support. Change is inevitable. The issue is not whether apartheid is to be dismantled, but how and when. And then, what replaces it: race war, bloodbath and new forms of injustice? Or political accommodation and racial coexistence in a just society? The outcome depends on whether and how quickly the South African Government can accept the new reality, and on whether men and women of peace on both sides can seize the opportunity before it is too late.

(Mr. Shultz, United States)

This much is clear: there must be negotiation among South Africans of all races on constitutional reform. True peace will come only when the Government negotiates with, rather than locks up, representative black leaders. The violence will end only when all parties begin a mutual search for a just system of government.

One area where the future has brightened in the past five years as the aspirations of the people to democracy have been met in country after country is Latin America - as President Sarney just said so eloquently. In contrast to only 30 per cent in 1979, today more than 90 per cent of the people of Latin America live under Governments that are either democratic or clearly on the road to democracy.

In Central America, El Salvador, under the courageous leadership of President Duarte, has shown that democracy can take root and thrive even in the most difficult terrain. Its citizens have braved extremist violence to participate overwhelmingly in four free elections since 1982. Their President's current personal ordeal only serves to underscore the sacrifices thousands of Salvadorians continue to make as they fight to realize the ideals of the United Nations Charter. For this commitment they should be applauded by all Members. Ironically, El Salvador is today the only democracy subject to the scrutiny of a special rapporteur for human rights.

Among El Salvador's neighbours, Costa Rica has long been the region's beacon of representative government; Honduras is about to replace one freely-elected government with another; and Guatemala is about to join them as a democratic nation with the election of a president in November. These developments should enhance regional co-operation for economic development, which the United States supports through our Caribbean Basin initiative and President Reagan's initiative for peace, development and democracy.

(Mr. Shultz, United States)

But regional peace in Central America is threatened by the rulers of Nicaragua and their Soviet and Cuban allies. Behind a cloak of democratic rhetoric, the Nicaraguan communists have betrayed the 1979 revolution and embarked upon a course of tyranny at home and subversion against their neighbours. Brave Nicaraguans are fighting to restore the hope for freedom in their country and the other nations of the region are working together in collective self-defence against Nicaraguan aggression.

How can this crisis be resolved? The Central American nations, together with their nearest neighbours, the members of the Contadora Group, have subscribed to a document of 21 objectives. These include non-interference in the affairs of one's neighbours, serious dialogue with domestic opposition groups, free elections and democracy in each country, the removal of foreign military personnel and a reduction of armaments. My Government supports a verifiable treaty based on full and simultaneous implementation of the 21 objectives. We welcome the resumption of talks next month in Panama and hope they lead to a final agreement. Contadora is the best forum for pursuing a settlement.

In El Salvador, President Duarte, true to his pledge to the Assembly last year, has pursued a dialogue with the guerrilla opposition. Would that the rulers of Nicaragua would make, and honour, a similar pledge to the Assembly this year. In San Jose on 1 March of this year the Nicaraguan democratic resistance called for internal dialogue, moderated by the Roman Catholic Church, to end the killing.

The people of the region are waiting for a positive answer from the rulers of Nicaragua. Can it be that, never having been chosen by their people in a truly free election, they lack the confidence to face opponents they cannot silence or lock up, as they have so many others? The united Nicaraguan opposition deserves to participate in Nicaraguan political life and has an important role to play in the diplomatic process. Regional peace will not come without it.

(Mr. Shultz, United States)

The reality of democratic revolution is also demonstrated by the rise of national liberation movements against communist colonialism: in Afghanistan, Cambodia, Angola and other lands where, as in Nicaragua, people have organized in resistance to tyranny. Unlike the old European empires that came to accept the post-war reality of self-determination and national independence, the new colonialists are swimming against the tide of history. They are doomed to fail.

In Afghanistan the almost six-year-old Soviet invasion has inflicted untold suffering on a people whose will to resist and to free themselves from a pitiless tyranny cannot be broken. Hundreds of thousands of Afghans are dead or maimed, millions more make up the largest refugee population in the world and countless villages, schools and farms lie in ruins. Nowhere in the world has the carnage wrought by Soviet imperialism been greater than in Afghanistan and nowhere has the resistance been more determined and courageous.

The withdrawal of Soviet forces, as the General Assembly has noted on six occasions, would lead to solution of the Afghanistan problem. A solution must also encompass restoration of the country's independence and non-aligned status, self-determination for the Afghan people and the return in safety and honour of the more than 3 million refugees. Unless and until the Soviet Union permits such a solution the national liberation struggle in Afghanistan will continue, the world-wide effort to provide succour to a beleaguered people will go forward and Soviet protestations of peace on this and other issues will not ring true. My Government, together with others concerned, stands ready to implement a just solution to this problem.

Cambodia, as we all know, stands as one of the worst examples in history of a totalitarian ideology carried to its bloodiest extreme. Today, courageous freedom fighters under the leadership of Prince Norodom Sihanouk and Son Sann struggle to

(Mr. Shultz, United States)

reclaim their country. We continue to support the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) programme for a peaceful solution; Vietnamese forces must withdraw completely, and Cambodia's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity must be restored under a Government chosen in free elections.

In other countries where the apparatus of repression is well developed, countless thousands of men and women wage private struggles for freedom, armed only with their consciences and their courage. Some suffer for their political convictions, others for their religious beliefs: solidarity trade unionists in Poland; Jews, Baptists, Roman Catholics, Pentecostalists and others in the Soviet Union; Baha'is in Iran. With all the men and arms at their disposal, what are these Governments afraid of?

These brave and often nameless prisoners of conscience struggle to achieve for men and women in every corner of the world the promises of this Organization. We are with them, and we call on all States as Members of this body to honour their solemn commitments. As Thomas Jefferson once said,

"The opinions of men and women are not the rightful object of any Government, anywhere."

(Mr. Shultz, United States)

The quest for peace continues on many fronts. And for all the obstacles confronting it, there are examples of success - such as the Treaty on Antarctica, which recently marked a quarter century of effective international co-operation. We can learn from problems overcome as we tackle the formidable problems ahead.

In the Middle East, 10 or 15 years ago, peace between Israel and any Arab State seemed a remote, if not impossible, dream. Finally, after untold suffering and four wars, a courageous leader, Anwar El-Sadat, abandoned the old ways of thinking and took the step no other Arab leader had been willing or prepared even to contemplate: he recognized that the State of Israel was here to stay and, with Prime Minister Begin, vowed there would be no more wars. Peace and normal relations were established, and the Sinai was returned.

The past year has seen major efforts toward new negotiations between Israel and its Arab neighbours. The United States is committed and engaged in support of those efforts, in accordance with President Reagan's initiative of three years ago. Yet the lesson of the past is clear: progress can be achieved only through direct negotiations, based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). There is no other way, and evasion of this reality only prolongs suffering and heightens dangers. Nothing positive will ever be achieved by chasing illusions of so-called armed struggle; but much can be accomplished by parties who are committed to peace and engaged in serious dialogue. The moment is at hand - this year - to make major progress and to begin direct negotiations.

To the east, we have the continuing failure of reason to prevail and end the devastating war between Iran and Iraq. Prolonged by Iran's refusal to come to terms with its inability to achieve victory, this war has now entered its fifth year, with no end in sight. We again call on both parties to negotiate an end to the fighting.

