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PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE FIFTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 22 September 1986, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. CHOUDHURY (Bangladesh)

later: Mr. THOMPSON (Fiji)
(Vice-President)

- Address by Mrs. Corazon C. Aquino, President of the Republic of the Philippines
- General debate [9] (continued)

Statements were made by:

Mr. Wagner-Tizon (Peru)
Mr. Amega (Togo)
Address by Dr. Gro Harlem Brundtland, Prime Minister
of the Kingdom of Norway
Mr. Dhanabalan (Singapore)
Mr. Mathiesen (Iceland)
Mr. Caputo (Argentina)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.45 p.m.

ADDRESS BY MRS. CORAZON C. AQUINO, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES

The PRESIDENT: This afternoon the Assembly will first hear an address by the President of the Republic of the Philippines.

Mrs. Corazon Aquino, President of the Republic of the Philippines, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations General Assembly the President of the Republic of the Philippines, Her Excellency Mrs. Corazon Aquino, and to invite her to address the Assembly.

President AQUINO: It is the irony of the United Nations that so many new leaders have stepped to this rostrum, as I have today, with mixed feelings. Yes, we took power to implement so many of the ideals that the United Nations stands for. We have restored human rights and liberated our people from the oppression and corruption of a Government that had long since lost their support. Yet, like so many other leaders before me, I am obliged to say that we did that by ourselves. It was the Filipino people alone who braved intimidation and cheating at the polls and, when their victory was stolen from them, turned out into the streets by the million to reclaim and secure it.

Indeed, as our country bled at the hands of a Government that had lost all respect for the rights of our people, its leader's wife came to this rostrum to call piously for a new human order - this when thousands of Filipinos were political prisoners. And in the final months of the dictatorship international solidarity was expressed by ordinary people everywhere, who sat in front of their television sets and watched and cheered our revolution.

In this year of all years, when in so many parts of the world we see people struggling to establish their human rights, I believe one must be frank to be

(President Aquino)

relevant. I mean to use this occasion to share with oppressed people everywhere my own experience of how change is brought about.

My basic conclusion can be stated very simply: to be free one can, as a people, effectively appeal to international standards of human rights set by others, such as the United Nations. Yet, in the end, to vindicate those rights, to achieve freedom, one is on one's own.

The United Nations has stayed out of the internal affairs of nations. Its Charter orders that that should be so. Obviously this is wise in so far as it prevents abuse of the sovereign independence of nations. Yet it has also been an invitation to hypocrisy. The value of this Assembly should rest on us, its members, practising what we preach. To my mind, that requires both realism and concern when we address the affairs of others, realism in that we should not promise more than we can deliver.

(President Aquino)

We should acknowledge what the Filipino people have learned: there is no substitute for action by an oppressed people themselves. But there should be concern about allowing this Hall to be abused by those who claim one standard of behaviour and behave according to another back home. Do not misunderstand me. The United Nations should never be an exclusive club for one ideological model, for that would defeat its primary purpose, to keep peace in an imperfect world.

There are many ways to run a country, but there is only one way to treat people: with decency and respect for their uniqueness as individuals. Only if those of us who have the responsibility of leadership respect our fellows and their essential right to find fulfilment in their lives can we hold our heads high here at the United Nations.

The United Nations would lose all purpose if it were to set about judging one political system against another. Yet, equally, if the United Nations does not notice how governments treat people, it is nothing. I need only go back to the rousing words of the United Nations Charter. The United Nations is about people. If it fails them, can it be any better than its most corrupt and oppressive Member State? Even diplomacy, which is pre-eminently about States, cannot ignore, without peril or embarrassment, how States treat their people.

And so, as the leader of a country which has this year enjoyed the sweet taste of freedom, again let me reconfirm our support for what the United Nations at its best stands for: the peace, freedom, dignity and partnership of mankind. But let me also at the same time serve warning to those denied freedom and dignity: do not look beyond yourselves to find them.

We in the Philippines were strengthened in our resolve by knowing that people around the world shared our struggle. On their televisions and in their newspapers, they followed our drama. Further, we know that the rights we fought

(President Aquino)

for are universally sought after; they are enshrined - not entombed, mind you - in the United Nations Covenants. The importance of such international support should never be dismissed. It helped us knowing we were not alone.

But even when the authors of the United Nations Charter stopped short of endorsing any right of interference in any nation's internal affairs, they were responding to more than the jealous realities of intergovernmental relations. Rather, they were reflecting a more lasting truth about how man prefers to order his life on this planet.

People must be masters of their own fate. The Filipino people have known and been grateful for liberation at the hands of others: in 1898, a liberation that was swiftly betrayed, and in 1946, one which we promptly wasted. Yet now, having known the exhilaration of throwing off our bonds ourselves, I think every Filipino would agree there is only one real liberation.

Only a people, already sovereign in their hearts and deeds, can win and keep their independence and freedom. This is not a pessimistic conclusion because, additionally, I believe that no government can indefinitely resist a people united against it. It may have the guns, the goons and the gold. Yet, as we found in the Philippines, there is no government that can indefinitely resist a people determined to be free.

And so, while the United Nations may not intervene to bring the sovereignty and freedom enjoyed by nations to the peoples who are denied them, it should carefully avoid becoming an unwitting partner of their oppressors.

I turn now specifically to the great moral issue that confronts this General Assembly: the situation in South Africa. To Nelson Mandela and his wife, Winnie, and all South Africans, my prayers are with you. Mr. Mandela's long incarceration in prison, separated from his wife and family, inevitably reminds me of the imprisonment of my own husband, Ninoy Aquino.

(President Aquino)

The lesson in my country and so many other places such as Argentina, whose President Alfonsin recently visited Manila, is that every act of repression reaps its final return. In the end, human values cannot be held down. They could not be in Argentina; they could not be in the Philippines. They will not be in South Africa.

It is right that we all play our part in creating the environment for change in South Africa. The Philippines will support any action the international community takes to hasten the advent of peace and freedom in South Africa and to show solidarity with its people. But it would help the case a great deal if this forum were to take equal note and action against oppression wherever it occurs, wherever people are abused and degraded, be it blatantly or ostensibly in their own name. I do not believe that the force of moral action is diminished by being spread wherever it is needed. It is strengthened by exercise and weakened by neglect.

Let me say directly to the millions of victims of apartheid in South Africa, to the families of those who have given their lives: do not waiver in your unity; look only to your own strength and determination.

If there is one tactic that served us above all others in our movement for freedom, it was espousing a programme of action that kept us united. In our case, this meant the use of non-violence and constant vigilance against the provocation of the authorities. Often, I was urged to go further: to call for a more confrontational line. But my constant concern was to keep the wide coalition of forces that backed our campaign together. Often, I disappointed some of my supporters by approving only limited actions against the Government. Yet it was the rock-like unity of the opposition and the enormous support it enjoyed that overwhelmed the Government. That meant not going faster than any of our supporters were prepared to go. This allowed us to overcome where more narrow-based opposition challenges had failed to dislodge the dictatorship.

(President Aquino)

Perhaps the United Nations cannot go faster than its most reluctant Member towards its stated goals of peace, freedom and dignity for the peoples of all nations. And perhaps, for its more significant achievement, we should look rather to the peace it has helped preserve, and the co-operation it has fostered, between nations already friends, than to the peace it has failed to keep between nations bent on war. In the same light should we regard the salutary influence of its freedom-practising members in the counsels of the world. Even so have I come to appreciate the achievement of our own regional organization, the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN). ASEAN's faltering steps towards economic co-operation and complementation, in the name of peace and stability in the region, are meant to serve and express the abiding peace and amity among its members that were there from the start.

(President Aquino)

To nurture a vigorous peace wherever it abides and strengthen long-standing friendships: perhaps this is all that it lies in the power of international organizations to do.

I have always been a firm advocate of peace. Perhaps it is only the tragedy of conflict that teaches us the true value of peace. Let us who are the loyal friends of peace continue to resist the temptation to exploit the conflicts of our neighbours. Those of us in ASEAN understand the crucial importance of these goals. Each of our countries has passed through periods of crisis when great rifts of weakness have appeared, yet none of the others, for all our differences in political systems and beliefs, has exploited the occasion; on the contrary, they have risen to it with encouraging expressions of sympathy and offers of help and mediation, ever respectful of the integrity of their tragic neighbour.

And so my message today is an effort to bring this mission of the United Nations into sharper focus to the end that there shall be no more disappointments over unwarranted expectations. There will be no more wasted hopes on the part of those who must save their strength for the long and difficult struggle for peace and freedom. There will be, on the other hand, a clearer recognition by the United Nations of its irreducible commitments and values, a more jealous regard for their integrity and, for that reason, perhaps, a surer prospect of achieving the United Nations goals of peace, freedom, dignity and the partnership of mankind.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of the Philippines for the important statement she has just made.

Mrs. Corazon Aquino, President of the Republic of the Philippines, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

AGENDA ITEM 9 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. WAGNER TIZON (Peru) (interpretation from Spanish): In extending to you, Sir, the greetings of the Government and people of Peru, I have to say how pleased we are that a representative of the third world is presiding over this session of the General Assembly, at a time when the international atmosphere is rife with signs of regression. I am convinced that, imbued with the valiant tradition of autonomy to which Bangladesh has been faithful since its dramatic attainment of independence, you will be able to guide the deliberations of this forum in the best and most just way.

I should also like to express my country's appreciation of the firm yet gentle guidance given to this Assembly during its historic fortieth session by the experienced Spanish diplomat, Ambassador Jaime de Piniés.

I do not believe that the fact of being a compatriot and, more than a colleague, a disciple, of our Secretary-General should inhibit me from associating Peru with the warm tributes paid to him by all the Members of the United Nations for his far-reaching, sustained efforts on behalf of international peace, security and development. For five years now a good part of our common hopes have been reposed in him and he has discharged that enormous responsibility not only with wisdom and intelligence but also with noteworthy distinction, in circumstances that have frequently been adverse.

(Mr. Wagner Tizon, Peru)

From the balance sheet of statements made by some hundred Heads of State on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations at the last General Assembly, a shared vision of disturbing trends at the international level emerges. On that occasion President Alan García of Peru speaking from this same rostrum, drew the international community's attention to the existence of problems of exceptional seriousness, such as the foreign debt, the arms race, drugs trafficking and terrorism, which threaten the survival of States and undermine the very basis of world coexistence, and which are certainly a reflection of the present unjust international order, of the deterioration of the system of multilateral co-operation and its growing replacement by power politics.

The year gone by reveals the worsening of such problems, and the consequent need to insist that they be dealt with and to issue a call for action. Peru sees a new turn of events in which confrontation between the blocs of world power has ceased to be exclusively strategic and military, but increasingly technological in nature and directly and more deeply related to the economic system of world domination.

The big nations, because of the demands of that confrontation, encourage expenditures and large deficits in their own economies, which, in the last analysis, need to be financed by any means possible, thus increasing the cost of money and making the economic system that they control function as a giant suction mechanism.

In this new model of domination, based on an unproductive creditor mentality through rates of interest, the way in which loans are allocated and the predominance of a national currency as the basis of international liquidity are at the root of the burgeoning debt and of the absurd situation in which the developing world is financing the struggle between the big Powers for international power at the cost of the poverty of our peoples.

(Mr. Wagner Tizon, Peru)

Given this situation, the Peruvian Government took a historic decision, the validity of which has asserted itself increasingly on the international field, where no one doubts that it is not right to satisfy transnational capital with the sacrifice of our peoples and that it is irrational to enter into new loans only to pay prior interest and debts.

The Peruvian Government has established the principle that, as we are paid for our exports and labour, thus shall we pay our debt without sacrificing the development and basic needs of our people, and in a measure of sovereign reaffirmation we set a ceiling of 10 per cent of our export income for debt-servicing. Thus we have been able to implement an independent and national economic policy which has made it possible for us to avoid a decline in the value of our currency, to reduce inflation, to lower interest rates, to reactivate the economy and employment, and to stimulate social expenditure by the State.

This decision has been answered by the International Monetary Fund, which declared Peru ineligible for new credits from that institution. The fact that the Monetary Fund continues to use anachronistic criteria to apply that measure is a demonstration of its persistence in ignoring the seriousness of the problem of the foreign debt.

On the other hand, the international community, fully aware of the explosive political nature of the problem, has chosen to inscribe the question of the foreign debt crisis and development on the agenda of the General Assembly, thus recognizing the competence of the United Nations to seek a just, effective and lasting solution.

The debt today characterizes the historic stage when the transnational creditors and seeking to lead our countries towards extreme dependence, preventing them not only from defining the priorities of their development processes, but also from drawing up their own political plans.

