



General Assembly

PROVISIONAL

A/43/PV.15

5 October 1988

ENGLISH

Forty-third session

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE FIFTEENTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 3 October 1988, at 3 p.m.

President:
later:

Mr. CAPUTO
Mr. HUERTA MONTALVO

(Argentina)
(Ecuador)

- General debate [9] (continued)

Statements made by:

Mr. Madrigal Nieto (Costa Rica)
Mr. Masri (Jordan)
Mr. Hamud (Somalia)
Mr. Pinheiro (Portugal)
Mr. Ould N'Diayane (Mauritania)
Mr. Bayih (Ethiopia)
Mr. Barrios Tassano (Uruguay)

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

Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, within one week, to the Chief, Official Records Editing Section, Department of Conference Services, room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

88-64213/A 6623V (E)

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

AGENDA ITEM 9 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. MADRIGAL NIETO (Costa Rica) (interpretation from Spanish):

Mr. President, my dear friend and colleague, I take especial pleasure in telling you how gratified we Costa Ricans feel to see you presiding over the General Assembly. Your gifts as a statesman, your breadth of diplomatic experience and your profound faith in democracy, all of which have been proven by your record in brotherly Argentina, are a guarantee of success in the conduct of our debates.

I should like also to express appreciation of the part played in the recent election by Dame Nita Barrow, the Ambassador of Barbados, who enhanced the great traditions of this Organization.

Through the dedication of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and that of his distinguished associates to the cause of peace, the effectiveness of the United Nations in promoting understanding among peoples has been demonstrated. But let it be said that without his tact, experience, wisdom and culture, these accomplishments would not have been possible. Such successes renew the confidence placed in our Organization and help to strengthen it, as the award of the Nobel Peace Prize to the United Nations peace-keeping forces shows. Costa Rica, which has no army, was deeply moved at this well deserved award of the Prize and the recognition that it represents of the forces and arms that silence war, save lives and protect peoples. We congratulate them sincerely.

The very essence of the work of this Organization is to apply a body of international law that was conceived while humanity was suffering the ravages of the most bloody conflict in history. The Charter signed at San Francisco outlawed the use of force in international relations and formulated the hope that the history of the world would not be the history of the wars of mankind. To make this

(Mr. Madrigal Nieto, Costa Rica)

hope a reality, peoples must live and act in accordance with the principles of the Charter. Double standards of ethics in our Organization, whereby acts are forgiven or condemned according to the sympathies or interests of the moment, erode faith in the Organization. Today's renewed confidence in the Organization resulting from its successful efforts in bringing about a cease-fire between Iran and Iraq, in finding solutions to the conflicts in Afghanistan, Kampuchea and Western Sahara, in seeking reconciliation in Cyprus and promoting the independence of Namibia should put an end to any temptation to return to those practices which negate the very essence of this Organization.

This opens up a new phase of well-founded hopes - hopes that were more than confirmed by the positive talks between the President of the United States, Mr. Ronald Reagan, and the General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Mr. Mikhail Gorbachev, the outcome of which proves the effectiveness of dialogue in achieving the most noble goals. The step taken towards disarmament is a small one by comparison with the long path that lies ahead; but let us hope that it signals the dawn of a world free from hatred and fear.

As Costa Rica has outlawed the army as a permanent institution, it has supported with special emphasis and moral authority the efforts made by the United Nations to halt the arms race. Costa Rica calls for full awareness of the need for world-wide disarmament, for definite action to ban nuclear tests and reduce nuclear arsenals, to initiate conventional disarmament and to stop the transfer of weapons to underdeveloped nations.

The countries of the third world have often had the misfortune to suffer the tragic fate of being the setting for confrontation between the great Powers. Strategic, political and economic conflicts which escalate into war take place in peaceful regions and take their deadly toll among the sons of those peoples.

(Mr. Madrigal Nieto, Costa Rica)

It is alarming to know that world military spending amounts to a trillion dollars a year - an amount 20 times more than the total amount of the co-operation extended to the developing world. It is a source of shame to know that, in the first 12 hours of today, more than 14,000 children have died somewhere in the world for lack of food and medical attention, while in those same 12 hours more than \$136 billion has been spent on armaments, an amount which any intelligent person will realize far exceeds the sum needed to avoid that tragedy.