(Mr. Shultz, United States)

On the Korean peninsula we see the first tentative steps being taken to get away from the mode of thinking that has characterized the past 40 years. A decade ago, there seemed little hope for a significant reduction of tension. Yet last year both Koreas began a multifaceted, direct dialogue, which the United States supports as the key to a solution. While the animosities of a lifetime are not resolved quickly, a start has been made. We also believe that membership in the United Nations for both the Republic of Korea and North Korea, in accordance with the principle of universality, would help reduce tensions.

Perhaps the most dramatic problem that requires new ways of thinking is international State-sponsored terrorism. Terrorism is every bit as much a form of war against a nation's interests and values as a full-scale armed attack. And it is a weapon wielded particularly against innocent civilians, against free nations, against democracy, against moderation and against peaceful solutions. It is an affront to everything the United Nations stands for.

Progress has been made against the terrorist threat through co-operation in the United Nations system. Many nations subscribe to The Hague, Tokyo and Montreal Conventions to make air travel safer and to suppress hijacking and sabotage. Progress has also been made in providing protection for diplomats, and some nations have agreed on how to handle hostage situations. Just this month, participants at the Seventh United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, held at Milan, adopted a strong, broad-ranging resolution urging all States to adhere to these agreements and to strengthen international actions against terrorism.

Much more remains to be done. The United States and other nations, for example, are working with the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) to improve standards of security. Over this past year, some 90 potential terrorist actions against United States facilities or citizens have been deterred or

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prevented. But the fight has only begun, and it cannot be won by one Government alone. The civilized world must put the terrorists and their supporters on notice: we will defend ourselves in any and every way we can.

The reality of the nuclear age has impelled the United States and the Soviet Union to engage in a dialogue, of varying intensity, for the past 40 years. This dialogue has been an unprecedented attempt by two rivals to manage their competition and avert war. We know that we share a responsibility for maintaining peace, not just for our peoples, but for all the earth's peoples.

Despite all the difficulties, let us remember what has been accomplished. After the two most destructive wars in history, the super-Powers, joined with others, have averted world war for four decades. We have had some success in limiting nuclear testing. Working together with other nations since the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in 1968, we have succeeded in restricting the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Twenty years ago it was conventional wisdom that there would be 15 to 25 nuclear-weapon States by today; yet the number of States acknowledged to possess nuclear weapons has held at five for the past 20 years. The United States remains committed to all the goals of the Treaty, whose Third Review Conference just concluded successfully in Geneva. And the United States and the Soviet Union have taken practical steps to avoid conflict. Our navies have long agreed to work together to prevent incidents at sea. And we have set up and improved the "hot line" for crisis communications.

In the nuclear and space arms talks in Geneva, the United States has advanced far-reaching proposals: a reduction by almost one-half in the most destabilizing weapons, strategic ballistic missile warheads, and the elimination of the whole class of the United States and Soviet longer-range intermediate-range nuclear forces missiles worldwide, all leading ultimately to the complete elimination of nuclear arms. We repeatedly have stressed our readiness for give and take and to

(Mr. Shultz, United States)

consider alternative proposals. Each of our proposals has been followed up by further attempts to find common ground with the Soviet Union. We have offered trade-offs and have made clear our readiness to take account of legitimate Soviet concerns to obtain an agreement that would enhance strategic stability and strengthen deterrence.

Progress at Geneva has been slow. Thus far the Soviet Union has not negotiated with the responsiveness that the talks require. None the less, our determination to reach an equitable agreement has not wavered.

In this spirit, President Reagan last June decided to continue our policy of taking no action that would undercut the limits of previous agreements, to the extent the Soviet Union shows comparable restraint. Despite serious reservations about those agreements, and serious concerns about the Soviet record of non-compliance, the President made this decision to foster a climate of truly mutual restraint to facilitate progress in arms control.

While the most direct path to a safer world is through equitable, verifiable reductions, we also see value in verifiable limitations on nuclear testing. For that reason, President Reagan, in his speech to this body last year, proposed that the United States and the Soviet Union exchange visits of experts at test sites to measure directly the yields of nuclear-weapon test. This would significantly improve confidence in the verifiability of proposed treaty limits on underground testing. The Soviet Union rejected this offer. Nevertheless, last July, the President issued an unconditional invitation for a Soviet team to observe and measure a nuclear test at the Nevada Test Site. We again call on the Soviet Union to take up this offer, which is a concrete, positive step toward verifiable restrictions on nuclear testing.

(Mr. Shultz, United States)

When the Anti-Ballistic-Missile Treaty was signed in 1972 it was assumed that tight limits on defensive systems would make possible real reductions in strategic offensive arms. But the Soviet Union has never agreed to any meaningful reductions in offensive nuclear arms. Instead, it has continued an unprecedented military build-up - particularly in heavy intercontinental ballistic missiles with a first-strike capability - which is eroding the basis on which deterrence has rested for decades. The strategy of reliance on offensive retaliation to preserve deterrence and prevent war thus is being called into question by Soviet actions.

The answer is, first, for us both to agree on strategically significant, verifiable reductions in the numbers and destructive potential of offensive weapons. But there are additional ways to redress the problem. President Reagan has directed our scientists and engineers to examine, in the light of new technologies and fully in accord with the Anti-Ballistic-Missile Treaty - the feasibility of defence against ballistic-missile attack. Strategic defence could give our children and grandchildren a safer world. We would continue to rely on deterrence to prevent war, but deterrence would be based more on denying success to a potential attacker and less on threatening massive mutual destruction. Such a means of deterrence should be safer and more stable. Our goal is not to achieve superiority but to add to the security of both sides. As former Soviet Premier Kosygin said, an anti-missile system "is intended not for killing people but for saving human lives". The Soviet Premier was right.

We want to co-operate with the Soviet Union in making progress on these most important of all issues. Progress requires - it demands - good will, realism and honesty. Behind the curtain that encloses Soviet society, free from the open debate we see in the West, a major strategic defence programme has proceeded for decades. The current Soviet leaders know that. In the past 20 years the

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Soviet Union has spent about as much on strategic defence as on its offensive nuclear forces. The Soviets know that. The Soviets have the world's most active military space programme, last year conducting about 100 space launches, some 80 per cent of which were purely military in nature, compared to a total of about 20 United States space launches. The Soviets know that, too. They deploy the world's only anti-ballistic-missile system, whose nuclear-armed interceptors and other components are undergoing extensive modernization. They are researching many of the same new technologies as we, and are ahead in some. And the Soviet Union has the world's only extensively tested and fully operational anti-satellite system. The Soviet leaders know full well their own efforts in these fields. Their propaganda about American programmes is blatantly one-sided and not to be taken seriously.

So let us get down to real business, with the seriousness the subject deserves, and let us do so in the quiet of the negotiating room, where we can really make progress on narrowing our differences.

Progress needs to be made in other arms-control areas as well. Restraints on chemical and biological weapons have eroded in recent years as international agreements have been violated by the Soviet Union and others. In April 1984 the United States proposed a comprehensive treaty for a global ban on chemical weapons. We will again introduce a draft resolution on chemical weapons in the First Committee. We must have talks on serious, verifiable proposals.

To reduce the risk of conflict through miscalculation we and our Atlantic allies have proposed significant confidence- and security-building measures at the Conference on Disarmament in Europe. To enhance security in Central Europe we have repeatedly sought ways to move the mutual and balanced force reduction talks in Vienna forward.

(Mr. Shultz, United States)

In sum, the United States and the Soviet Union now have a historic opportunity to reduce the risk of war. President Reagan looks forward to his meeting with General Secretary Gorbachev in November. We have a long agenda. The United States is working hard to make it a productive meeting and we want the meeting itself to give a further impetus to the wide-ranging dialogue on which we are already embarked. Soviet acts of good faith and willingness to reach fair agreements will be more than matched on the American side.