(Mr. Wagner Tizon, Peru)

The foreign debt is therefore a retrograde step in the evolution of international relations because it tends to neutralize the State in its very essence.

This situation obliges us to make a profoundly political assessment of the duty of the United Nations to oversee the future of the international community and to stem a trend which is so anarchic as to be a destructive element in the very system of international relations.

The warning that the President of Peru sounded a year ago on the dangerous threat that drugs trafficking poses to contemporary civilization and the primary responsibility of the consumer countries was welcomed and confirmed by leaders the world over, and has become a central subject of national debate and a central subject in the political life of world consumer centres. Convinced that in order to confront this scourge, joint action is necessary, Peru has entered into bilateral agreements with neighbouring countries and at the Andean level we have promoted and signed the Rodrigo Lara Bonilla Convention, which bears the name of the Colombian minister, martyr in the struggle against drugs trafficking and which is open to accession by other Latin American countries.

Furthermore, my country carried out the so-called Cóndor Operations, which struck a harsh blow at drugs traffickers by destroying sophisticated clandestine laboratories, landing strips, and by capturing planes and boats as well as modern weaponry in order to fulfil the commitment assumed by my country towards the youth of the world.

With the moral authority conferred upon us by these actions, we urge the adoption of effective measures in the great consumer centres, as demand in those centres is primarily responsible for the existence of the narcotics traffic in accordance with the old economic law that demand creates its own supply.

(Mr. Wagner Tizon, Peru)

In disarmament debates we can see that in this nuclear era our civilization, for the first time in history, is coexisting with the means of its own destruction.

This threat is more imminent today for two reasons. First, because the balance of terror, always precarious but thus far a real balance, is being bypassed in the strategic concepts of the super-Powers, while delays in their arms-control talks have become disconcertingly long.

Secondly, because the planned leap towards the militarization of outer space would not only exponentially expand the nuclear threat and its cost, but in certain sectors is being adduced as an anti-nuclear panacea.

This brings us into an extraordinarily unstable international situation in which disarmament efforts may be frozen altogether, and in which the process of conventional and regional disarmament is also held back.

Peru is not a nuclear country, nor does it wish to become one. Fortunately, Latin America has with great foresight chosen the path of denuclearization. This is why we firmly ask that the super-Powers do their duty towards mankind's future by halting the arms race and dismantling their nuclear arsenals.

This is what mankind wants. This was the appeal made from Harare by the 101 Heads of State of the Non-Aligned Movement. This is the demand of the international community represented in this Assembly, which cannot abandon its right and duty to protect life.

(Mr. Wagner Tizon, Peru)

When President Alan Garcia took the initiative in July last year in sponsoring a regional agreement to limit the procurement of arms, which has already received valuable support from neighbouring countries, and when he announced then, as he also announced two months ago, a unilateral reduction of arms purchases, he was doing no more than to translate into reality in the context of Latin America that which we are seeking from the nuclear Powers - the right to life and development. We want to give a new dimension to defence needs on the basis of new concepts of regional security, based on a system of relations characterized by the dynamics of co-operation and not of conflict, thereby providing what is needed for the well-being of our people.

That is why Peru also offered to be headquarters of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development, which can foster in Latin America a collective regional awareness of those objectives, which are of universal interest.

Terrorism is today another irrational phenomenon, which the international community must tackle with resolve. Our primary obligation must be to reach, within the framework of the United Nations, legally binding agreements clearly dissociating States from terrorist activities, whether overt or covert, and effectively punishing those who promote terrorism. Unless that first goal is achieved, the political objective of the systematic blackmail and destabilization pursued by international terrorism will be promoted whether through contributing to the erosion of democratic societies and their replacement by repressive police States or through the collapse of the international legal order as people take the law into their own hands.

In Peru, which has for some years suffered from the criminal action of terrorism as a misguided tool used to advance alleged social demands, our policy is clear: energetically to combat that armed fanaticism, but within the framework of law and respect for human rights, and if human rights are violated to punish in an

(Mr. Wagner Tizon, Peru)

exemplary manner those responsible, in such a way as to maintain intact our democratic order.

Therefore, it has always been disappointing that some democratic States represented here permit - in a mistaken interpretation of freedom of opinion - expressions of support, however insignificant, for those that have chosen the path of fratricidal violence in a democracy as broad and pluralist as Peru's. This grave legal and moral distortion must be corrected. We urge democratic countries to rectify their legislation, and we urge the international community to adopt clear norms repudiating those absurdly lenient attitudes towards crime and destruction.

I referred to those grave problems because I sincerely believe that they all have alarmingly destructive consequences which no State can confront alone, and because they really amount to a global crisis in international relations resulting in a weakening of the system of multilateral co-operation, a resurgence of power politics, the erosion of the international legal order, a recrudescence of local conflicts and a sharpening of the crisis in North-South relations.

In this context it is clear that the so-called crisis of multilateralism is much more than a crisis of one form of international co-operation. What is at stake is the very validity of the system of co-operation and collective security, the alternative being to have to accept the legitimization of power as an instrument of international politics.

That is why, in the specific context of the United Nations, any reform must strengthen the first of those two options - that is, the Organization's role as the body responsible for promoting peace, security, co-operation and the solution of the problems of development in a framework of responsibility and collective action. In that regard, any reform to improve the efficiency of the United Nations and to make more democratic the taking of decisions can only be welcomed by the international community. But if the Organization's distressing financial problems

(Mr. Wagner Tizon, Peru)

led us into situations that were incompatible with making the system more democratic, we should have no hesitation in choosing a more democratic and independent, but at the same time more austere, system giving no State decision-making power over the Organization's fate on the basis of its economic contribution.

Present conditions demand that international peace and security be strengthened. In the Middle East the continuation of the conflict and the delay in starting a process of negotiations serve only to increase violence. A just and lasting solution, with rights and guarantees for all, can be based only on the merging of three substantive elements: the recovery by the Palestinian people of all its rights, including the right to form its own free and sovereign State; withdrawal from all occupied territories; and recognition of the right of Israel and all the States of the area to live in peace within secure and internationally recognized borders, in accordance with the provisions of General Assembly and Security Council resolutions.

Complying with the principle of non-intervention is a basic obligation of international coexistence and the indispensable partner of the right to self-determination.

We are in favour of an urgent solution in Afghanistan, through the withdrawal of all foreign troops and respect for the independence and non-alignment of the Afghan people. Similarly, we support the immediate withdrawal of foreign occupation forces from Cyprus and its right to sovereignty and territorial integrity. We propose a negotiated political solution in Kampuchea, including the prompt withdrawal of foreign troops and the safeguarding of its national integrity and independence.

In Central America acts of intervention constitute the main obstacle to the peace efforts of the Contadora Group and the Support Group. But Contadora is committed before history to peace in Central America, and its efforts will not

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cease. It is essential to continue to work for the establishment of conditions conducive to peace agreements. It is therefore essential that an end be put to all acts of intervention, coercion and harassment that can rekindle violence and cause an escalation of the conflict.

In the context of that serious problem the Peruvian Government clearly reaffirms its solidarity with the people and Government of Nicaragua with regard to any act of intervention or aggression. We demand an immediate end to the military and paramilitary activities in and against Nicaragua and respect for international legality, as enshrined in the recent advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice.

In the South Atlantic the continuation of the British military presence in the Malvinas and the permanent danger of an escalation of tension make it essential that the negotiations called for by the General Assembly start soon with a view to reaching a definitive solution to the problem, with respect for the inalienable rights of Argentinian sovereignty.

In southern Africa the last battles against colonialism and racism are being waged. The peoples and nations of sisterly Africa must know that not only history is on their side; they also have with them all of us who uphold racial equality and the right to independence and the freedom of peoples.

As an expression of that militant solidarity, the Government of Peru has established diplomatic relations with the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO), which is in the vanguard of the struggle and the legitimate representative of the people of Namibia. Peru's participation in the machinery for action created in Harare bears witness to the fact that we likewise fully join in the commitment made at the eighth Summit Conference of the non-aligned countries to give all the support and help necessary to SWAPO, the liberation movements of South Africa and the front-line States in a struggle in which - however much it may be impeded by selfishness, arrogance and obduracy - victory is now seen on the horizon.

(Mr. Wagner Tizón, Peru)

We are deeply concerned at the negative trend in the international situation. None the less, we are encouraged by the conviction that we are not alone in our struggle. We see ever growing political trends within the industrialized countries against war, the use of force and acts of intervention - in other words, against any type of imperialist action. But the greatest encouragement comes from our own strength, from our peoples, from their indomitable fight for a more just, more free world, from their capacity to sacrifice, to do without, in order to uphold our struggle for economic independence and from our potential for collective action as a factor of social change in international relations.

We, the non-aligned countries, constitute an important force in the present-day world. The fact that the Yalta and Potsdam Agreements did not remain petrified in time, that the cold war did not succeed in dividing the world into rigid zones of influence, that colonialism did not live on in the dreams of the colonizers, that the United Nations ceased to be the exclusive instrument of the Powers is largely thanks to the role played by the Non-Aligned Movement in its 25 years of existence.

The Eighth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, held in Zimbabwe, strengthened this process and reaffirmed the full validity of the Non-Aligned Movement as a valid choice for our peoples in reaffirming their independence and asserting their destiny. It is more necessary than ever before that the non-aligned countries, most of which have experienced a colonial past and which are now confronting an unequal structure of political and economic power, fulfil the historic duty of bolstering our unity and overcoming the problems that stand between our peoples and the better and more just world to which they aspire.

(Mr. Wagner Tizon, Peru)

Peru is fully committed and dedicated to that shared undertaking in brotherly solidarity with all the peoples of the world with whom we share the same devotion to peace, freedom, democracy and justice.

Mr. AMEGA (Togo) (interpretation from French): We come once again to this important rostrum, on the occasion of the forty-first session of the General Assembly, in 1986, which has been proclaimed the International Year of Peace. I wish peace to you, Mr. President, peace to all delegations, peace to all nations, peace on our earth. Catharsis is not needed to recall the dream of mankind that peace will reign among all men and all peoples. Is it not the desire of all that we can extinguish the hotbeds of tension throughout the world? What would be the meaning of the celebration of this International Year of Peace were we to continue to deny the right to development of some and seek to maintain our domination over others, to continue the frenetic arms race? Can our Organization one day fulfil its raison d'être, that is, the maintenance of peace and security in the world? Members will understand my perplexity faced with this desolate theatre that is our world and conscious as I am of being a Ubuesque character in a play in which the stupidity of man prevents him from realizing the world of peace to which he aspires.

Last year, the fortieth anniversary of our Organization aroused great hope of a fresh start in international relations, and the celebration of the International Year of Peace should be considered as a milestone in this renewal, which calls for new thinking about the role of our Organization.

The founding Members, who had witnessed tragedies that sowed death and desolation on earth, gave the maintenance of peace pride of place in the Charter of the Organization to which we all belong.

(Mr. Amega, Togo)

By becoming signatories to the Charter did we not declare that

"We, the peoples of the United Nations, determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind, and to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small"?

By becoming signatories to the Charter did we not declare our faith in the purposes and principles of the Organization? Did we not undertake

"To maintain international peace and security ... to take effective collective measures ... for the suppression of acts of aggression ... and to bring about by peaceful means, and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law, adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations which might lead to a breach of the peace"?

Does the celebration of the International Year of Peace herald the fulfilment of our hopes for the strengthening of peace and mutual trust among nations and the advent of more just and equitable co-operation so that our Organization may fulfil its destiny?

Can the celebration of the International Year of Peace mean that the present hotbeds of tension will be extinguished, that effective negotiations on nuclear disarmament will be resumed, that it will be realized that peace on earth is essential if we are to achieve our common destiny?

This common destiny, Mr. President, is a bond between my country and yours, with which we enjoy close ties of friendship and co-operation. It is no mere coincidence that at the time of the celebration of the International Year of Peace you are presiding over the work of our session. You belong to a country and a continent which are the cradle of an age-old civilization and great religions the

(Mr. Amega, Togo)

essence of which are virtue and peace. Imbued with this philosophy of peace, the corollary of which is love and tolerance, there is absolutely no doubt that you will be able to harmonize any discordant notes that may be heard in guiding our work in harmony towards positive results. It therefore gives my delegation great pleasure to congratulate you on your unanimous election to the presidency of the forty-first session of the General Assembly. We assure you of the readiness of the delegation of Togo to co-operate with you in carrying out your heavy responsibilities.

We have not yet forgotten the outstanding nature of last year's session, on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of our Organization. With his clear thinking, his sense of moderation and his wisdom, combined with his great diplomatic skill, Mr. Jaime de Piniés won the admiration of all for the ability with which he presided over the work of that session. I should like to pay a personal tribute to him as well as to his country.