If the agreements between the Soviet Union and the United States were to lead to complete disarmament, we, along with all the peoples of the world, would joyfully trust that, having averted the threat of a new holocaust, the resources previously allocated to weapons would now be used for education and health, economic development and culture throughout the world. In other words, we would live in accordance with the principle which upholds nature itself, destruction would end and creation would begin. That is why the small developing countries urgently need to convince all the military Powers that peace is in the best interests of all.

The community of nations has witnessed with deep concern the continuing crisis in Central America. The desolation of vast areas of land, the devastation of some economies, the appalling misery and imprisonment, the persecution or death of those who disagree with their rulers are serious ills which Esquipulas II sought to resolve within a given time frame, but which persist because Governments lack the political will to carry out the process of democratization to which they agreed. For Esquipulas II is, above all, the final stage of the plan presented by President Arias which, in turn, embodied all the efforts of the Contadora Group and its Contact Group. It is an unswerving commitment to democracy.

(Mr. Madrigal Nieto, Costa Rica)

A thorough consideration of the obligations entered into in the Guatemala procedure would lead to the conclusion that, to a greater or lesser degree, none of the States that signed the procedure has complied fully with the terms of the agreement. This applies also to Costa Rica, because our Legislative Assembly has delayed ratification of the treaty establishing the Central American parliament. None the less, when the Esquipulas II agreement was signed, our country had already for some decades been doing far more than carrying out the fundamental objectives of the plan. For more than 40 years there have not been any military hostilities in Costa Rica and within the uninterrupted existence of its pluralistic democracy there has been permanent and intensive national dialogue. Since 1948 we have outlawed the army and there are no forces threatening the stability of our institutions. No Costa Rican has ever been imprisoned or exiled for political reasons, human rights are respected and we enjoy our freedom in peace.

Returning now to Central America, the reality is that the progression of that peace process has been halted and the international community, though encouraged by the trend towards dialogue and détente evident in other hemispheres, anxiously wonders why that crisis has not been resolved, since it is much smaller than certain others in which a solution is beginning to be found. There is a lack of genuine political will among some of the principal parties concerned. Although we can record progress in some areas, the fundamental commitments leading to democracy, national reconciliation, the sacrosanct protection of human rights and the non-use of territories as military sanctuaries have not been fulfilled. In the midst of all this, unfortunately, we must note that as the months have gone by we have seen the Nicaraguan Government step up its repression, fail to fulfil its commitments and attempt to reduce the crisis to a problem of security, showing obvious contempt for democratic values.

(Mr. Madrigal Nieto,
Costa Rica)

Perhaps in no other country of the region is the situation so chaotic; and perhaps no other Government has shown less will to solve it. But, what is worse, that situation has serious repercussions on neighbouring countries, which have to take in the thousands of persons who are fleeing in an attempt to find freedom, food and shelter. I appeal to the States Members of the United Nations to provide relief to the countries of refuge for the tremendous burden now weighing on us. Our greatest concern, however, is that the international community should renew its interest in peace and democracy in Central America.

I recognize that many States have stood by Central America in this long night of self-destruction. Similarly, the Secretaries-General of this Organization and the Organization of American States have shown a special interest in helping us solve our problems. Nevertheless, I have come here to ask that the democracies that share this concern should join together in a movement to support democracy in Central America, thereby renovating, strengthening and carrying out the Esquipulas II agreements, which aroused such well-founded optimism in the international community.

This effort to ensure democracy in Central America would be incomplete if we did not take into account the challenges involved in actually building and improving that democracy. Now more than ever before the industrialized countries must increase their co-operation in support of development, which of necessity has to respect the freedom and dignity of citizens, and they must help to give concrete shape to the special plan of economic assistance for Central America adopted by the General Assembly at its last session.