Just as there is a democratic revolution in the world today, so there is also a revolution in economic thinking. Mankind is moving towards an ever greater recognition of the inescapable tie between freedom and economic progress. Command economies, in spite of all their pretensions, have not done very well in liberating people from poverty. In reality, they have served as instruments of power for the few rather than of hope for the many. Expectations of material progress and prosperity have been fulfilled in countries whose Governments have applied reason and fresh thinking to their problems, learning from experience rather than slavishly following outworn dogma. The new way of thinking - economic freedom - actually is a return to old truths that many had forgotten or never understood.

Those developing countries in Asia relying on free market policies, for example, have enjoyed one of the most remarkable economic booms in history despite a relative lack of natural resources. The ASEAN nations and the Republic of Korea have grown at a 7 per cent a year rate over the past decade, the fastest rate in the world, and ASEAN has become a model of regional development and political co-operation. In recognition of the success of economic freedom the island nations of the South Pacific have continued to encourage the private sector as well. We are joining with them in a dedicated effort to negotiate quickly a regional fisheries agreement that will benefit all.

(Mr. Shultz, United States)

The success of these and other countries demonstrates that the laws of economics do not discriminate between developed and developing. For all nations equally the true source of wealth is the energy and creativity of the individual, not the State. After decades of fashionable socialist doctrine we see today on every continent efforts to decentralize, deregulate, denationalize and enlarge the scope for producers and consumers to interact in the free market. In India, China and elsewhere new policies are being adopted to unleash the creative abilities of talented peoples. At the Bonn economic summit last May the leaders of the largest industrial democracies acknowledged the same truth. The road to prosperity begins at the same starting point for all nations: freedom and incentives for the individual.

This truth should be our guide as we address today's economic challenges.

In sub-Saharan Africa drought has placed perhaps 30 million men, women and children at risk. We do not know how many have already died. Along with other Western countries, the United States has undertaken one of the largest disaster relief programmes in history. This year alone the United States has provided \$1.2 billion for drought and famine relief and \$800 million in other economic assistance. The nations that have been helping should continue to do so; those that have not borne their share should start to do so.

But we owe it to the suffering to ask this question: Why is food so scarce? Drought, without question, is part of the reason, but in some countries there are other, more important reasons. One is Government policies that have severely harmed agricultural productivity. These policies must be reversed. Those countries that have undertaken liberalizing reforms are reaping the benefits and can show the way for others. Another problem is lack of appropriate technologies. The United States is carrying out a long-term programme to strengthen African agricultural research, which we hope will help to produce a green revolution on the continent.

(Mr. Shultz, United States)

Elsewhere in the developing world, as in Africa, countries face the continuing problem of debt. Many have undertaken necessary, though painful, adjustment, taking courageous steps to cut Government spending, eliminate subsidies and price controls, permit currencies to adjust to the market, free interest rates to encourage saving and discourage capital flight and create conditions to attract new capital. Austerity, however, is certainly not an end in itself. The purpose of short-term adjustment is to get back on the track of long-term growth.

In all these efforts we must be careful that the heavy burden of servicing the historic debt levels of the developing nations of Latin America and Africa does not inhibit their future growth. Creative co-operation between borrowers and lenders, with continued constructive assistance from the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), will be essential in achieving that goal.

Other nations too have a major part to play in helping these countries overcome their debt problem and resume sustainable growth. External financing to support effective adjustment has been and will continue to be important. Access to export markets is also necessary. Indeed, an open trading system is crucial to the hopes of all of us. Trade expansion has been an engine of post-war prosperity. It would therefore be suicidal to return to the protectionism of the 1920s and 1930s which helped bring on the great depression. Protectionism is not a cure; it is a disease, a disease that could cripple all of us. Trade must be free, open and fair. The United States will work to see that it is. But there must be a level playing field. We want open trading, but that means mutuality. Barriers erected against American products are just not acceptable to us.

As President Reagan is saying today in a major speech,

"The freer the flow of world trade, the stronger the tides for human progress and peace among nations."

(Mr. Shultz, United States)

To preserve and strengthen the trading system may well be the central economic issue facing the world community today. For that reason it is essential that all nations join now in preparations for a new General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) round next year. No nation, even one as large and as powerful as the United States, can by itself ensure a free trading system. All that we and others have done to provide for the free flow of goods and services and capital is based on co-operation. Indeed, it was that very spirit of co-operation that prompted the United States and four of the leading industrial nations yesterday to pledge firm resolve to work together in addressing the pressing economic issues of this decade.

Sound economic policies in every country are the key to strengthening the world economy. In the United States policies that have unleashed individual talent, reduced Government's role and stabilized prices have helped to produce more than 8 million new jobs since 1982 and lead the world out of recession. But many imbalances in the world economy remain, notably in trade accounts, exchange rates and capital flows. These must be corrected by the world community acting in concert if recent economic gains are to be preserved and hopes for progress sustained. For its part, the United States must restrain public spending, reduce its budget deficit and encourage saving. Others must do more to reduce rigidities and promote the private investment needed to facilitate adjustment and spur expansion.

I believe we can surmount our problems just as we succeeded in solving the energy crisis and bringing inflation under control. There was a time when those problems too seemed insurmountable. We can succeed again today if we have the honesty and courage to face our problems squarely and if our ways of thinking conform to reality.

Forty years ago the founders of the United Nations recognized that new ways had to be found to regulate conduct between nations. That remains true today. The

(Mr. Shultz, United States)

Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights speak to us, not as different races, creeds and nationalities, but as human beings, men and women. Our task as we look at the next century is to learn that the things which unite us - the desire for peace, human rights and material well-being - as set down in those documents are far more important than the things which divide us.

The main obstacle to greater realization of the goals of the Charter is the lust of the few for power over the many, just as it has been the obstacle to human happiness since the dawn of history. But change is inevitable. And today change, technological change, holds out hope perhaps as never before. The revolution in communications and information may be the most far-reaching development of our time. Those political systems that try to stand in the way of the free flow of knowledge and information will relegate their citizens to second-class status in the next century. The future belongs to societies that can spread knowledge, adapt, innovate, tap the unfettered talents of well-informed citizens and thus fully exploit the new technologies; free societies clearly are best equipped for this challenge. The communications revolution will be a truly liberating revolution, for it threatens the monopoly of information and thought upon which tyrants rely for absolute control.

On every continent - from Nicaragua to Poland, from South Africa to Afghanistan and Cambodia - we see that the yearning for freedom is the most powerful political force all across the planet. The noble ideals of democracy and freedom are in the ascendant. Today, we can look with renewed hope to the day when the goals of the United Nations truly will be met.

Mr. GUISSOU (Burkina Faso) (interpretation from French): As we begin our work the Government and friendly people of Mexico are faced with a most terrible disaster as a result of the successive earthquakes that have devastated that country during the past week.

(Mr. Guissou, Burkina Faso)

On behalf of the people of Burkina Faso and the National Revolutionary Council and its Chairman, Captain Thomas Sankara, I convey to the people and Government of Mexico my delegation's heartfelt condolences and express to them our greatest solidarity at this time of tragedy. We in Burkina Faso have also suffered from natural disasters, and we are in a position to understand the tragedy that has struck Mexico and its people.*

*Mr. Hepburn (Bahamas), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Guissou, Burkina Faso)

My delegation is pleased to see you, Sir, presiding over the fortieth session of the General Assembly of the United Nations. You represent a country that is close to Africa, for Spain, by virtue of its geography and history, has always been a link between Africa and Europe. I wish to pay a sincere and well-deserved tribute to your predecessor, Ambassador Paul John Lusaka, who successfully presided over the thirty-ninth session of the General Assembly.