(Mr. Amega, Togo)

In this year in which we are celebrating the International Year of Peace, no one, I think, could deny the efforts made by the Secretary-General of our Organization, His Excellency Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, to establish peace in the tense regions of our world. The timely initiatives he has always undertaken, which reflect his determination to attain the primary goal of our Organization - the maintenance of international peace and security - as well as his devotion, call for a special tribute, for encouragement and congratulation from my Government and my delegation. Our pleasure at seeing him participate in our work is particularly great since we were deeply disquieted to learn of the brief indisposition that had prevented him from fully assuming his functions. It is our sincere hope that he will regain his full strength so that he may continue the work to which he is devoted as the head of the Secretariat of this Organization.

The peace that we all sincerely hope for through respect for the Charter of the United Nations would be completely meaningless were we to forget that it must help to bring about the full development of man in all aspects of his being.

It seems appropriate therefore to remind ourselves once again of this basic truth by quoting the words of our Secretary-General:

"When we pursue together the ideals and purposes of the Charter, let us be careful not to forget the quality of the world we are seeking to build and the ultimate raison d'être of all our work: the human being as an individual for whom the Declaration of Human Rights recognizes the right to a social and international order so that human rights and fundamental freedoms can be fully respected."

It seems that we have lost sight of the quality of the world in which we want to live as well as our basic raison d'être on this earth. How else can we explain that we have failed to resolve problems such as apartheid in South Africa, the

(Mr. Amega, Togo)

illegal occupation of Namibia, Kampuchea and Afghanistan, the situation in the Middle East, the Iran-Iraq war, the situation in Korea and in Central America, the arms race and the underdevelopment of young nations, among other things, Yes, apartheid must cease in South Africa. Yes, we forget too often that the fundamental raison d'être of all our activities is man.

We too often forget that we signed the Charter of the United Nations or that we acceded to it, and in so doing, we proclaimed

"faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person".

We too often forget that human rights are universal and inherent in the human person and that they cannot vary with colour of skin. For its part, as General Gnassingbe Eyadema, President-Founder of the Rally of the Togolese People and President of the Republic said:

"Togo cannot tolerate the situation of injustice and oppression now prevailing in this region, where a régime unworthy of man and of our era and contrary to any moral code is being maintained by means of extraordinary violence carried out against a population whose wrong is only the colour of their skin."

For that reason the Government of Togo appeals to the whole of the international community to mobilize all its resources to put an end to the despicable apartheid régime. For how long will the international community resign itself to the defiance of South Africa? Everything leads one to believe that this régime will continue to flout the international community as long as it can count on the understanding of some countries that refuse to take action against it. The purpose of United Nations resolutions calling on all States to put an end to diplomatic, military, economic and other relations with the régime of South Africa in order to inflict on South Africa sufficiently meaningful penalties to oblige it

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to give up its inhuman policy of apartheid has never been achieved. The principal partners concerned take shelter behind their constitution and their own national opinion, which, however, has reacted in favour of the abolition of that apartheid policy. The Afrikaner poet Breyten Breytenbach quite rightly summed up the situation when he wrote:

"The apartheid régime only exists because the world allows it to exist. It flourishes, it is accepted, encouraged, fed, armed, and saved if necessary, because it benefits South Africa's trading partners and investors."

It is comforting, however, to note that the international community has stepped up its political and economic pressure on the racist régime. That pressure must be increased and comprehensive mandatory sanctions must be implemented. We salute the Foreign Affairs Committee of the United States Senate which, at the beginning of August, almost unanimously approved the imposition of economic sanctions against the apartheid régime in South Africa, following the trade embargo already adopted by the House of Representatives.

The commercial restrictions decided on against the apartheid régime by Canada, the Scandinavian countries, the countries of the European Economic Community and others should be encouraged, so that they may attain their goal.

We praise those Governments for their determination and for the measures they have taken. The courageous position of the front-line States and of some Commonwealth States must also be commended. Those measures should be increased following the introduction by the Pretoria Government of further measures to strengthen the emergency law imposed on 12 June and aimed at giving the heads of the local police forces enormous powers, such as the power to arrest anti-apartheid militants, to impose curfews in black zones, to prohibit political activities, and to impose restrictions on freedom of the press.

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It is time that States that have refused to adopt meaningful sanctions against South Africa reacted in a similar manner. It is time for the States that continue to maintain direct or indirect relations with the racist régime of Pretoria to understand that it is they who support and encourage apartheid, with no respect for the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, notwithstanding the dignity of the human person in South Africa. It is time for South Africa to understand that apartheid is going through its death throes and that measures must be taken immediately to bring about its elimination through peaceful means. Otherwise - without wishing to be a prophet of doom - the new multiracial, egalitarian society called for by the blacks will be writ in blood.

Such is the grim conclusion reached by Sir Shridath Ramphal, Secretary-General of the Commonwealth, when he stated at the latest Paris conference on sanctions against South Africa:

"... in 10 years, things have changed. Apartheid must cease ... and it will cease - if necessary by means of a bloody struggle whose cost in human lives will be reckoned in millions of victims, whose agony will have repercussions in every corner of our multiracial world."

No individual, no people can indefinitely put up with the tyranny of another individual or another people. No people can bear passive witness to its own destruction.

History is full of edifying examples, and a number of countries which now tacitly or openly protect the racist régime of Pretoria should recall the struggle of their own peoples to regain their rights.

Let us wake up and courageously take proper steps to bring about the peaceful advent of a multiracial, egalitarian society, before it is too late. Let us think more deeply about our reason for being on this earth and the purpose of our

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existence, and we will understand the need to rid ourselves of the instincts to accumulate and to dominate whereby we deny the blacks in South Africa their human rights.

Let us not forget the words of President Eyadema:

"What we must remember is the need for the whole of humanity to guarantee humane living conditions for all individuals."

Let us thus make an effort to guarantee to all South Africans, whether white, black, Coloured or Indian, those humane living conditions by tolling the knell for the odious practice of apartheid. For its part, Africa is ready to face its responsibilities, not by accepting reform, modernization or any mere cosmetic change of apartheid, but its total destruction. As was proclaimed by Oliver Tambo, the courageous African National Congress of South Africa (ANC) militant:

"We must make the South African régime ungovernable and apartheid impracticable."

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Still on the subject of southern Africa, the racist régime of Pretoria continues to maintain its domination over the people of Namibia. In order to perpetuate its illegal occupation of Namibia through a so-called internal solution, the South Africa Government has increased and is increasing the obstacles it has placed in the way of the implementation of Security Council resolution 435 (1978) containing the United Nations plan for that Territory's independence. Further, it has continued its acts of armed intervention against the front-line countries, with the encouragement of the supporters of the rebel groups that harass those States. As in the case of apartheid, it is essential that pressures be brought to bear on the Pretoria Government to force it to abandon this latest neocolonialist manoeuvre of an interim government and to recognize that the only valid course is independence granted under resolution 435 (1978), free of any linkage with the withdrawal of the Cuban troops from Angola. In this International Year of Peace we must hope for the advent of an independent Namibia in which the Namibians can live in peace.

It is fitting to recall in this connection operative paragraphs 1 and 6 of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, which state:

"1. The subjection of peoples to alien subjugation, domination and exploitation constitutes a denial of fundamental human rights, is contrary to the Charter of the United Nations and is an impediment to the promotion of world peace and co-operation.

"6. Any attempt aimed at the partial or total disruption of the national unity and the territorial integrity of a country is incompatible with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations."

(resolution 1514 (XV))

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Those provisions have their basis in the Charter of the United Nations itself, Article 1, paragraph 2, of which states that one of the purposes of the United Nations is

"To develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, and to take other appropriate measures to strengthen universal peace."

A review of some of the provisions of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples and of the United Nations Charter is necessary in order to highlight once again the contradiction that exists between the commitment of States to the United Nations and the actual comportment of those States. Everywhere in the world we are witnessing acts of violence, whereas all our actions should be bent towards the search for peace, to such an extent that we cannot help but wonder whether people have not lost sight of the provisions of the Charter, bewitched by the sway of power, whose corollaries are hatred, intolerance and a will to dominate. Contempt for human rights unfortunately prevails throughout the world - in Namibia, in Chad, in Western Sahara, in Kampuchea, in Afghanistan, in the Middle East, in Korea, in Central America.

More than ever before, the problem of the right of peoples to self-determination exists in Namibia, a Territory that should have been independent long ago. All peace-loving States, all States for whom human rights and the rights of peoples have any meaning at all, should join efforts to see that Security Council resolution 435 (1978) is finally implemented to bring about the self-determination of the Namibian people and their independence.

In Chad, part of that country's territory is still under foreign domination. The Government of Togo, which welcomes the fact that most of the opposition groups have rallied to the legal Government in N'Djamena, hopes that soon all the people of Chad will regain control over the whole of their territory within internationally

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recognized borders so that peace and concord can finally be reestablished. That is our wish for that suffering people in this International Year of Peace.

Still in Africa, the Sahraoui people are seeking self-determination. Their right to self-determination has been recognized by all, and the adoption of resolutions to that end by the United Nations General Assembly and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) can only speed up the process of self-determination. My Government welcomes the efforts being made by the former Chairman of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), Mr. Abdou Diouf, and by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, to implement the provisions of those resolutions. It appeals to the parties concerned to return to negotiations under conditions appropriate to reaching a peaceful solution to that conflict.

Two other peoples are victims of the violation of their rights and the principles of the Charter: the peoples of Kampuchea and of Afghanistan. My country has followed with great interest the development of the situation in Kampuchea. By heroically continuing their struggle to resist the impressive forces deployed by the foreign occupying troops, the Kampuchean people have given us proof of their staunch determination to live in freedom and to recover the peace wrested from them. It is that determination for peace that explains the creation of the tripartite coalition led by Prince Sihanouk for the purpose of exploring new means of prevailing upon the occupying Power to withdraw and thereby put an end to an occupation that flouts international law and the principles of the Charter. As a country of peace and dialogue, Togo has always hoped for a speedy resolution of the problem of Kampuchea. Accordingly, it has always supported the wise proposals of the General Assembly and of Prince Sihanouk, which seek merely bring about respect for the principles of the Charter in order that the peace to which the Kampuchean people are entitled can be reestablished. Determined to regain that

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lost peace, the Kampuchean people has made yet another proposal, consisting of 8 points, formulating the conditions necessary to a peaceful settlement of the problem. That proposal - and we cannot overemphasize this - is inspired by the sincere desire of the people and coalition Government of Kampuchea led by Prince Sihanouk - to whom we pay a resounding tribute for his deep sense of humanity - to find a political solution to the problem. The proposal is based on the principles of our Organization and has been reflected in the relevant resolutions adopted by the General Assembly in recent years.

The Government and people of Togo would like to express their support for the latest proposal of the Kampuchean people and hopes that it will meet with a favourable response so that peace can return to that region in this year when our Organization is celebrating the International Year of Peace. In this year of peace, the international community must support that proposal in order to resolve a problem that has dragged on for far too long.

The same is true of the situation in Afghanistan. There too a people that wishes only to live in peace has for more than six years suffered from a situation of war. The foreign troops, which will go to any lengths to establish their domination, must withdraw from Afghanistan. The Organization must do its utmost to see that the relevant resolutions adopted are implemented. The indirect negotiations between Pakistan and Afghanistan are aimed at resolving the problems of millions of Afghans who have fled their homes in search of peace in neighbouring countries.

It is time, therefore, for all foreign troops to withdraw from that country. Such a withdrawal would mean that the refugee question could be resolved at the same time. The announcement by the Soviet authorities that some of those troops would soon be withdrawn is a sign of goodwill to resolve the problem. We hope that

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the occupying troops can soon be completely withdrawn so that the Afghan people may fully enjoy their rights.

In the Middle East we must face the fact that the diplomatic efforts to resolve the region's problem have been futile. That problem, which revolves around the question of Palestine, the Israel-Arab conflict and the civil war in Lebanon, must be resolved within the framework of an international conference, which we favour. The problem of the Middle East is one of the most serious challenges to the credibility of our Organization. The evolution in the relations between the various parties involved and concerned gives rise to some glimmer of hope that the problem may be settled. In order to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the region, guaranteed by the two great Powers and other interested States, in particular France and the United Kingdom, the international conference on Palestine must find a solution to three main questions: first, the creation of a Palestinian State on the basis of the General Assembly resolution on the partition of Palestine; secondly, withdrawal from the territories occupied since 1967 and, thirdly, the right of all State in the region, including Israel, to live in peace within secure and recognized borders.