That is all the more urgent when we bear in mind the critical situation which the foreign-debt problem has created for the Central American nations. We are the victims of poverty and of a crushing financial commitment which has only rarely

(Mr. Madrigal Nieto,
Costa Rica)

produced an improvement in our economic and social conditions. We recognize our commitment and, like most debtor countries, are making tremendous sacrifices to honour it. We believe, however, that our creditors must fully understand the extent of these sacrifices. So far the international community does not appear to have clearly realized that the present situation cannot go on much longer. We see that debt servicing is swallowing up the foreign exchange we need for the health, education and development of our peoples and, incredibly, our creditors' strategy disregards the very high social and political costs involved in the debt servicing.

We are not, of course, asking that our entire debt be cancelled but, rather, that our creditors agree to share the responsibility and to negotiate realistic formulas to alleviate our debt burden. We recognize our responsibilities, but we ask our creditors to recognize theirs. The consequences of the present situation will be fatal in the short- or medium-term, and our creditors will be among the victims. That is why we ask that international financial policy should take into account the threat which this situation poses to the future of democracy in the world. In Latin America, where the building of democracy has gained strength, slowly and arduously, the conditions for the repayment of the debt and the social costs involved have started to undermine our democratic institutions.

We cannot disregard the fact that the sacrifices which the debt is demanding of the Latin American democracies might become a new pretext for succumbing to the temptation of totalitarianism. The danger which this situation poses to Central America strengthens our hope that the international financial community will realize that, because the countries of our region are very small and have barely begun their development and because some of them have suffered the ravages of nature and of violence, the region needs to be rebuilt and to grow in order to

(Mr. Madrigal Nieto,
Costa Rica)

overcome subhuman conditions. Therefore, we hope that the creditors will take an especially broad view of the situation, and we trust that that hope will not be in vain.

In the past four decades most members of the international community have made a joint effort to establish a new international economic order that would narrow the gap between the developed and the developing States. The results, however, have been discouraging. We still have an economic system in which a handful of powerful beneficiaries are surrounded by the two thirds of the population of the world that live in poverty. That system is without any ethical basis; it disavows man's solidarity with his fellow men and prevents all countries and all individuals from exercising their right to development, to the progress brought about by science and technology, to culture and well-being.

The third millenium of our era is about to begin, and the countries of the world - whether in the North or in the South, in the Eastern or in the Western Hemisphere, in the Caribbean basin or in the Pacific basin - should be able to provide all their citizens with a life of prosperity and freedom. What other meaning can one attach to man's time on earth if it is not to turn the world into a place befitting the advanced status of the human species?

I believe that the United Nations must make an extraordinary effort to discuss ideas and promote initiatives and, above all, to awaken in the statesman of the world a spirit of creative solidarity which will gradually shape for the twenty-first century the universe of peace and prosperity we all desire.

The Government of Costa Rica proposed the inclusion in the agenda of this session of the General Assembly of the item on science and peace. We want science to be applied more fully in the quest for peace and development. We want to encourage the scientific community to work towards the attainment of constructive

(Mr. Madrigal Nieto,
Costa Rica)

social and economic goals. The link between science and technology must have an impact on the interdependence of technology and development, and not of technology and domination. It is a source of great concern to the Government of Costa Rica that the well being derived from scientific and technological discoveries is narrowly focused on a small group of inhabitants of the earth and, at the same time, a considerable share of science and technology is devoted to promoting, not man's well being, but his extermination and the destruction of his property. Above all, however, we are concerned and indignant that it is technological progress in the military sphere which is made available to the developing world on the most favourable terms and that countries which do not have what they need to feed their peoples incur military expenditures out of all proportion to the size of their impoverished economies and incomparably larger than the tiny sums they spend on education or health - to mention only the essentials.

Science, which records and synthesizes thousands of human experiences, which draws its sustenance from the knowledge of many, which is the result essentially of the most noble exercise of the human mind, should become the common heritage of mankind in order to enlighten and ennoble rather than to produce wealth and well being for a few at the cost of the hunger, the destruction and the death of the rest.