In a few days' time all the peoples and nations of the world will be marking the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations. It would be presumptuous to try in a few short minutes to evaluate this Organization 40 years after its founding and it is not the intention of my delegation to do this.

We have come to this rostrum to enable our people, the Burkinabe people, and our country, Burkina Faso, to share their thoughts with the other 158 Members of the United Nations. We believe that all our positive and constructive thoughts taken together will undoubtedly present the truest possible picture of the United Nations.

The life expectancy of a citizen of Burkina Faso is 40 years. This explains and helps to show why in Burkina Faso it is our deepest aspiration and our most sincere wish to see the United Nations develop and make progress. That is why we struggle to ensure that the United Nations contributes a little more each day to making this a better world for everybody.

The work that we have done together in 40 years is positive. The family circle has widened, the number of Members has trebled and all Members have more or less adhered to the principles and ideals contained in the Charter. It is nevertheless true that when it comes to implementation the noble ideas underlying the Charter have not always had the support of the indispensable common political will.

(Mr. Guissou, Burkina Faso)

Forty years after the San Francisco profession of faith, decolonization has not yet been fully achieved, in Africa in particular and elsewhere in the world.

Forty years after Hiroshima, the spectre of nuclear war still hovers over the human race and may at any moment jeopardize its future.

Although the United Nations has to a certain extent helped us to avoid a third world war such as the wars of 1914-18 and 1939-45, the balance sheet of local conflicts since 1945, were it to be drawn up, would be just as terrifying as that of the last war.

The fascism and institutionalized racial discrimination that the world thought it had conquered and buried with the defeat of nazism have re-emerged in South Africa and Israel, where they are arrogantly practised before the eyes of the international community through the abhorrent systems of apartheid and Zionism.

Even worse is the cynical use made of the weapon of obscurantism and hunger, which every year kills 30 million children, women and men, particularly in my country and in the African Sahel. In our view, this weapon is just as deadly as the nuclear weapon. Indeed, it is even more deadly in that it makes possible more effective forms of political blackmail. It enables the powerful of this world to pour out millions of tons of food aid so as to quieten and lend moral comfort to their own domestic public opinion on the one hand and on the other hand to convince those who are starving that their only means of salvation will for ever lie in the humanitarian gestures of the powerful. Thus, to demand the means to produce food oneself instead of accepting humiliating aid may be presented as a rejection of human solidarity in the face of children, mothers and fathers dying of hunger.

(Mr. Guissou, Burkina Faso)

The problem of the external debt must be considered in close relationship to the requirements of development by and for the people themselves.

Addressing his colleagues at the last summit meeting of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) President Thomas Sankara, said:

"The Burkinabe - that is, a people made up of upright and honest men - will use no trickery, deceit or dishonesty against anyone. That is why, without complaint and in dignified silence, we shall discharge our foreign debt correctly while following the sacred path of the liberation of our people. We shall struggle against the straitjacket that has been imposed on us with no sign of weakness, without resignation or fatalism, but honestly and faithfully. How can one demand that peoples who have been excluded from the feast should pay off a debt of which they know nothing? What would our working masses say if they knew that this debt, which causes us so much worry, represents only 1 per cent of the world debt?"

The current debt burden prevents any true economic recovery. The position of my country is that we, the debtor countries, must, whatever the cost, present a common front and avoid any disruption of our ranks in the face of the organized, united partners that harry us. Only such unity among the poor will enable us to secure if not the cancellation at least the suspension of payments.

The tremendous achievements of science and technology have not been used for the economic and social development of mankind as a whole. How else can we explain the fact that on the eve of the twenty-first century millions of human beings throughout the world, particularly in Africa, Asia and Latin America, are still suffering and dying of ignorance, above all, and secondly of hunger, thirst and disease?

(Mr. Guissou, Burkina Faso)

Burkina Faso's revolutionary experience of the past two years has been and continues to be inspired by all past revolutions. We understand the misfortunes of all peoples throughout the world, without exception, and will continue to sympathize with them. Yet it is a new revolution in that it categorically rejects any servile imitation of others.

Venturing on new paths to words of a better world, we have chosen to seek forms of organization that are better adapted to our civilization and that can bring out people closer to the other peoples of the world in the search for the well-being and progress of all.

The pursuit of this objective has been reflected in the mobilization, rational organization and collective discipline that our people have freely imposed on themselves in daring to bring about profound changes in their day-to-day economic, social and cultural life.

For the past two years, under the leadership of the National Revolutionary Council, our people have made tremendous efforts in the main vital sectors of our society. I shall just mention two examples here.

First, the "vaccination commando" made it possible to immunize, within 15 days, 2.5 million children ranging in age from 9 months to 14 years, against measles, meningitis and yellow fever. The coverage was 106 per cent, showing that children from neighbouring countries were also able to benefit.

Secondly, thanks to the political determination to mobilize all energies in the democratic and revolutionary structures of the defence committees of the revolution, a city such as Ouagadougou, our capital, today has more than 150 wells providing drinking water to 20 sectors which were previously without this essential provision.

(Mr. Guissou, Burkina Faso)

We are happy to underscore the effective contribution made by the specialized agencies of the United Nations, specifically the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in our "Commando Vaccination" effort, and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for carrying out the drilling of wells and for other work relating to our infrastructure.

We are not simply boasting of our achievements here. We are expressing a belief, one that we have developed over these past two years of revolutionary struggle. In Burkina Faso, positive developments and real achievements have proved that it is now possible to build a better world, so long as we are willing to think the unthinkable and to involve as many as possible in this endeavour.

In our own daily struggles we also participate, in word and in deed, in the just and legitimate struggles of all peoples against imperialism, colonialism, neo-colonialism and racism - the main causes of the evils that are crippling all initiatives for a just and equitable peace throughout the world.

This ongoing search for international peace and security remains the major imperative of our Organization on the eve of its fortieth anniversary.

In his report on the work of the Organization, the Secretary-General quite rightly emphasized the role that each Member State must play in order to safeguard the mission of the United Nations: the maintenance of international peace and security.

In the Security Council Burkina Faso has been working to the best of its ability and basing its participation on a firm defence of the principles of the Charter and the fundamental rights of peoples.

Hence we endorse the Secretary-General's proposal to members of the Security Council to make this major body of the United Nations the true guardian of peace

(Mr. Guissou, Burkina Faso)

rather than an arena of confrontation between ideologies and policies that are at times totally irrelevant to the basic concerns of peoples. Going beyond the Security Council, we reaffirm the need to keep the United Nations as a whole free of bilateral controversy and make it once again the true forum for multilateralism.

Fatherland or death, we will triumph.

Mr. DHANABALAN (Singapore): Allow me to congratulate the President on his assumption of this high office. There are few men in this hall who have been associated with the United Nations as long as he has. If the fortieth session of the United Nations General Assembly is to provide meaningful new directions for the future, it will require vision and leadership. It could not have found a better man than him to guide it.

Please allow me also to pause a moment and place on record our deep appreciation for the work done by his predecessor, Ambassador Paul Lusaka. He brought great honour to his country and to the continent of Africa with his fine stewardship of the General Assembly through the thirty-ninth session. Not least among the achievements of the thirty-ninth session was the great outpouring of concern, both in words and deeds, for the crisis that afflicted many African nations. This was due in no small part to Ambassador Lusaka's efforts. We thank him.