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It is essential that solutions be found to these questions without delay, which are the core of the Palestinian problem. This eternal question of Palestine is made even more painful and difficult because of the exacerbation of the clashing antagonisms in Lebanon. Armed confrontations between opposing factions in that country continue to prevent a halt in the civil war. One cease-fire agreement follows another without being kept, and the people permanently chained to a powder keg. UNIFIL should be allowed to discharge its mandate properly so that our Organization can attain the basic goal for which it was established. There must be more dynamic, more honest, more direct co-operation among the Powers concerned with the Lebanese leaders so that peace can be finally restored to that country. We appeal to the Lebanese themselves to look beyond their rivalries and contemplate healing the wounds they are inflicting on a country that used to be universally admired. In that context Togo welcomes the agreement reached on 3 September between Muslims and Christians to adopt a national charter to put an end to 11 years of civil war.

Not far from the Middle East, in South-West Asia, two brother countries continue their terrible gladiatorial struggle. At a time when people are becoming aware of the need to strengthen co-operation among States, it is regrettable that the excesses of nationalism which have led to war between two States which should live in peace continue to keep them away from the negotiating table. The Iran-Iraq war, which is entering its seventh year, is a pointless war, and it is high time that the protagonists took stock of the great loss of human life and material damage, and realized that hopes of military victory are illusory. The efforts of the Secretary-General, of the Islamic conference and of countries that have good relations with the two brothers who are now enemies must be encouraged, so that this International Year of Peace that we are celebrating can have some meaning for the peoples of Iraq and Iran.

(Mr. Anega, Togo)

Once again from this rostrum, on behalf of the Government and people of Togo, we appeal to the authorities in Iran and Iraq to think of their peoples, whose only wish is to live in peace. As President Eyadema has said:

"May universal peace reign so that the enormous resources now being devoted to war can be released and so that a world of true fraternity can be established, a world of equal justice for all where the dignity of the human person is respected."

The arms merchants also should endorse that wish and supplying weapons to that theatre of war. We wish to reaffirm our support for the mediation efforts of the Secretary-General, and would urge him to continue them in order to bring about a peaceful settlement of the conflict.

Elsewhere in Asia the Korean people has been divided for more than 40 years. How much longer will families remain separated? Does the international community wish to endorse that accidental and temporary partition? We do not think so, and we are convinced that all sides will learn from past mistakes. In that context, my Government has doubts about the advisability of admitting the two Koreas to the United Nations. To admit them as separate Members of the Organization would create a situation identical to one that we are all familiar with, that is the consolidation of two separate States and the acceptance of a de facto situation, which would be a serious obstacle to the reunification desired by the Korean people.

It is to be hoped that the obvious desire of the North Koreans for dialogue with a view to reunification should receive a favourable response from the parties concerned, so that the three-point plan that they propose, which is intended to lead to the establishment of a democratic federal republic of Koryo, where at a first stage each of the two Koreas would maintain the régime of its choice, before moving on to the final stage of reunification. We reaffirm our support for that

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plan. We hope that the meetings that have taken place between various humanitarian and economic bodies in the two countries can continue and be taken a stage further, so that there can be a speedy settlement of this question and peace can be restored in the Korean peninsula.

In Central America the situation has continued to worsen, endangering peace and security in that part of the world. It is regrettable that the efforts made by the Contadora Group to end the fratricidal conflict have not met with the hoped for response. If this situation continues it will considerably weaken and even rule out any chance of a negotiated solution to the problems of the region. Once again, Togo appeals to the good will of the parties concerned, and urges them to respect the principles and purposes of our Organization so that peace can be restored to the region.

To add to the grim picture of the political situation, as if the misfortunes besetting our earth were not sufficient, another scourge is threatening us all, and is becoming increasingly dangerous every day: international terrorism. It is not without reason that the media consider it the plague of our times, because it strikes without discrimination, leaving innocent victims, and sowing destruction and desolation along its path. Terrorism is a crime against humanity, whether committed by individuals, groups, or States and whatever the alleged motives. Terrorists are criminals and must be combated and condemned as such by the international community at large. The very survival of organized society is at stake. Togo adds its voice to all those throughout the world who have condemned this scourge and we call upon all States to engage in close co-operation to put a speedy end to it.

An analysis of the various situations we have just reviewed clearly shows that these have come about only because of weapons. Undoubtedly the needs of national

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defence seem to justify the existence, equipment and the maintaining of armies by every nation, but unfortunately these needs encourage the trade in arms at the expense of the social, humanitarian and ethical considerations which should prevail over the arguments of profit and over political and ideological motives.

Unfortunately, we are witnessing a frenzied arms race which is increasing the prospect of our own destruction, the destruction of mankind, whom we are striving to protect. How far will human vanity lead us before we understand, as President Eyadema has said that

"The shot that emerges from the gun causes indiscriminate casualties among the population. The nuclear bomb does not distinguish between developed or underdeveloped countries. When chemical and bacteriological weapons are released, they do not select their victims; they strike indiscriminately. The frenzied nuclear arms race is a threat to all mankind, rich and poor, developed and less developed."

We must all commit ourselves to ending the arms race, inter alia, by giving active support to the World Disarmament Campaign.

In this context my country is sparing no effort, and our desire to provide the headquarters for the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament clearly reflects that commitment. We sincerely thank the whole international community for the choice of Togo to host this important regional Centre. We are counting on the generosity of all peace-loving nations to contribute to the smooth running of the Centre. We have offered material facilities and a financial contribution to allow the Centre to start its work. We are counting on the good will of other States. Peace is a joint asset that all States must try to safeguard in all regions of the world. We should stress the role of the two super-Powers in

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the maintenance of that peace. Thus it is to be hoped they will be able to agree on a formula for peaceful compromise in which star wars and star peace can be harmonized, so that the resources released as a consequence of the abolition of all the arsenals can be allocated to the development of States, and bring about the prosperity that our peoples desire.

(Mr. Amega, Togo)

Hundreds of millions of people are now living in total destitution and cannot meet their essential needs for a normal life offering them enough food and a modicum of clothing, water, a roof over their heads, and so on. Hundreds of millions of people are prevented from enjoying most of the basic and inalienable human rights contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. At the same time, part of humanity, basically in the developed countries, is living in comfort and abundance. This injustice must be redressed and humanity must find a solution to this situation by contemplating a system of international co-operation able to eliminate the serious disparities in today's world and to establish a just equitable world, economic and social order, where people have the same chances of development.

More than 12 years ago the Member States of the United Nations, anxious to remedy the serious crisis besetting the world, decided, following the sixth special session of the General Assembly, to think about establishing a just, equitable international economic order. That order would replace the obsolete laws that governed international economic relations and put an end to widespread exploitation and confusion.

Today, more than a decade since its adoption, the Programme of Action for the Establishment of a New International Economic Order is a dead letter, because of the selfishness of the developed countries, which are still clinging on desperately to some of their prerogatives.

The North-South dialogue, which should have been established between rich and poor countries to ensure harmonious growth of the world economy has become in most cases a confrontation where all kinds of interests clash.

Thus the widespread crisis, which has been going on for so many years, still goes on, even if some industrialized countries have at some point noted a few vague signs of recovery. However, it is clear that a world economic recovery cannot

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really be brought about at the expense of the developing countries, and it would be an illusion on the part of some developed States to wish to build their prosperity on the ashes of the poor nations.

The many hard-working poor people in the third world are indubitably full partners on the international economic chess board, whose just remuneration is essential for the recovery of the world economy.

The countries of the North must fully realize the interdependence of all economies whether developed or developing. They must take all proper action to put an end to disorder and the uncertainty marking international economic trade, which so strikingly affect third world economies.

Everything should be done to halt the present order based on the phenomenon of dependence, which derives from the unequal relationships that emerged in colonial history.

This order, which was imposed on developing countries at the time when most of them suffered from colonial subjugation, is the main obstacle to their growth and keeps them, even after they have won independence, in the role of supplying raw materials and purchasing of manufactured products. Thus, the third world countries have been lagging behind the rich countries and are feeling even more acutely the after effects of the crisis and do not have any dynamism of their own to resist it. Whereas the prices of commodities that they export and which generate most of their financial resources are collapsing, the prices of the manufactured products that they import are sky-rocketing, causing a serious deterioration in the terms of trade.

The development efforts undertaken by the poor countries have thus been nullified, whereas their indebtedness is increasing beyond all tolerable limits.

(Mr. Amega, Togo)

This chronic indebtedness, which is for our peoples a very heavy burden, would not be so serious, so crushing, so difficult to bear, if the forces that are completely beyond our control, did not exploit the interest and exchange rates of certain strong currencies.

Impelled by a desire for profit, these forces no longer realize that the question of paying off our debts is intimately linked with an improvement in the socio-economic situation of our countries. Is it not time for the donor countries to bring about a better organized financial and monetary system? Is it not important that in order to recover their credits in good time they should contribute to the recovery of our economies, effectively giving assistance to our industrialization, enabling us to produce and to sell, by seeking to bring about the disappearance of protectionist measures preventing our products from access to the markets of the developed countries.

The world, for several years, has been going through a difficult period, where only mutual understanding and solidarity among all nations, both large and small, is the proper course of action.

The thirteenth special session of the United Nations General Assembly, held from 27 May to 1 June of this year, which stressed the critical economic situation in Africa, doubtless created better awareness of the effects of the international crisis on the African economies in the minds of all Member States which joined in devising ways and means to assist Africa. That session was timely indeed and it can never be over-emphasized that our continent, which has the sorry privilege of having two thirds of the least-developed countries, and where poverty seems to have found fertile grounds, is suffering indescribable difficulties, not only because of the widespread crisis, but because of the drought, desertification and famine.

(Mr. Amega, Togo)

The particularly disquieting situation in Africa was eloquently described in the document submitted by the African States and in the statement made by President Diouf of Senegal, who was then Chairman of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). We do not intend to describe that again.

We would merely here welcome the fact that the priority programme for the economic recovery of Africa, 1986-1990, was taken into account in the Programme of Action adopted by the General Assembly.

In keeping with that Programme of Action, African States have undertaken to finance national and regional development programmes of a socio-economic nature, and the international community has expressed its will to support and supplement their efforts.

The African countries, as was reaffirmed at the last session of the Conference of Heads of State and Government of the OAU, will respect their commitments because they have understood that they themselves must take their own destiny into their own hands before requesting assistance from the international community.

It remains for that community to show solidarity with Africa and ipso facto show proof of its resolve to promote international co-operation, which would benefit all States without exception. The interdependence of nations in the world requires that after Africa, certainly an under-developed continent, the efforts of the international community should turn to other poor regions and should consider the establishment of a just, equitable economic order. All necessary initiatives must be taken here, because the dignity of the human race, and indeed the future of peoples are at stake.

(Mr. Amega, Togo)

We are mindful of what President Eyadema said:

"Today the development of science and technology has brought people on our earth closer together and has given developed nations amazing means to bring about spectacular changes in our lives. But what would be the point of this progress, the result of so much intelligence and work by the human community were these changes not to include as a prerequisite in their goals, the overall development of the human condition?"

The peoples of the third world for their part are firmly resolved to rally round and to increase co-operation among the developing countries, to supplement north-south co-operation.

This south-south co-operation which is now indispensable for many reasons, will be strengthened for the well-being of the poor nations.

Here, my delegation welcomes the results of the high-level meetings of the Group of 77 on economic co-operation among developing countries, held in Cairo in August, and the summit conference of the Non-Aligned Movement in Harare.

We commend the decisive action of the Group of 77 and the Non-Aligned Movement for south-south co-operation and thus of the socio-economic emancipation of the poorest countries.

(Mr. Amega, Togo)

It is also appropriate to pay a well-deserved tribute to the organizations and agencies of the United Nations system, among others, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and the United Nations Development Programme, which have been making a very useful contribution to the promotion of economic and technical co-operation among developing countries. This tribute is also extended to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), which has been making decisive and effective efforts to stave off famine and to ensure self-sufficiency in food in the countries of the third world.

More than ever before, in this Year of Peace, a campaign of publicity and persuasion is needed to induce States to assume their full responsibilities to mankind, in keeping with the principles of the United Nations Charter and with human rights, in order to bring about the development of all peoples in peace and harmony. The celebration of the International Year of Peace should be an opportunity for us to question our own conduct so that it can be directed towards achieving that peace. We must regain our faith in our Organization and its principles so that we can effectively create a world where all peoples, while respecting the differences between them, can decide in complete freedom on the forms of association that they need to work on a basis of complementarity, in dignity and peace, for their happiness.

Peace to all Members.

The PRESIDENT: The Assembly will now hear a statement by the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Norway, Dr. Gro Harlem Brundtland.

Mrs. Brundtland, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Norway, was escorted to the rostrum.

The PRESIDENT: I have great pleasure in welcoming the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Norway, Dr. Gro Harlem Brundtland, and inviting her to address the General Assembly.

Mrs. BRUNDTLAND (Norway): Sir, allow me first of all to congratulate you upon your election to the high office of President of the forty-first session of the General Assembly. I am convinced that its work will benefit from your experience and knowledge.

At the beginning of this session of the General Assembly, the future of East-West relations is a central concern in all corners of the globe.

The future of East-West relations encompasses the decisive questions of our times: war or peace, disarmament or continued arms race, peaceful co-operation or confrontation, mutual confidence or distrust. The East-West relationship largely determines the international climate and indeed sets limits to what can be achieved also in other areas which are in urgent need of attention, such as the North-South relationship and the global challenges of development, environment, trade and finance. These are questions of fundamental importance to the future of mankind, which we cannot afford to go on neglecting. Also for this reason we need a new beginning in East-West relations which can liberate energies and resources.

Achievements that have already been made must therefore be carefully protected and preserved, such as the anti-ballistic missile Treaty, which indeed plays a vital role.

The Geneva negotiations are of fundamental importance to the future of East-West relations. They must give us the answer to the key question of whether it will be possible to turn the tide of the arms race. Without real progress in the field of disarmament and arms control, our efforts at dialogue and co-operation in other areas will be seriously limited.

So far, we have not seen tangible results in the form of any decisive progress in arms negotiations. From the Norwegian side we have wholeheartedly endorsed the broad aim of the Geneva negotiations, which should be conducted with a view to

"... preventing an arms race in space and terminating it on earth by limiting and reducing nuclear arms and strengthening strategic stability ..."

(Mrs. Brundtland, Norway)

This very promising result of last year's summit meeting between President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev is an agreement on broad objectives that it is essential for us to retain.

The Helsinki process now sorely needs a vitamin injection and new impetus to become a positive, dynamic factor in East-West relations. The breakthrough at the Stockholm Conference announced today is not only an important achievement, but also has a potential for further progress. If we now experience an improved atmosphere in the vital area of arms control and disarmament, it could mark a historic moment.

In Stockholm, a new generation of confidence and security building measures have been adopted, and major concessions have been given - concessions that will lead to reduced risks, and to greater openness and predictability all over Europe.

But we need higher aspirations. Regularity in the political dialogue at the highest level between the super-Powers is an imperative for stability and predictability in East-West relations. Pending questions that hamper a new summit now urgently need solutions to pave the way for new agreements in Geneva.

The work undertaken in multilateral disarmament forums is also of crucial importance, both as an expression of wide public concern and for negotiating global disarmament agreements. The nuclear test ban issue remains a vital question. Efforts here should be further intensified. It is our hope that this session of the General Assembly will contribute to expediting the work of the Conference on Disarmament in order to reach agreement on a comprehensive test ban.

It still has not been possible to reach agreement on a treaty banning chemical weapons, although important progress has been made. Recent use of these abhorrent weapons underlines the need to eradicate them once and for all.

(Mrs. Brundtland, Norway)

As we work towards an end to the arms race on earth, we must at the same time seek to prevent a spread of the arms race into outer space. It is our firm belief that outer space must be reserved for peaceful purposes exclusively. We fully support the efforts to that end in the United Nations and in the Conference on Disarmament. The irrationality of the arms race is most amply demonstrated by the global imbalance between the resources spent on armaments and what is devoted to development. This fundamental problem should indeed be a matter of concern for the entire world community. Norway, therefore, supports the idea of holding the United Nations conference on disarmament and development as soon as possible.

Last year the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations was solemnly commemorated in this Assembly Hall. Political leaders from all over the world came here to pay a tribute to the Organization. It was seen as an expression of support for multilateralism as a basic concept and working method in international affairs.

(Mrs. Brundtland, Norway)

Past experience has shown us that there is no alternative to global co-operation in the striving for peace and security, for economic and social development and for the protection of human rights.

In spite of the many pledges made in this Hall last year, the political and economic problems on the agenda of the United Nations persist, and in the past year there has been hardly any progress on major issues before the Organization. In addition, the United Nations itself has for some time now experienced severe financial problems caused by significant withholdings of assessed contributions on the part of several Member States. These withholdings, together with the lack of budgetary discipline, in fact threaten seriously to undermine the viability of the United Nations.

The Norwegian Government is deeply committed to multilateralism and to a strong United Nations; and the objective need of the world community is greater today than it was when the Organization was created 41 years ago.

The financial crisis is the manifestation of a fundamental crisis of credibility which has been festering for some time. There has been a widespread and deepening loss of confidence in the United Nations on the part of many Member States and their publics that believe that the Organization is not sufficiently effective in meeting its original objectives or in serving the interests of its Members.

Even the strongest champions of the United Nations - countries like Norway and many others - must now concede that these concerns have some validity. The political and economic issues on the agenda of the United Nations persist. Its budget is burdened by unnecessary duplication and overlapping of functions, and the budgetary process lacks the discipline required to evoke the full support of all Member States.

(Mrs. Brundtland, Norway)

The task of renewing the effectiveness of the United Nations is basically political in nature. It requires that Member States manifest the political will to place the financing of the Organization on a viable basis and provide the Secretary-General with the mandate and the support he needs to carry out the major organization, staffing and budget changes which will reduce costs, improve effectiveness and restore confidence. At this forty-first session we have a unique opportunity to do exactly that. It is an opportunity we must not miss.

We have before us the report of the Group of High-Level Intergovernmental Experts - the Group of 18 - established last year by unanimous decision of the General Assembly to examine and suggest improvements in the Organization's administration and finances. The Norwegian Government fully supports these recommendations and urges the Assembly to approve them in their entirety.

These recommendations are only the beginning of a reform process in the United Nations, a process which will be painful and which will necessarily take time. It is essential that this transformation be allowed to take place in an orderly and responsible manner, and that Member States indeed co-operate closely with the Secretary-General in the difficult task he faces in implementing these changes.

Earlier this year, for the first time in the history of the United Nations, attention was focused on the economic and social problems of one single continent. The special session on the critical situation in Africa was an important element in the United Nations efforts to assist African countries in surmounting their grave economic and ecological crisis.

Based on the thorough preparations made by the Organization of African Unity and its member States, the special session adopted unanimously a programme of action for African economic recovery and development for 1986-1990.

(Mrs. Brundtland, Norway)

We managed to set up a common point of reference, where the mutual commitments of Africa and the international community are elaborated. The consensus that was reached on this document must be seen as a notable achievement. However, the final evaluation of that session can only be made in the future. The follow-up action must be pursued energetically on the national, regional and international levels.

We witness, with respect and admiration, the valiant efforts undertaken by African countries to initiate new economic policies. However, interdependence is today a living reality. The African countries will succeed only if the international community agrees to complement these efforts with new and increased assistance.

Norway pledges its full and continued support to the African development efforts.

One area where the United Nations has a special responsibility and where we hope that the Organization may play a decisive role is the question of South Africa and Namibia.

The situation in South Africa has reached an explosive stage. The black majority is no longer willing to tolerate the aggressive apartheid system and is demanding the obvious right to be treated as equal citizens with full political rights. Instead of addressing these legitimate demands, the South African Government has once again resorted to the desperate means of declaring a state of emergency and detaining hundreds of apartheid opponents. This policy will only lead to prolonged suffering and bloodshed in South Africa.

The dramatic events should not make us forget that South Africa continues its illegal occupation of Namibia, in violation of Security Council resolution 435 (1978). This issue was dealt with extensively at last week's special session on Namibia, and I should like to repeat our demand to the South African Government

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to agree to the implementation of the United Nations plan for Namibia without any further delay.

The policy of trying to abolish apartheid through a dialogue with the South African Government has been tried repeatedly without success. In its recent report the Commonwealth eminent persons group draws the depressing conclusion that the South African Government does not seem to be prepared for a genuine dialogue with the opposition and that outside pressure is essential for any prospect of peaceful change. My Government strongly supports these conclusions.

(Mrs. Brundtland, Norway)

Some countries, even so, continue to argue against sanctions, on the ground that sanctions will create increased suffering for the black population and cause economic difficulties for the neighbouring countries of South Africa. We do not underestimate those difficulties. But, even though sanctions may cause hardships in the short run, representative black leaders argue that that is preferable to the prolonged suffering that apartheid implies. We think it is wise to listen to those leaders. In fact, we feel there is an obligation to do so. The Norwegian Government therefore urges the Security Council to impose comprehensive mandatory sanctions against South Africa. We also propose that the United Nations prepare a contingency plan for assistance to South Africa's neighbours in the event of South African reprisals against those countries.

Norway has repeatedly advocated comprehensive, mandatory sanctions against South Africa. I take this opportunity to urge those countries that still oppose sanctions to reassess their attitude.

The absence of binding sanctions should not be used as a pretext for failing to act against apartheid. Measures by individual countries or groups of countries are also important, in order to signal disapproval of apartheid and express solidarity with those who work for changes in South Africa.

My Government believes that an effective oil embargo would be an important measure against South Africa. For that reason we were pleased to host a United Nations seminar on the oil embargo in Oslo in June this year, in preparation for the United Nations World Conference on Sanctions against Racist South Africa, held in Paris. The proposal to set up an international monitoring mechanism on the supply of oil to South Africa was included in the Final Declaration of the Paris Conference, and we hope that the Security Council will be able to support this idea, with a view to achieving an effective oil embargo against South Africa.

(Mrs. Brundtland, Norway)

In addition to the measures contained in the Nordic Programme of Action, Norway has adopted a number of unilateral measures. My Government is now preparing a bill on an economic boycott of South Africa, a bill which is expected to be decided upon by the Norwegian Parliament this autumn. In this way we want to make our contribution to bringing about a South Africa with equal rights and opportunities for all. We also hope to inspire other countries to follow suit, to increase the total international pressure against apartheid.

Time is running out for peaceful solutions. If apartheid is not abolished soon, the whole region of southern Africa may explode in a bloody upheaval. I appeal to every nation to move forward in taking effective action against apartheid.

From this rostrum world leaders have rightly been warning of the threats to the survival of mankind caused by existing nuclear arsenals, regional conflicts and failures of the development process.

Interdependence is becoming the dominant characteristic of the whole range of issues relating to development. It encompasses broad security concerns, environmental and ecological issues, and economic and cultural relations. There is also the geographical dimension of interdependence, regionally and globally. The nuclear accident at Chernobyl highlighted the awesome problems we shall face across the borders in the event of a nuclear disaster occurring in any one country. The rapid population growth in many countries is creating migration patterns which strain both national and cross-national systems. In the trade and financial area we see the mutual dependence of creditors and debtors, as well as the vital link between a non-protectionist trade régime and the ability of debtor countries to meet their debt obligations and generate the necessary resources for their own development.

(Mrs. Brundtland, Norway)

This is really the essence of the North-South dialogue: how the growing interlinkages between issues and interdependence between nations create an increasing number of problems that transcend national systems and require solutions of a global nature. The need for a global approach is clear, but it does not mean that all problems have to be negotiated and solved simultaneously. What it means is that global perspectives must permeate all the processes and the work we are engaged in, and that this is becoming more and more urgent. Protection of the environment and development are essential and mutually reinforcing goals. This requires that environmental considerations be built into development projects at the earliest possible stage. Otherwise, they will not be economically sustainable.

In recent years the world has become increasingly aware that the negligence of interactions between the environment and development is already seriously threatening the ability of the planet to sustain life for present and future generations. The threats of war and regional conflicts are the concern of us all, but so also are critical life support systems that are now at stake. The World Commission on Environment and Development, which is to report to the General Assembly next year, is convinced that these new imperatives can be seriously addressed only by defining the goals of economic activity in terms of sustainable development.

Sustainable development will require a recovery from the economic stagnation of recent years and indeed a new era of growth in the world economy. But it cannot be a repetition of the non-sustainable development patterns of the past decades, which resulted in the development crisis of the 1980s. A new era of growth must be built on new patterns of the development and on a unification of ecology and economics.

The earth is one, but the world of man is not. Mankind shares a common origin and a common future. Short-sighted self-interest has misled the human race to

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over-exploitation of the troubled planet. We have been heavily overdrawing the account which nature opened for us. But the unsustainable trends can be rectified. We must formulate and adopt new strategies to secure a sustainable common future.

The opportunities are in fact there. Now it is time for us to act.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Norway for the important statement she has just made.

Dr. Gro Harlem Brundtland, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Norway, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Mr. DHANABALAN (Singapore): We meet this year under inauspicious circumstances. There is a storm brewing that threatens to sink the United Nations. We are fortunate to be guided by you, Sir, in this difficult moment. Coming from a brother country in Asia, we know that Bangladesh has weathered many a storm with courage, determination and grit. With this background and your considerable political and diplomatic experience, I am confident that you will provide us with the right leadership to guide us through the difficult days ahead.