In recent years, the United Nations has also benefited from the wise guidance provided by the Secretary-General, His Excellency Javier Perez de Cuellar. In a series of remarkably candid and insightful annual reports, from 1982 to 1985, he has openly discussed and analysed the strengths and weaknesses of this Organization. Those who wish to understand where the United Nations stands today need go no further than these four annual reports to grasp the crisis and the challenges facing the United Nations today.

(Mr. Dhanabalan, Singapore)

The prestige of the United Nations is at an all-time low. The debates of the Security Council and the General Assembly, which once gripped world attention, are now generally given scant consideration. The Charter states that the United Nations was created "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war". Yet in the last 40 years there have been about 150 armed conflicts, big and small, which have killed 16 million people, and perhaps as many as 20 million. In 1983 alone, there were 40 separate armed conflicts, major and minor, involving 75 countries, or half the membership of the United Nations. The majority of the victims of these conflicts have come from the developing countries.

The United Nations has not been indifferent to these conflicts. Each year we have here taken principled stands on such key instances of foreign aggression and occupation as on the rights of the Palestinian people, and the Namibian people, and the occupation by Soviet and Vietnamese armies of Afghanistan and Cambodia. In spite of our clear statements, the conflicts persist, resulting in critics of the United Nations suggesting that this Organization may have failed.

Recent developments in South Africa have given us a ray of hope. The United Nations critics claimed in the past that persistent condemnation of apartheid in this Hall would make no difference. The events of the last few weeks, where both the South African people and the international community have ferociously broken down some of the pillars of the apartheid régime, demonstrate that the persistence of this Organization can pay off.

Unfortunately, in South-East Asia Viet Nam continues to denounce and reject United Nations resolutions on Cambodia, thereby undermining the credibility and legitimacy of this entire Organization. Only recently, the Non-Aligned Ministerial Meeting in Luanda reaffirmed that Movement's commitment to the decisions of the United Nations and the principles of the United Nations Charter. If, as it is often claimed by Viet Nam, Viet Nam sincerely desires to live in peace with its

(Mr. Dhanabalan, Singapore)

neighbours, it should conform to the spirit and principles of the Movement by immediately implementing the United Nations resolutions on Cambodia.

I do not belong to the ranks of pessimists who claim that the days of the United Nations are numbered. I do believe, however, that the United Nations today is in some peril. There is a clear danger that this Organization may become irrelevant to issues of peace and security, the primary issues for which it was founded. To prevent that from happening, let each Member of the United Nations ask itself this question: Who gains if the United Nations fails?

To use a contemporary analogy, we could liken the super-Powers to super-tankers and the majority of nations of the world to little boats and some of them even to little rafts that are barely afloat.

(Mr. Dhanabalan, Singapore)

In looking at contemporary issues of war and peace, the United Nations has often fallen into the trap of looking at the world from the perspective of the super-tanker. Several disarmament resolutions proclaim that the central issue of the day is the danger of a collision between these two super-tankers. This, in my opinion, is not so.

While it is true that all of us may perish if there is a collision between these two super-tankers, such a collision is not going to occur because both of them have too much to lose from a direct collision. That is why Soviet or American soldiers have died fighting each other in the last 40 years.

Each super-tanker, however, has tried to recruit small boats to ram into each other, or to churn up the waters around them in the name of revolution and liberation.

Coming from a small nation like Singapore it has always been a source of amazement to us that there are so many small nations which are willing to be seduced into this task of generating turbulence. When such turbulence occurs, the super-tankers are not threatened. It is only the other small boats that face the danger of capsizing.

It is therefore a myth - perpetuated especially by one super-tanker - that revolution and turbulence are good for the third world. The small States of the third world would do well to remember that a more stable international political order would increase our chances for survival. A stable order would increase trade, investment and financial flows to the third world, enhancing our prospects for economic development.

My remarks today are therefore not addressed to the super-tankers but to the over one hundred nations that are small boats and rafts. Let us pool our interests and work for a stronger, more credible and more effective United Nations because it is the only - I repeat only - international institution dedicated to such a stable international political order.

(Mr. Dhanabalan, Singapore)

In historical terms, the Charter of the United Nations is a remarkably revolutionary document.

Man's recorded history has witnessed the rise and fall of many societies and nations. The law of the jungle prevailed. Those that became mighty claimed the right to occupy neighbouring territories, enslaving or massacring populations as their armies marched across different lands.

In June 1945, a brave little document emerged which declared that all this had to stop. This document was the Charter of the United Nations.

The critics of the United Nations who wish to see this Organization swept from the face of this earth should pause to consider the alternative. If the United Nations has not succeeded in erasing the habit of 5,000 years of recorded history, it should be remembered that the forty years of the United Nations existence is a mere wink in time.

Going against the natural unfolding of history, the Charter of the United Nations states in Article 2 that the United Nations "is based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all its Members".

The Charter's concepts of national sovereignty and territorial integrity means that while nations have the right to become strong and mighty if they wish to do so, they have no right to expand beyond their borders. It is therefore not surprising that all the fragile new States that have emerged in the last 40 years have quickly reaffirmed their commitment to the United Nations. They have done so not only because it is a noble idea but because it was the closest they could come to obtaining a guarantee for their survival.

Will this revolutionary concept of equal nation States survive into the 21st century? It may. But to do so, all nation States need to invest in a strong and stable international political order. A credible, effectively functioning United Nations which strongly reinforces the principles of territorial integrity and

(Mr. Dhanabalan, Singapore)

sovereign equality, will make it easier for even the smallest States of the world to retain their independence.

The small nations of this world which try to cheat on the rules of the Charter are really sowing the seeds of their own destruction.

Technological advances are making the United Nations more relevant each day. The world is shrinking at a pace unprecedented in the history of man. Nations that were once separated by mountains and oceans can now look squarely into each other's eyes. Tremendous developments in telecommunications and computer technology have made this possible.

In July this year, almost one and a half billion people or one quarter of this globe's population simultaneously watched a live concert held to raise aid for Africa. On this shrinking globe, where there are massive movements of peoples and goods every day, a political disturbance in Asia could lead to bombs being placed on aircraft in Canada; a new and frightening disease afflicting North America could be carried to the opposite side of the globe within twenty-four hours.

We fear that the international institutions of today are unable to cope with the new networks and patterns of interdependence that are evolving each day.

It is no longer accurate to say that we belong to the same planet. The old cliché that the world is a global village is more true today than ever before. Throughout history village communities have tended to be stable and enduring. People do care about their own neighbourhoods. They adopt careful and responsible positions on issues directly affecting them.

In this shrinking global village it is inevitable that nations will eventually view global issues more responsibly when they see the direct implications for themselves. That day will come.

(Mr. Dhanabalan, Singapore)

We could help to expedite it by transforming this Assembly and perhaps the Security Council into a village council. This is not a frivolous or purely rhetorical suggestion.

In village meetings it is sometimes useful to let off steam. The United Nations has performed this function admirably. Countless small wars have been avoided because some wise leaders have transported their anger and the anger of their populations to the hall of this General Assembly, allowing it to explode in this hall, and thus bringing a catharsis to their populations and reducing the impulse towards war. No other global institution can perform this thankless task.

Too much anger and rhetoric, however, can poison the atmosphere. This too has happened in the United Nations. This institution is being overcome by the fumes of its own rhetoric. We are not the first to make this observation. In June this year, several former Presidents of the United Nations General Assembly met under the able chairmanship of Ambassador Paul Lusaka in New York to discuss the state of the United Nations. I commend their report to you.