Please allow me also to pause a moment to place on record our deep appreciation for the work done by your predecessor, Ambassador Jaime de Piniés. He saw the United Nations through one of its most triumphant moments, the fortieth anniversary celebrations. He also provided firm and determined leadership at the resumed session to ensure that the financial crisis did not overwhelm the United Nations. We thank him.

There is a consensus that the United Nations is going through one of its most difficult periods. Some call it the "crisis of multilateralism". The Chinese word for "crisis" is a combination of two characters: "danger" Wei and "opportunity" Ji. This is the situation that the United Nations faces today.

The danger is clear. The gradual erosion of faith in the United Nations, evidenced by the growing practice of financial withholdings, threatens the financial integrity of the Organization. The Secretary-General has periodically issued reports on the "current financial crisis" to remind Members how fragile the financial situation is. In his report dated 21 August 1986, he said that against assessed contributions of \$US 978 million payable as at 1 January 1986, only \$US 568 million had been collected by the end of July. If these withholdings continue, the United Nations may have to cease operations one day.

What is to be done? One thing is clear. A ship passing through a storm cannot proceed under full sail. When treacherous winds and currents appear,

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seasoned sailors trim their sails, batten down their hatches and offload excess baggage. Wisely, the captain of our ship, the Secretary-General, has begun doing this. Even more wisely, the Member States endorsed his actions at the resumed session of the General Assembly in April this year.

These are, however, only short-term measures. For the long term, the United Nations can only continue to function when there is a reasonable consensus among all its Members that this is an Organization worth saving. The fortieth anniversary celebrations, which saw the largest gathering mankind has seen of Heads of State or Government, seemed to indicate that all nations were committed to this Organization. One year later, the United Nations coffers are running dry. The same nation States have locked up their purses. Such actions always speak louder than words.

The money needed to save the United Nations is a pittance. The annual budget of the United Nations is \$US 800 million. It is just a drop in the ocean compared to the world's combined income of about \$US 13 trillion, or more accurately it is only 0.006 per cent of the combined world income. If our world is not able to squeeze out this small amount to keep the United Nations functioning, it is a clear sign that the international community has lost faith in the United Nations.

It will not be easy to rebuild this Organization. The small States, which make up the vast majority of the membership, have never lost faith. They know that global adherence to the principles of the United Nations Charter is crucial for their survival. We need the United Nations, as Article 1 of the Charter states:

"to develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples".

If these principles disappear, together with the United Nations, life for the small States could become very hazardous.

(Mr. Dhanabalan, Singapore)

Yet a United Nations composed only of small States would be a pointless Organization. The threats to small States will always come from the medium-sized States and the big Powers. We need their continued adherence to the principles of the United Nations Charter. And we need their continued commitment to the Organization. How can we achieve this?

Perhaps we should see what the small States did at the very beginning of the United Nations. Here I quote from the classic work of Inis Claude, "Swords into Plowshares":

"Small States are not necessarily the saints of the international community; if great nations are inclined to abuse their strength by behaving dictatorially, small ones are often tempted to abuse their weakness by behaving irresponsibly. But many small State representatives at San Francisco displayed a high degree of statesmanship. They did not challenge the principle of great Power leadership. Indeed, they welcomed it and relied upon it, but they made great and somewhat successful exertions to modify it, and to confine its expression within tolerable bounds." (New York, Random House: 3rd edition, 1964, p. 57)

Unfortunately, many small States have failed to realize the wisdom of such moderation in our deliberations. Instead, we have constantly passed resolutions, routinely, recklessly and often selectively condemning a great Power. This has not brought us any closer to our goal of convincing any great Power to behave otherwise. All our resolutions should be carefully crafted, tempered by wisdom and judgement, to persuade great Powers that it is in their interest to take cognizance of the needs of small States. The reckless attacks of previous years have led to the inevitable result that both the Soviet Union and the United States decided, no matter what their other disagreements may be, to ignore and sometimes to undermine

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the United Nations. It is not surprising that the largest financial withholdings have been made by the Soviet Union and the United States. The art of political moderation must be relearned by all of us.

The immediate complaints of the super-Powers and the larger nation States concern the financial management of the Organization. The Secretary-General has wisely alerted us to their complaints. He said on 18 December 1985:

"Even though the budget adopted by the Fifth Committee provides for a real growth of only 0.1 per cent, Member States which account for almost 80 per cent of the assessed budget either cast a negative vote or abstained in the vote. This is disturbing evidence of a growing division in the membership on financial matters which, if long continued, can have very negative implications for the Organisation." (A/40/PV.122, p. 27-28)

* Mr. Thompson (Fiji), Vice-President, took the Chair.

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This financial crisis is only a symptom of greater disillusionment with the United Nations. None the less, we can and should resolve it quickly. The choice for small States is clear. We can either continue to engage in long and unseemly negotiations over the finances needed to keep the United Nations going or we can concentrate on substantive political issues. The longer we argue over what is, relatively, a financial drop in the ocean, the less attention we can pay to substantive political issues.

If we fail to resolve these financial problems the United Nations will shrink and die. If it dies, all its considerable political achievements over the years and all the resolutions that we have adopted reaffirming the international community's moral and legitimate stands on the critical issues of apartheid and Namibia, the Middle East and Palestine and Kampuchea and Afghanistan will also disappear.

Fortunately for us, the Group of High-Level Intergovernmental Experts, which was entrusted with the task of reviewing administrative and financial matters in the United Nations, has come up with a reasonable report recommending some reforms. Staff should be reduced by 15 per cent and the overstaffed higher levels by 25 per cent. Fewer consultants should be hired. Official travel should be curtailed. The political departments should be consolidated. The forty-first session of the General Assembly should quickly endorse those recommendations.

There is, unfortunately, one unresolved issue in the report of the Group of High-Level Intergovernmental Experts, and this concerns the critical question of budgetary management. I fear that if this issue is not resolved quickly the financial crisis will drag on. The existence of the United Nations will continue to be precarious. Each time the Organization stumbles the interests of the small States suffer. As they make up the vast majority of the membership, the small States can easily vote in any budgetary procedure they like - as they have tended

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to do, against the wishes of the larger States, in regard to budgetary matters. This reckless use of our votes has unfortunately led us to the present crisis and will only ensure the continuation of the crisis. If we try to do the same with the budgetary procedure, we shall only aggravate the problems of the United Nations, and solve none.

Last year, just before the fortieth anniversary celebrations, former Presidents of the General Assembly met at a seminar in New York. With their collective wisdom, they passed on some pieces of advice to us. One was that the making of decisions by consensus should be encouraged and incorporated in the rules of procedure. We should heed that advice. Consensus is what we should aim for in financial matters.

Where I come from, in South-East Asia, we have word for consensus: it is mushawarah. Consensus, in our definition, consensus does not mean that any Member State, large or small, has the power of veto. It means a spirit of give and take, a spirit of understanding each other's interests.

Fundamentally, this is the new understanding we have to recreate in the United Nations. We have to rebuild the political compact that once existed between the small States and the great Powers on the role and purpose of the United Nations. We cannot afford to ignore the views of the great Powers. The Charter itself confers many special responsibilities on the five permanent member States of the Security Council, including the high responsibility of selecting the Secretary-General.

Those special rights go hand in hand with a special duty and obligation to maintain the strength and integrity of the Organization. Tragically, four of the five permanent member States have not taken their duties seriously in respect of their financial obligations. They have indulged in the illegal practice of withholding finance, which threatens to cripple the Organization.

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Article 17 (2) of the United Nations Charter clearly states that

"The expenses of the Organization shall be borne by the Members as apportioned by the General Assembly."

The operative word is "shall". It is our obligation as States Members of the United Nations to pay our assessed contributions to the United Nations budget whatever complaints we may have about the Organization. As a gesture of good faith, permanent members should cease the illegal practice of withholding and pay their dues.

I do not expect that these problems will be resolved easily or quickly. Political trends evolve slowly. Even though the anti-United Nations mood is at a high point in many countries, the pendulum will swing back if the United Nations sends the right signals to the international community. Until these difficult moments pass and the storm clears, the United Nations will have to run a tight ship, and our captain, the Secretary-General, must quickly resolve the administrative and other management problems that plague the Organization.

We are counting upon the President of the General Assembly to forge a consensus agreement on budgetary questions that will be acceptable to all Member States, to ensure that the financial trickle that keeps the Organization going will not dry up completely in the near future.

Mr. MATHIESEN (Iceland): I should like to begin by congratulating Mr. Choudhury on his election to the presidency of the forty-first session of the General Assembly. I assure him of the Icelandic delegation's support in carrying out the duties of that noble office.

This November will mark the fortieth anniversary of Iceland's entry into the United Nations. Over this period of time the number of Members has more than tripled, the scope of the Organization's work has expanded even further and, although the Organization has not been entirely effective in all the work it has

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undertaken, its value is beyond any doubt. We have here a venue for discussion and the exchange of ideas, where the rules and standards of international relations are gradually being shaped.

Four decades are a short period in history. We can hardly expect a perfect body of international rules to emerge in such a limited time. Constitutional ideals, such as the rule of law, took many centuries to evolve. The process of granting them appropriate status has never been without struggle or wholly successful.

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In comparison, it might be said that the institution of international law is still in its infancy. The constitutional history of individual States provides experience that we can use, to a certain extent, as a guide in the future development of international relations.

An episode in one of the classics of ancient Greek literature, Homer's Iliad, shed light on the significance of fixed rules governing the relationship between rulers and their subjects. Sarpedon, the son of Zeus and a mortal woman, was fighting Patrocles, the friend of Achilles. Watching their battle, Zeus was filled with sorrow at the thought that his son would fall and was tempted to intervene. "I wonder now," he said to his sister, Hera, "shall I snatch him up and set him down alive...or shall I let him fall?" Hera replied that such an intervention would only arouse the anger of the other gods, with unforeseeable consequences, since "a number of combatants at Troy are the sons of gods."

Zeus heeded Hera's advice, and what he feared happened. But he sent down a shower of bloody raindrops to the earth, as a tribute to his beloved son. The custom dictating the relations of men and gods was so strong that it restricted the actions of even the most powerful of gods. Justice demanded that fixed rules of conduct be obeyed by gods and men alike. The gods were indeed mighty, but their obligations imposed limitations on their power.

It is not my intention to draw a parallel between the world Powers and the ancient Greek gods. A comparison of that kind would not be fair. I have taken the liberty of alluding to this episode in support of my view that nations have to respect certain codes and customs and avoid anger and passionate reactions which, if carried to extremes, could lead to the end of civilization as we know it.

I also wish to illustrate my belief that the leaders of States must exercise restraint and let their actions be governed more by prudence than by emotion. Minor interests must give way to the prime interest of all mankind, which is to ensure world peace and security.

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Patience and, at times, a willingness to back down from absolute demands are required. Nations must treat each other with tolerance and show respect for different customs and views. Above all, every Government must take care not to stain its actions with anger or ill feeling. If that were to happen, the consequences would be unforeseeable.

Nowhere is the need for statesmanlike prudence more urgent than in East-West relations. Last year's summit meeting between President Ronald Reagan of the United States and Mikhail S. Gorbachev, General Secretary of the Soviet Communist Party, kindled new hopes for accelerated détente. The leaders of the two most powerful nations on earth had not met for six years. Such meetings are desirable every year, in the hope that if held their effectiveness would increase accordingly.

Other promising signs for progress in the field of détente and disarmament have been seen over the past year. The military build-up of the super-Powers long ago reached a stage which makes it difficult to believe that any further build-up could in itself offer them or others greater security. On the contrary, the only way to increase security seems to be by means of negotiated disarmament. Care must be taken that each and every stage reduces uncertainty. Cuts in nuclear arms arsenals would be of no avail if an uncontrolled escalation of conventional weapons were to take place at the same time. Full supervision of the enforcement of disarmament is essential for such steps to be effective.

The conclusions reached at the Stockholm Conference on confidence-building measures arouse optimism about the outcome of the third follow-up meeting at Vienna of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE). An agreement has been reached in Stockholm expanding earlier commitments obliging nations to announce their military exercises and to allow observers to attend them. Discussions between the countries of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)

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and the Warsaw Pact countries at the talks on mutual and balanced force reduction in Central Europe, held at Vienna, will, it is hoped, bring some tangible results. There have been reports of a possible thaw in attitudes at the intermediate-range nuclear force talks at Geneva. We also hope that an agreement of some sort on chemical weapons will be reached in the disarmament talks under the auspices of the United Nations.

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Less progress has been achieved in other spheres where attempts have been made to improve East-West relations. The Berne human rights meeting on freedom of movement and the reunification of families ended this spring regrettably without any results. The same thing happened at the Ottawa expert meeting last year. A large gulf divides East and West on such issues, a gulf which will never be bridged unless countries cease violating the terms of the Helsinki Agreement and demonstrate greater respect for human rights.

Despite the positive developments which I have cited, many aspects remain to be considered. As a representative of an island nation in the mid-Atlantic I cannot help expressing my concern over the enormous build-up in Soviet maritime forces and the continued military build-up on the Kola peninsula. It is crucial for the security of States in that area that this situation be changed for the better.

Little would have been achieved if the progress made in certain areas of disarmament were simply to mean another arms race at sea or, for that matter, in space. On this issue it is above all the super-Powers that need to show restraint, not by sacrificing their sons, as Zeus did in the myth that I mentioned, but precisely to prevent a situation which would cost the lives of their sons.

Elsewhere the picture is also gloomy. War still rages in Afghanistan and foreign troops continue to occupy Kampuchea. The Middle East is burning with conflicts and there is no end in sight to the civil war in Lebanon and in the war between Iran and Iraq. Streams of refugees are fleeing from these troubled regions and, as the age we live in steadily increases contact between nations, there is a growing danger that local conflicts will escalate, with terrible consequences. Such a risk now hangs over South Africa, where the Government severely violates all civilized rules in its dealings with the black population of that country.

Apartheid is a repulsive system which all civilized nations should feel motivated to oppose, but it cannot be denied either that widespread violations of

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human rights take place elsewhere. What makes the system of apartheid particularly repulsive is that it is decreed by constitutional law, that the South African constitution assumes different laws to apply with regard to white and black people and, furthermore, that it assumes that one race should enjoy freedom at the expense of the other.

I should like to mention also a form of crime which the nations of the world must unite against. I am referring to international terrorism, when groups of extremists resort to criminal activities in an attempt to force people into accepting their causes. Innocent people are most often the victims of such action. The world community must adopt stricter measures in order to stop this scourge.

A serious world situation exists in more areas than in these tragic instances of military conflict and violence that I have mentioned. Malnutrition and famine, disease and the lack of education afflict a large part of the world's population. Last spring, an extraordinary session of the United Nations General Assembly dealt with the serious economic situation in Africa. Certain measures were agreed there which it is hoped will reduce the amount of suffering on that continent.

Besides direct contributions to less fortunate nations, the wealthier nations ought to take various other steps to stimulate world economic development. I should like to underline the necessity of removing trade barriers, protective tariffs and other forms of official interference, which restrict access by the developing countries to the markets of the industrialized world. At the same time domestic growth needs to be stimulated in the developing countries and they must be supported towards self-reliance by various other means.

The United Nations has an important role to play in all the fields I have mentioned, but in order for it to serve those aims it needs the support of its Members. It is simply not acceptable for nations to avoid honouring their

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obligations towards the United Nations. It is intolerable for the Organization to find itself facing financial difficulties for this and other reasons.

Other improvements also are important. The United Nations role in peace-keeping work and disarmament must be strengthened. Iceland, together with the other Nordic nations, has taken initiatives which would result in progress in this field.

The United Nations must be able to perform its role more vigorously in these and other areas. The aim is to nurture the seeds which the Organization has sown and thereby help develop mature attitudes in international relations.

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I began this address with a quotation from classical Greek literature, which I used as an example of great understanding of the principle that the powerful must also obey certain rules if they wish to ensure peace. The United Nations is our instrument for creating such a code in the international arena. The future of mankind demands of our generation that we strengthen this instrument so that it can serve its aims in the most effective way.

I would like to conclude by citing the literature of my own nation where an understanding is also to be found of the peace-keeping role of the rule of law. In one of the most famous of the Icelandic Sagas, the Njals Saga, it is stated that we build society by law but destroy it with lawlessness. These words reflect an understanding of the fact that if a law is broken, peace is broken as well. This applies just as much to the international scene; we build this world with justice but we destroy it with injustice.

Mr. CAPUTO (Argentina) (interpretation from Spanish): Mr. President, first, I would like to congratulate you on your unanimous election as President of the forty-first session of the General Assembly of the United Nations. We are pleased to see a diplomat like you, of proven merit and knowledge, directing these deliberations. You are a citizen of Bangladesh, a country with which Argentina maintains friendly relations.

I also wish to greet the Secretary-General in a very special way and express to him how pleased we are now that he has fully recovered. His dedication, efforts and leadership deserve our most heartfelt gratitude.

I would also like to express my sincere appreciation to Ambassador Jaime de Piniés who presided over the fortieth session of the General Assembly in such an able and successful manner.

(Mr. Caputo, Argentina)

At this juncture, we feel it is our duty to pay tribute to the memory of Olof Palme, a statesman who fought untiringly for the cause of peace and development. His ideas will continue to inspire peoples and direct the actions of Governments.

We meet in this principal forum to deliberate, negotiate, and adopt decisions on the fundamental issues which are of concern to the international community: peace, justice prosperity, the defense of human rights, and the sovereignty and independence of nations.

The consideration of these issues has become especially relevant in light of the fortieth anniversary of our Organization, which we designated with the following call for hope: "The United Nations for a better world". I believe it is thus appropriate and necessary to pause and reflect on the present conditions affecting international relations in contemporary society. The seriousness of the existing conflicts, the increasing disparity in the distribution of power and wealth, the senselessness of terrorism, have reached proportions of such magnitude that they threaten the existence of a community of nations respectful of the right of each and every one of its members.

Throughout its existence, the United Nations has served as an essential instrument for the elimination of all forms of discrimination, for decolonization, for the strengthening of human rights and for the promotion of economic and social progress. During these years, mankind has avoided the tragedy of a new war on a universal scale. It is fitting to ask what would have happened in the world without the existence and active presence of the United Nations.

Based upon this positive balance, last year's commemoration represented a commitment to multiply efforts in order to advance concretely towards the achievement of the principles and purposes of the Charter, that is to say the construction of a better world.

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However, the past year has not been positive and it must be admitted that the present serious international situation does not seem to arise from a set of circumstances, but rather from a structural manifestation, the expression of a logic which impels the forces leading us towards dissension, confrontation and destruction.

Despite the great effort of decolonization, new forms of dependence and exploitation incompatible with the basic provisions embodied in the Charter are gradually imposing themselves and appear to generate an order from which one can discern nothing but new and increasingly unbearable demands on the weakest members of the international community.

The bloc policy, a modernized version of the old policy of the balance of power, is replacing the collective security system. Its implications are well known: a reduction of the political independence of the less powerful; a stagnation in the relations between the principal partners; an increasingly inequitable economic order, and a forced homogenization of the world which stifles national styles.

The realistic aspiration of progress and justice, which formed the basis of the creation and vitality of our Organization, seems to be disregarded for the sake of hegemonic projects which exclude the alternatives of an authentic peace. Such is the logic of the present-day world, a logic of senselessness.

This logic stems from the confrontation of the blocs in a world characterized by a bipolar tendency, which in turn brings about two consequences which affect the developing nations in particular.

The first is an increase of what we could call the amorality of international politics, which is a result of the excessive weight of the security factor.

(Mr. Caputo, Argentina)

This distortion establishes a difference and sometimes an opposition between the criteria applied to internal relations and those applied to international relations.

Thus, on the one hand the inviolability of civil rights in the domestic order is not carried out into the international order with regard to matters related to the respect of people's rights to self-determination and independence. On the other hand, the calls for equality found in the internal message are not translated into an external version of equality among States and the resulting respect of their sovereignty.

The second consequence is that we suffer because of the problems resulting from the uncertain and arbitrary security borders which separate both blocs, giving rise to a kind of underhanded war which occurs at many different levels, disregarding the basic principles and rules of international law and allowing the confrontation of underground powers and destructive fanaticism.

We are all aware of the fact that there can be no real independence as long as there is no effective control within the internal political area of our countries. In addition, we are all aware that this capacity to control tends to weaken and even vanish as a result of the confrontation between the super Powers. The war of propaganda and mutual harassment within our own territories is known to polarize societies and divide citizenry because of questions often unrelated to their own interests. As a consequence, the global strategic conflict ends up by absorbing our national energies.

(Mr. Caputo, Argentina)

Moreover, while we become involuntary participants in and victims of the global strategic conflict, the regional tension thus created turns back upon the super-Powers, increasing the danger to their own internal peace and survival. We believe it necessary to recreate a logic of good sense, the logic which led to the creation of our Organization four decades ago. To do this, we must first and foremost rid ourselves of the nightmare of war.

The Argentine Government gives the highest priority to the question of nuclear disarmament. Today there would be no winner in a nuclear war: all mankind would be its victim. Based on this simple, apocalyptic reasoning, my Government returns to this forum to insist on this question, which no one can ignore.

At the beginning of 1984 the tension between the United States and the Soviet Union had reached a level comparable to the highest level reached in the so-called cold war. Mutual dialogue had been interrupted and replaced by a counterpoint of challenge and response, which lead to the development of new weapons and their positioning in territories which until that time had been free of them.

This gloomy outlook began to brighten when the United States and the Soviet Union issued, on 20 November 1985, a joint communiqué in which they stated that "a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought". If this sentence means to its authors what it states literally, we have no doubt that the bilateral disarmament negotiations must make progress. Yet this has not been the case.

In 1984 the Argentine Government requested that a global disarmament process be initiated urgently. Nevertheless, none of the negative conditions mentioned by us on that occasion has been overcome; on the contrary, in many cases those conditions seem even more negative. Such is the position regarding the vertical and geographical proliferation of strategic weapons, the continuation of nuclear-weapon tests, the deceptive guarantees of security given to States which do not possess nuclear weapons, and the absence of measures to prevent nuclear war.

(Mr. Caputo, Argentina)

This was why my country, on 22 May 1984, together with India, Greece, Mexico, Tanzania and Sweden, started an initiative seeking to halt the nuclear-arms race and bring about nuclear disarmament. We asked that the tests, the production and the positioning of nuclear weapons and launching systems be suspended. We also requested that this be followed by a substantial reduction in nuclear forces.

We, those six countries, have continued to put forward practical initiatives, and during our recent meeting in Mexico we offered our assistance in setting up appropriate verification mechanisms. Such measures could include the creation of temporary surveillance stations in the existing testing zones, arrangements to use the stations in the United States and the Soviet Union to monitor their territories beyond the testing zones and the inspection of large chemical explosions. In addition, we have proposed to the Heads of State of the United States and the Soviet Union that experts from our six countries should meet with Soviet and American experts.

The Mexico Declaration begins by proclaiming the right of mankind to peace, which is intimately linked to the right to live, since war would inevitably lead to a holocaust. Therefore, I should like to take this opportunity to ask the States responsible for the arms race to give appropriate consideration to the proposals presented by the group of six.

War is also looming over Latin America. The Central American crisis and conflict have become more and more serious. A peaceful settlement in Central America is not only a humanitarian objective for other peoples, but a necessity for all Latin Americans. On the basis of the experience of three years of negotiation, we must now find a new process that will once again give rise to hope. I believe this process should not insist on the formal aspects of a treaty, it being understood that prior to the peace treaty itself a desire for peace on the part of all parties is indispensable.

(Mr. Caputo, Argentina)

Today an exceptional treaty, the Act on Peace and Co-operation in Central America, is available to us thanks to the great efforts of the Contadora Group. This lucid and complex document is a truly important source for the measures we must take. But for this instrument eventually to be effective, the parties which are to be governed by it must first reach agreement on how to resolve the conflict.

It is quite clear what has to be achieved. The Contadora Group and its Support Group expressed it in the Message of Caraballeda, Venezuela, in February of this year, as follows: the full exercise of self-determination; non-interference in the internal affairs of other States; respect for the territorial integrity of States; pluralistic democracy; no armaments or military bases that would endanger peace in the region; no military operations by countries of the region, or by countries with interests therein, which would involve aggression or constitute a threat to peace; no foreign troops or military advisers; no support, whether political, logistical or military, for groups seeking to destabilize the constitutional order of the Latin American States by means of force or terrorist acts of any kind; respect for human rights, which means unconditional respect for civil, political and religious freedoms so as to ensure peace by a strictly Latin American process.

None of these aims has been fully achieved in the region and some of them have increasingly been violated in the past weeks. These 10 commandments, which should be the decalogue of hope, are instead the cause of our anxiety.

Even though the aims are clear and the international community has endorsed them, it seems that there is growing confusion about how to achieve them.

We believe that a reciprocal commitment is needed: on the one hand a commitment among Latin Americans based on the assumption that the political, economic and social development of Central America is the responsibility of those countries which, like ours, are committed to this effort of mediation and peace;

(Mr. Caputo, Argentina)

and on the other an agreement among Central Americans regarding democracy and the elimination of any kind of political, military or economic dependency on any Power.