Their prescriptions were many. The United Nations Secretariat needs tight management. In the debates, consensus building should be promoted. The number and the length of United Nations resolutions should be reduced. Every effort should be made to eliminate agenda items which are no longer relevant. Meetings should start on time.

If all these recommendations were adopted, the world would pay greater heed to the deliberations of this body and the important resolutions adopted each year.

If we, the smaller nation Members of the United Nations, can continue to steer a wise and careful course between the two super-Powers, if we can continue to reaffirm our commitment, both in word and deed, to the United Nations Charter, and if we can gradually cleanse the deliberations of this body of empty rhetoric and

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hosturing, then I am confident that when we reach port in the 21st century, the United Nations will continue to be relevant.

Singapore, as one of the smallest member States of the United Nations, is solemnly dedicated to the task of moving the United Nations into the 21st century, and we begin by repledging our commitment, both in word and in deed, to the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter.

Mr. RAMIREZ OCAMPO (Colombia) (interpretation from Spanish): At the outset allow me to express Colombia's grief at the tragedy in Mexico. We wish to restate our solidarity with that fraternal people. Together with the Latin American Group we shall be sponsoring a draft resolution associating the United Nations with the efforts to deal with the disastrous events in that country.

My country owes a great deal to Spain, as does mankind as a whole, which thanks to that country was enriched by the meeting of two major cultures five centuries ago.

From the ancient times of Suarez and Vitoria, Spain was the founder of the law of nations. It is significant that the presidency of this fortieth session of the United Nations General Assembly has been entrusted to one of its experienced diplomats, skilled in dealing with its items. I wish to convey to Mr. de Piniés the congratulations of the delegation I have the honour to head, with our wishes that his work will be as fruitful and meaningful as the anniversary we are commemorating this year.

Mr. Perez de Cuellar, an illustrious Latin American and son of a brother country with which we maintain close links of friendship, conducts the work of our Organization with a skill and even-handedness acknowledged by us all. His report will be a helpful guide in our discussions.

This forum has been the stage from which, during four decades, men of all races and ideologies, who have built the contemporary world, have expressed their thinking and the will of their people in the difficult times of the age in which we are living. We have come here today to pay a tribute to what it represents as a symbol of men's will to live in peace with others.

(Mr. Ramirez Ocampo, Colombia)

We must remind those who take a disdainful and sceptical view of the importance of the United Nations that it constitutes the best barrier against final destruction: a place for dialogue and rational means of ironing out, on an equal footing, differences that might appear to be impossible to overcome.

We wish to honour the memories of the United States President, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, and the British Prime Minister, Sir Winston Churchill, who both expressed in the Declaration of the Atlantic their belief that "the disarmament of the aggressor nations was essential until it was possible to come to establish a wide and permanent system of general safety".

That statement bore in it the seed of our Organization which later bore positive fruits for humanity. Its policy served to smother the embers left behind by the barbarism of the world wars; because this is where we strive to combat the war and destruction that have always been the harvest of the senselessness of the human race.

It was the pride of the generation before us to raise the structure of this Organization; and, to our good fortune, it did so with a wide sense of co-operation, of respect for the views of the small countries which, like us, in the daily exercise of a practice that became enshrined in legislation, appealed to law to bring controversies to an end. For the first time in history, our views were sought and we had a right to speak and to vote, in order to lay the foundations of a new era. Gone were the days when Powers took authoritarian decisions on the absolute control of peoples and regions.

The Latin American States stoutly defended the regional agencies that had long been at work and, it pleases me to recall, on the initiative of the Colombian delegation attending the San Francisco Conference. the rule of good will in the fulfilment of the obligations and duties of all the members of the new community was included.

(Mr. Ramirez Ocampo, Colombia)

Throughout these 40 years, succeeding Colombian delegations have reaffirmed the spirit of the founders of the United Nations. In that period there has been evidence of antagonistic positions on the means to ensure the primacy of reason over force, of law over arbitrariness, of freedom over all forms of slavery. However, my country has always favoured dialogue as the means to settle differences between opposing positions, considering that it is better for the world to witness the clash of dissenting ideas than that of arms.

The true revolutionary aspect of the system established by the victorious Powers after the Second World War was that it created a machinery accessible to all where the rule of numbers was imposed, that is, decision making through the oldest and most democratic of powers, that of majorities, which best expresses the will of nations.

We were therefore opposed, during the San Francisco Conference, to the inclusion of the veto right in Security Council decisions. Our delegation explained the reasons why Colombia voted against the Yalta formula. It was evident that the voting system proposed would place questions of war and peace in the hands of one of the five Powers, contradicting the principle by which the problems of the international Organization should be resolved by simple majority.

In that regard, former President Alfonso Lopez Pumarejo, the head of our delegation, stated:

"The veto means that the interests of five major Powers shall be subjected to the will of one Power. The result will always be an agreement not to act. This lack of action will cause the Council and the great Powers to lose prestige, and will lead to the decline of the Organization. It is unwise to make future amendment impossible".

We may now be sufficiently mature for the creation of a compulsory international jurisdiction that will lead countries to the peaceful settlement of all their controversies. Thus we should bring more clarity to one of its essential principles: the equality of all States.

The moral strength of the United Nations is based on the fact that in it are represented all the peoples of the world. Thus, no one questions its legitimacy, and no State should impose its law over and above a clearly established order that seeks, by definition, respect and equality.

(Mr. Ramirez Ocampo, Colombia)

Far beyond any selfish considerations, therefore, we must preserve and defend the Organization and the wide range of agencies to which it has given rise, agencies that have brought to many places in the world the succour of their activities to combat hunger and disease, to disseminate knowledge, to protect children, refugees, employment and the environment, and to struggle for development.

A result of this commemorative session must be a strengthening of this moral force so that its beneficial action can, as it has over the past four decades, prevent a conflict between the super-Powers from leading us to disaster.

That is why Colombia belongs to the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries: Our membership has its basis in a historic tradition rooted in our very quest for freedom. Our political beliefs encompass principles advocating the right of all peoples to choose their own path of progress, respect for the self-determination of each country, and pluralistic co-operation preventing confrontations such as those generated by a policy of blocs.

In our view, the time has come to delete all references to "enemy States" from various Articles of the Charter; they constitute a true anachronism in view of the political make-up of the present world, which has overcome the ruins which separated the fighters of the great war.

It is only natural that mankind should be unable to forget the Hiroshima holocaust, except in the beautiful way that that city has chosen to do so: not in a spirit of retaliation or vengeance, but as a living testament to what another nuclear tragedy could bring.

The Charter of the United Nations was drafted with the intention of eliminating the hardships then endured by the human race. We are now experiencing a new wave of attacks against human dignity which have gravely jeopardized that intention in today's world. I speak of terrorism, whose defiance and destruction

(Mr. Ramirez Ocampo, Colombia)

daily claim a greater number of innocent victims all over the world. States must take more effective action to fight this crime, which claims political aspects. The international community cannot shirk the determination of Member States to impose sanctions against those harbouring movements which commit such reprehensible acts as the kidnapping of the daughter of President Duarte of El Salvador.

This new kind of warfare - so appropriately called the "dirty war" because of its cowardice and unfairness - is a greater scourge upon mankind than conventional warfare itself. While our Organization has begun consideration of this subject - as a fitting homage to the anniversary we are commemorating - we should undertake to sign a convention against terrorism.

We were surprised to note recently that developed countries refrained, on the basis of the questionable argument of its cost, from supporting the Secretary-General's proposal to call a meeting of plenipotentiaries to deal with the subject of drug trafficking. We wish to place on record that our position in this matter is to support any initiative towards that end, for this traffic is a threat to the integrity of mankind.

Colombia reiterates its decision to combat this scourge. In fact, we are doing so together with many other countries, and with all of our neighbours. At the recent meeting of Foreign Ministers of the Andean Group - whose members are Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela - we agreed to work on a multilateral agreement to supplement existing bilateral agreements, which will bear the name of our former Minister of Justice, Rodrigo Lara Bonilla, who was infamously murdered for his struggle against drug trafficking. We intend in this way to strengthen international action against the narcotics trade.

(Mr. Ramirez Ocampo, Colombia)

We stress the thesis that the limitation of conventional weapons is essential for developing countries, since it is with such weapons that they fight both at the domestic level and among one another. It is time for the international community to confront this question, which involves so many vested interests. Thus, we have raised the question several times at the Organization of American States, but we consider that this is not an exclusively regional subject.

Clearly, we must express our best wishes for the success of the Geneva talks on the implementation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and for the achievement of new agreements which will enable mankind to live in the certainty that this fragile voyager in space - Earth - will not be annihilated by the demented games of the great Powers.

Moreover, we favour a greater number of denuclearized zones, such as those established in Latin America by the Treaty of Tlatelolco and those proposed for the Indian Ocean, Africa and the Antarctic.

To complete the task of decolonization, the United Nations must bring about the independence of Namibia, with which Colombia reiterates its solidarity. In no way can we acknowledge the government installed by South Africa to inherit its colonialist legacy; in this connection, our Organization has taken decisions guaranteeing the self-determination of the Namibian people. We shall fight all necessary diplomatic battles until freedom and justice are restored in that esteemed African Territory.

A blemish persists on this planet: Racial discrimination is still present in South Africa. The latest events in that country have once again shown the truth about the infamous Pretoria régime, which, in the words of Pope John Paul II, undermines the entire human race.

(Mr. Ramirez Ocampo, Colombia)

We reaffirm the need for both Argentina and Great Britain to return to the negotiating table and resume the dialogue that will enable them to reconcile Argentine sovereignty over the Malvinas Islands with the interests of the islanders.

It pleases us to see that talks between the two Koreas have been resumed, along with exchanges of visits by economic, sporting and Red Cross groups from both countries. We are convinced that the peaceful route of mutual understanding is the only way to come to a satisfactory agreement.

We also express our firm hope that a just and viable solution will be found for the question of Cyprus, in conformity with United Nations resolutions; we renew our support for the mission undertaken by the Secretary-General in this connection.

It was 10 years ago in this very Assembly that Colombia first stated its position with regard to the rights of equatorial States such as ours in the synchronous geostationary orbit. Since then, we have participated intensively in the appropriate forums to obtain universal acceptance of our theses, based on an assertion of our sovereignty and on the search for equity in the framework of a new body of space law, which was inaugurated only in 1957, with the launching of the first SPUTNIK and which covers one of the most breath-taking adventures of twentieth-century man.

Colombia looks forward to an open door on active and equitable international co-operation, taking into account the rights of developing countries and the special geographical location of the equatorial nations.*

* The President returned to the Chair.

(Mr. Ramirez Ocampo, Colombia)

The idea is that access to this limited natural resource will serve to close, not widen, the technological gap in space, as one of the elements that must define the new international economic order for which we are striving.

Extremely important decisions have been taken during these 10 years; more specifically, at Vienna at the United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE-82), where the main principles of equity were laid down for the peaceful use of the geostationary orbit in the service of all mankind, and not only of the great space Powers.

At the Conference of Plenipotentiaries of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) in Nairobi, also held in 1982, on the basis of a proposal by Colombia, articles 10 and 33 of the International Telecommunication Convention were modified to permit an equitable, efficient and economic use of the geostationary satellite orbit, taking into account the specific needs of developing countries and the special geographical location of certain countries.

In the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, Colombia, together with Ecuador, Kenya and Indonesia, submitted a draft containing principles designed to permit establishing special set of legal rules for the geostationary orbit, a draft regarded by the developing countries as the basis for negotiations to establish a sui generis legal régime that takes into account the technical, legal and economic aspects of the problem.

Recently, the Conference on the use of the orbit and the planning of the space services that would use it, convened by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) in Geneva, declared itself incompetent to decide on our sovereign rights in the orbit, and it empowered the Secretary-General of that United Nations specialized agency to address the Secretary-General of the United Nations and, through him, the Committee on Outer Space, in order to have this basic question analysed and defined.

(Mr. Ramirez Ocampo, Colombia)

We have thus entered a new stage in which the United Nations will be able to confirm, as in the case of the law of the sea, its capacity to reassert the sovereignty of countries occupying a specific geographical location.

In recent years we have helplessly witnessed a process of deterioration in multilateral co-operation as a result of the growing preference of States for bilateral relationships from which they expect to obtain political and even economic dividends. Multilateralism is the most appropriate and fair mechanism for disseminating the products of generosity and goodwill to the neediest countries, without any form of conditions or discrimination.

There has been an unfortunate weakening of some United Nations agencies that have rendered invaluable services to humanity in the past as a result of the application by many developed countries of the criterion of zero growth in their contributions to those agencies. That has forced the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), for example, drastically to reduce the World Food Programme (WFP), at the very time when the entire world is witness to one of the most dreadful famines ever experienced. We should perhaps follow the example of those young singers who have placed themselves at the service of this cause and for whom compassion has no colour or political slogans.

International trade is the outstanding means of co-operation through which wealth and resources could be more efficiently distributed. Multilateral action co-ordinated through agencies such as the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), and mechanisms such as the Generalized System of Preferences, should provide us with the international economic environment needed for economic development.

It is essential to halt the alarming deterioration in the terms of trade of developing countries - mainly the result of the fall in real prices of their commodities, many of which have fallen to levels never before seen in this century.

(Mr. Ramirez Ocampo, Colombia)

We must do away with the protectionism that is spreading to all corners of the world, found especially in the industrialized countries which have now embarked on the harshest of trade wars - as was recognized only yesterday by the Ministers of Finance of the five most developed countries - without considering the consequences for the world economy, and above all for third world countries.

The United Nations cannot play a secondary role nor act after the fact in conflicts arising as a result of a lack of solutions for underdevelopment and poverty. The United Nations cannot ignore the surreptitious moves to nullify measures to enable us to come closer to a new international economic order, as for example in the case of the various Decades for Development, the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States, or UNCTAD resolutions.

The same powers granted to it for the very effective struggle against colonialism must be extended to regulate the machinery and practices now used to manipulate the great economic differences between States. The same decisive action must be undertaken in the commercial and monetary spheres, which cannot be regarded as an area reserved for the consolidation of inequality and the predominance of power.

We hope that the next round of negotiations of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) will contribute to overcoming the crisis and the inclusion of concepts that will benefit developing countries.

An erroneous view is often no more than a truth stated before its time. When discussing the Treaty of Versailles, Lord Keynes, the representative of the British Government, declared that if Germany was to be squeezed, it was vital that it should not be ruined, and he proposed that President Wilson should launch a vast financial programme to save Europe. The United States Treasury was horrified at the proposal. However, 30 years later, a similar scheme, the Marshall Plan, was accepted, making use too late of a scheme that, if adopted in time, could have prevented the Second World War.

(Mr. Ramirez Ocampo, Colombia)

Authoritative voices have recently been heard proposing something similar for Latin America, where the most serious problem is no doubt the heavy burden of its foreign debt. Let us hope that those voices are heeded in time, and not after a cataclysm has occurred, as the President of Brazil has so eloquently warned us might happen.