If we want peace, it is necessary for the nations of Central America to make a colossal effort to secure their internal and external freedom, that is their democracy and independence; and if we want the Central American countries to be able to make this effort, the remainder of Latin America must pledge its help in bringing about the material and political conditions that will make possible the independence and freedom of the Central American countries.

If Latin America runs away from the conflict, the conflict will catch up with it. If Central America does not destroy the causes of the conflict, the conflict will destroy it.

This mutual effort could be vain unless there is a third pledge: that of the countries that have links and interests in the region to abstain from any kind of intervention, since what happens in the future will largely depend on them and since the peace and security of those nations is contingent upon satisfactory solution of the Central American conflict.

Our country is willing to honour its pledge; we hope that at this decisive time those who have done most in favour of peace will once again take the initiative and redouble their efforts.

The identification of practical ways to eliminate injustices which may create new areas of tension will also contribute towards peace and development in Latin America. In this regard, we support the just and legitimate efforts of our sister republic of Bolivia to recover a direct, useful and sovereign outlet to the Pacific Ocean. This would be a just historical indemnity which, by eliminating the land-locked character of that country, would promote its development.

(Mr. Caputo, Argentina)

Similarly, I wish to reiterate the support of my country for all of Panama's efforts to ensure full compliance with the Treaties applicable to the Canal and to obtain all countries' endorsement of the Protocol to the Treaty Concerning Permanent Neutrality and Operation of that interoceanic waterway.

My country's backing of the initiative of the Federative Republic of Brazil to designate the South Atlantic as a zone of peace and co-operation of the peoples of South America and Africa also takes its inspiration from the same dedication to peace that characterizes the Argentine people and Government. Demilitarization of the South Atlantic and avoidance of the arms race will contribute substantially to a lessening of international tension.

My Government wishes to reiterate that the sovereignty dispute over the Malvinas, South Georgias and South Sandwich Islands is an issue of permanent interest to the Argentine Republic and represents the central problem which keeps it apart from the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

We are determined to achieve a peaceful, equitable and final solution to this dispute through serious negotiations in good faith. If such a solution were achieved, relations between the two countries would be established on solid and permanent bases. However, despite the repeated calls of the international community, the United Kingdom still refuses to accept comprehensive negotiations.

The international community has fully understood the necessity for the Republic of Argentina and the United Kingdom to resume negotiations and has expressed this desire by supporting last year's resolution 40/21, adopted by a majority of votes in the General Assembly.

Nevertheless, the international community once again is witness to the intransigent stand of the British Government, which persists in ignoring its call and rejects negotiations as the appropriate and rational way to solve international disputes.

(Mr. Caputo, Argentina)

Such an attitude only prolongs a situation which, because of its consequences, is as unacceptable as it is detrimental: First, the excessive military presence in the South Atlantic constitutes a serious risk to Argentina and affects the entire region.

Secondly, the strategic airport built on the islands and the extraordinary naval reinforcement jeopardize the stability of an area which is part of a Latin-American nuclear-weapon-free zone. Thus the Malvinas Islands have been turned into a new zone of strategic interest and attract the global East-West conflict towards them.

Thirdly, the illegal and arbitrary "Exclusion Zone" unilaterally declared by the United Kingdom around the Malvinas Islands precludes Argentina from engaging in legitimate and peaceful activities in waters and air space falling within its jurisdiction. In addition, this has caused the uncontrolled exploitation of the area's fishing resources.

The Argentine Government reiterates its willingness to initiate negotiations in search of an imaginative solution that would, through special statutory safeguards and guarantees, also allow the interests of the present inhabitants of the Malvinas Islands to be adequately addressed.

The next step on the road towards final solution of the question of the Malvinas Islands must be taken by the British Government and the Republic of Argentina, together with the international community. They await a positive reaction, as can already be observed in certain political spheres of the United Kingdom as well as in other sectors of the public opinion of that country.

I should like to avail myself of this opportunity to thank the Secretary-General for his assistance and constant efforts to promote fruitful negotiations. The Argentine Government asks him to continue his efforts, and reiterates that he can be assured of its broadest and fullest co-operation.

(Mr. Caputo, Argentina)

Before addressing myself to other important issues that deserve our special attention I wish to mention one which preoccupies us all by virtue of its flagrant nature: the untenable policy of the Government of South Africa, which offends not only the written rules of international law but also more basic and fundamental rules which each one of us carries within his conscience.

The Argentine Government has repudiated time and again the policy of apartheid and its inexorable consequence: the harassment of the republics of southern Africa.

Faced with the continuing acts of aggression by the Government of South Africa which are the other side of an institutionalized régime of racial discrimination, unacceptable in the framework of the contemporary international community, we have broken diplomatic relations with the Republic of South Africa.

Once again we reiterate in this forum the Argentine people's expressions of friendship to the oppressed people of South Africa, as well as our support for the just struggle it is engaged in to establish a free, egalitarian and democratic society in its country.

On this occasion, I believe it necessary to confirm the unlimited support of the Argentine Government for the people of Namibia - represented by the South West Africa People's Organization - which still suffers from the illegitimate occupation of its Territory by South Africa.

As I stated in my message addressed to the recently concluded special session of the General Assembly on Namibia, this situation is unacceptable. Its continuation can only be explained by the imbalance of the forces involved and the importance of the interests seeking to perpetuate it.

There are countries which, though they do not belong to the region, still have a great responsibility towards it. This responsibility is incompatible with the continuing existence of racism, colonialism and interventionism - scourges that are contrary to human dignity, violate human rights and breed violence and destruction.

(Mr. Caputo, Argentina)

There is no rule of law in South Africa or Namibia. The longer it takes to establish it, the more widespread will be the violence and injustice; the greater will be the insecurity of those who share with us the Atlantic basin.

The Middle East region continues to pose a risk of conflict, escalation and war, as we have unfortunately witnessed.

We the Argentine people believe in the possibility and need for peace in that tormented region - a peace based upon truth, justice and freedom for all, without exception, a peace based on the negotiation of the legitimate interests by all those who hold inalienable rights that no one can ignore, a peace based upon mutual respect and tolerance. That is the context in which Argentina affirms the necessity for recognition of the Palestinian People's right to form on its own territory an independent State enjoying full self-determination and governed by authorities freely chosen by the Palestinian people.

Similarly, we uphold the right of all the States in the region, including Israel, to live within secure and internationally recognized boundaries.

For the same reasons we condemn all measures which jeopardize the full force of human rights, as in the case of the forceful occupation of territories, acts of terrorism and violence, which cut short human lives, destroy families and mutilate children and adolescents.

I wish to mention especially the conflict that has been raging between Iran and Iraq since 1980: that war must cease. The peace, which should never have been broken, must reign once again. The peoples of both nations, which have suffered and been terribly afflicted, must once again co-exist as brothers. The Argentine Republic is friendly to both; it has supported and will continue to support all efforts to restore their full enjoyment of the right to life and peace pursuant to the United Nations Charter and the principles of non-alignment.

(Mr. Caputo, Argentina)

A part of this pattern of tension can also be observed in Lebanon, a country with which we have relations of long-standing and deep friendship. We can only express our hope to see once again a flourishing and peaceful Lebanon, enjoying fully its sovereign rights, free from occupation of any part of its territory and actively contributing towards the progress and stability of the region.

(Mr. Caputo, Argentina)

The senselessness which tends to dominate the international scene reveals itself crudely in the world economic situation, and this widens the gap separating an ever more powerful centre from an ever weaker periphery. To this we must add a technological monopoly which threatens to disenfranchise even further the developing countries. The lack of access to the more advanced technologies will accentuate the economic instability but, more than this, it will affect the capability of the nations left behind to act politically, submitting them to a new form of colonialism.

Unfortunately, it must be admitted that in the year that has elapsed since the last session of the General Assembly no events have occurred in the area of international economic relations that would raise our hopes for a more equitable and rational system. On the contrary, the situation of international trade has deteriorated, showing clearly the doubly unjust principles on which it is at present based. On the one hand, something that is a fallacy is stated: de facto equality among nations. From this premise, rules are conceived which not only do not favour possibilities for development of the poorest but also perpetuate, if not intensify, already existing inequalities. Disregard for de facto inequality leads to the creation of an actual de jure inequality among nations, through a body of norms and principles which all must accept as the only one capable of governing commercial exchange.

The poorer nations, the youngest ones, the former colonies, we are told, should not and cannot search for the road towards their own development and progress outside the framework which the richest nations, the most established Powers and the most important cities of the world need to strengthen their trade and productive investment.

Now comes the second inequitable basis. The evolution of the international economic order is showing that what the backward nations cannot do the richest

(Mr. Caputo, Argentina)

can. Thus one arrives at the paradox where precisely those who created the rules in accordance with their needs and their requirements are not only the first but indeed the only ones who violate their own rules when this becomes necessary for the defence of their own interests.

The process which led to starting the new round of General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) negotiations show how far the logic of discrimination reaches: while the opening of markets for goods and services is proposed, protectionism and unfair competition increase as regards traditional raw materials. Since its inception GATT has failed to address the question of raw materials.

The deterioration of international trade has worsened the problem of external debt owed by developing countries, especially that of Latin America. In our region the standard of living has regressed 10 years in the past 5 years. In addition, servicing foreign debt in the past four years has turned Latin America into a net exporter of capital: we have exported more than \$100 billion.

The response of the Latin American countries has been an enormous effort to put order into their economies, improve efficiency and increase exports, an effort that is nevertheless neutralized by the drop in raw material prices on the international markets. The logic of senselessness puts us into this absurd predicament in which our efforts to comply with the debt requirements meet with discrimination and ever growing protectionism on the part of our creditors.

The subsistence of the negative factors of the prevailing international economic system obliges Latin American countries to make even greater efforts to transform regional co-operation into a concrete fact. This is the reason behind the ambitious integration agreement entered into recently by my country and the Federative Republic of Brazil, the final purpose of which is to create a common

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market system between our two countries. As my dear colleague from Brazil has said, we share the fraternal aspiration to "grow together". Also, as the Republic of Uruguay is doing, we hope that other Latin American countries will join this initiative. Thus Latin America is moving from the rhetoric of integration to a common effort which translates into practical initiatives.

The Cartagena Consensus, which remains fully valid as a means of solving the debt problem, as well as other joint endeavours which direct the course of the democracies of Latin America, has paved the way for the possibility of a new regional arrangement to serve our peoples and all mankind, not contradictory to but complementary with the other regional arrangements which more and more characterize the times in which we live.

One of the main themes on the agenda of the General Assembly refers to the crisis within the United Nations. The Organization can only be strengthened by a rationalization of its duties based on the expert report submitted for our consideration. However, in addition to the obvious need for a readjustment of the work procedures and administrative and financial reforms, a concern arises with regard to the true purposes and possibilities of our Organization.

This is where an attempt at frankness must play a fundamental role. For four decades the United Nations has assisted in the reconstruction of economies shattered by war and has helped countries subjected to colonial domination to gain their independence. Nevertheless, fundamental tasks remain to be undertaken in this search in the United Nations for a better world. To carry out this substantial task, we must all contribute, whether or not this is convenient to our own particular interests.

This is how we see the world and its conflicts. We do not expect miracles but we shall not let ourselves be disheartened. We trust in the ability of mankind to understand existing situation and apply its will to transform it. But there will

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be no transformation of the present without a proper understanding of the fundamental facts that shape it, nor will it be possible to build the future unless there is a clear idea about what we expect for our civilization.

The years remaining until the end of this century present a challenge to our intelligence, to our will, and fundamentally to our sense of ethics in relations among men and nations.

Our presentation is essentially political, in the profound sense of this word. We believe in peace as a true formula for coexistence, in equality as a predicate of action towards the common welfare, in development as a focus for the energies of men and women to build a new society.

We have no other weapons than our minds, and this is why we ask that this logic of senselessness be abandoned in order that common sense may be restored. We repeat that we must regain our senses so that the system of peaceful coexistence of our various national identities may survive. For more than 40 years that has been the principal objective of our Organization.

We do not believe that our world can organize itself to build a better future by favouring immediate interests derived from strategic and military concepts or proceeding from the basis of a continuous confrontation between the great hegemonic blocs that use their power politics in dealing with those which do not belong to any of the power blocs. We prefer a world in which people can coexist peacefully and freely, not in submission or under oppression but rather on the basis of respect for diversity. As Albert Camus once said:

"The extremisms of the right or of the left seek totality, that is to say, the elimination of differences, and not unity, which is the harmony of contrasts."

The meeting rose at 7.10 p.m.