Mr. Henry Kissinger, referring to the Latin American debt, has stated that

"... the dialogue with debtor countries should change from the collection of interest to the task of economic development ..."

and that, otherwise,

"... there would sooner or later be a collapse, not only of the foreign debt structure but of the political institutions of Latin America and co-operation in the Western Hemisphere would be seriously jeopardized".

That thinking coincides with some of the guidelines contained in the Cartagena Consensus, of which Colombia, together with 10 other debtor countries of the region, was a promoter and founder. In that document we stated that the foreign debt is an obligation individually contracted by each specific country, and thus it should be treated on a case-by-case basis. However, the problem amounts to more than mere accounting and banking arrangements, because of the social and political effects of the debt servicing and the drastic depressive results of the adjustment processes.

(Mr. Ramirez Ocampo, Colombia)

That is why it is essential that, as proposed by the Presidents of the 11 countries at the recent Bonn summit, the establishment of a political dialogue between debtor and creditor countries in order to overcome this problem in a real and permanent way be no longer delayed.

In the present circumstances, Latin America must pay 800 billion dollars in the next 15 years on account of its debt. This level of servicing will absorb a large portion of domestic savings and the inflow of foreign exchange, to the extent that it is impossible to expect an increase in the per capita income of the 380 million Latin Americans in the next 15 years. That would make development impossible. Therefore Latin America must cease to be an exporter of capital and internal savings.

Colombia, which has always honoured its debt, has already reached a complete agreement with its creditors, guaranteed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which enables it to obtain fresh resources destined for major productive projects, such as the exploitation of our large fields of coal, oil and ferronickel, and for the reactivation of our foreign trade.

We have adopted a process of self-discipline, monitored by the Fund, which has already begun to reactivate our economy.

We are fully aware that the problem of the Latin American foreign debt remains and that the arrangements made so far through tremendous effort on the part of some countries are just temporary solutions. As indicated by the President of Colombia, Belisario Betancur, the debt bomb has not yet been deactivated.

The countries of the region cannot commit their income from exports beyond the levels required for their productive activity and for the gradual improvement of the living standards of their peoples.

Throughout this year Colombia, together with Mexico, Panama and Venezuela, the other members of the Contadora Group, has continued to work intensively and to

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offer its co-operation to the Central American countries to bring about the signing of the Contadora Act on Peace and Co-operation. The difficulties that have arisen in the negotiations sponsored by the Group have not been serious enough to overcome the craving for peace, but they have caused delay in reaching agreement.

We regret the recent incidents along the border between Costa Rica and Nicaragua and between the latter and Honduras, which indicate the need to expedite the process of negotiation and to maintain channels of communication between the countries so as to overcome problems through dialogue. The Contadora Group has reiterated its willingness to provide its co-operation and good offices in the search for permanent solutions to this type of incident, which hampers the good relations that should exist between States.

The Contadora Group has had the support and admiration of the Latin American Governments, and, in general, the community of nations. I must highlight here the important event that took place in our Cartagena de Indias on 24 and 25 August last when the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Contadora Group met with their colleagues from Argentina, Brazil, Peru and Uruguay, who had established themselves as a support group in Lima, to consider the working modalities that they could offer the Contadora Group.

This is the clearest proof of the political will of Latin America and of its desire and ability to devise a strategy of its own for resolving regional problems. That meeting gave evidence of Latin America's solidarity with the countries of Central America and its concern over the Central American crisis. It was decided to encourage the rapid completion of the negotiation process under way, since that crisis necessarily affects the future of our hemisphere. The meeting constituted a positive and unquestionable reinforcement of the work of the Contadora Group.

(Mr. Ramirez Ocampo, Colombia)

The eight Foreign Ministers agreed on the urgent need to tackle actual and potential conflicts and acknowledged that these have their origin in social and economic imbalances and the structures that restrict the freedom of speech and the participation of the people in true political processes that reflect the essential expectations of every society.

The response to the present economic situation in Central America has had as one of its most positive elements the participation of the European Economic Community (EEC). This example of international co-operation fosters our hopes and encourages the negotiating effort to which we are committed. This coming November, a new meeting of the Community will take place in Luxembourg with the participation of the Foreign Ministers of Central America and the Contadora Group. At that meeting the Community will formally demonstrate its support for the cause of peace by specific agreements aimed at ensuring the economic development of Central America.

We are battling against time. Thus, on 12 and 13 September last, at the meeting held in Panama with the Foreign Ministers of Central America, the Contadora Group delivered the final draft of the Act, which included the observations made by the Central American Governments on the text of 7 September 1984, which was submitted to the last session of the General Assembly. This exemplary legal instrument sets the basis for peaceful coexistence and encompasses comprehensive agreements which are a result of the consensus of the Governments of the isthmus.

Aware of the deterioration of the regional situation, we agreed to convene a final meeting of plenipotentiaries for 7 October to discuss, during a 45-day term that may not be extended, only those aspects of the Act that are pending in relation to the control and reduction of arms, the implementation and follow-up mechanisms in matters of politics and security, and military manoeuvres, and to negotiate the operational aspects essential to the fulfilment of the commitments entered into.

(Mr. Ramirez Ocampo, Colombia)

The Foreign Ministers of Central America also agreed that any incidents that might occur in the region should not be the subject of negotiation by the plenipotentiaries or condition the holding of the meeting, in order to guarantee its effectiveness.

Thus, we expect that once this stage of the negotiations is completed we shall be able to sign the Contadora Act in a joint Foreign Ministers conference. Regarding our work during the past year, we shall submit our report to the Secretary-General in keeping with the resolution adopted by the General Assembly at its last session.

We wish to reiterate in this forum today our call to countries with interests in the region to contribute, with understanding of and respect for the standards of international law and the self-determination of peoples, to the consolidation of peace, freedom and development, the ultimate goals of our efforts. As stated by the President of Colombia, Belisario Betancur,

"we seek in Central America countries that realize their own being in a peace that is more arduous than war itself."

This is why it is encouraging to note that the democratic processes in our hemisphere have expressed themselves in a movement towards pluralistic societies characterized by participation in the voting process and free election of their Governments. This process has gained force during the current year and is in total agreement with the free political processes that have been practised by Colombia for many years and have served as a means of expressing the differences and tensions characteristic of every society in evolution.

A great pontiff of the Church taught us that

"Man possesses an intrinsic dignity through which he is able to discover the marvellous order that rules over the forces of nature and forge the tools with which to master those same forces and place them at his service."

(Mr. Ramirez Ocampo, Colombia)

Thus, true progress must be understood as progress aimed at the moral and material refinement of all men, since it consists not only in the production of larger quantities of material goods but also in the qualitative growth which makes society more equitable and more responsive to the total well-being of its members.

That is our great responsibility and, 40 years after having accepted it, we have to ask ourselves if we have been equal to such a challenge. Let us then become fully involved in the struggle to offer all peoples of the earth a safer and better future, when we hope all men will be brothers.

AGENDA ITEM 122 (continued)

SCALE OF ASSESSMENTS FOR THE APPORTIONMENT OF THE EXPENSES OF THE UNITED NATIONS
(A/40/645/Add.1)

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): Before concluding the meeting, I should like to inform the Assembly that my attention has been drawn to document A/40/645/Add.1, which contains a letter addressed to me by the Secretary-General informing me that, since the issuance of his last communication dated 17 September 1985, Mauritania has made the necessary payment to reduce its arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter.

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of this information?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 1.25 p.m.