On 10 December we shall be commemorating the fortieth anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. With the signing of that charter of freedoms, human rights became a universal concern, and all States entered into a solemn commitment to observe them strictly. But genuine respect for those rights is still far from being a universal reality. Although it is recognized that frontiers must not be obstacles to respect for and full exercise of

(Mr. Madrigal Nieto,
Costa Rica)

human rights, the safeguards which ensure their effectiveness are difficult to apply and are of questionable usefulness.

When Costa Rica signed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, it already had a long tradition of respect for those rights. As early as 1908 my country had been the headquarters of the Central American Court of Justice, the first international court to recognize the individual as a subject of international law. That was the principle we reiterated in 1948 in signing the Declaration.

(Mr. Madrigal Nieto, Costa Rica)

That is why this must not be just another anniversary. The proximity of this fortieth anniversary of the Declaration should make us more aware that the framework of international backing designed to ensure the genuine and effective exercise of all the rights set forth in the Declaration remains ineffective. Costa Rica therefore reiterates its proposal for the appointment of a high commissioner for human rights who by his efforts would help to improve the discouraging situation of human rights in the world. We have here an excellent opportunity to reconsider this idea and put it into practice, otherwise obnoxious departures from the basic minimum norms establishing those rights will continue to be appalling challenges and to shock international public opinion. Because of its selectiveness, the present system of appointing special rapporteurs ignores the violations that occur in States which are not subject to United Nations vigilance and are thus not subject to the beneficial scrutiny of special rapporteurs.

Eighty-six States have ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and 38 are parties to its Optional Protocol, while 99 States are parties to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Costa Rica was the first country to ratify both Covenants and strongly urges those countries which have not yet done so to adhere to them as the most effective and genuine way of celebrating the fortieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

I cannot end my discussion of this topic without expressing the profound indignation of the people and Government of Costa Rica at the continued daily violation of human rights by the Government of South Africa. Costa Rica, in order to place on record its repudiation of such conduct in deeds rather than words, broke off relations with the South African régime in 1986 and, like the

(Mr. Madrigal Nieto, Costa Rica)

vast majority of members of this Assembly, demands an end to that abominable system of segregation, which is contrary to all the basic natural rules of human coexistence. A few days ago a call was made here for the release of all political prisoners held by that régime. We take this opportunity to join in the appeal and to demand support for the efforts of President Mobutu of Zaire to help bring about the immediate release of Nelson Mandela and all those who have been imprisoned in South Africa simply for having asserted their own humanity. This situation shocks the conscience of all free men.

I must also express our concern at the difficulties currently being experienced by Lebanon. As the President of France, Mr. François Mitterrand, so eloquently put it, a peaceful and reconciled Lebanon is a threat to no one. A Lebanon torn apart by violence will continue to be an area of insecurity for everyone. Let us hope that peace will return to that country.

My Government is concerned, too, by the scourge of illicit drug trafficking, which corrupts with its millions people from all economic and social backgrounds and regions. It threatens the stability of Governments and undermines the ethical and moral values on which our societies are based. Costa Rica has recently adopted new, stringent legislation against illicit trafficking and the abuse of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, and it proposes that more effective international machinery be established for both the prevention and the punishment of drug trafficking and to help producer countries replace such crops by new and lucrative ones in order effectively to dissuade farmers from taking part in the initial processes of the production of narcotic drugs.

The feelings of satisfaction which the United Nations is at present enjoying should make us reflect on the Organization's role as a forum for the universality of States. We hope therefore that progress towards the goal of universality will be made in the not too distant future so that we may welcome the admission

(Mr. Madrigal Nieto, Costa Rica)

of Namibia to the United Nations. We also hope soon to receive representatives from Korea, whether delegations from the two Republics that now exist or one delegation representing a unified Korea with a democratically elected Government. The fortieth anniversary of the Republic of Korea and the holding of the summer Olympic Games at Seoul - a world gathering of harmony and brotherhood - provide an auspicious opportunity for us to work for the admission of that country to our Organization. The new policy of co-operation and dialogue pursued by the Republic of Korea strengthens our hope that progress will be made in the reunification process.

It is our hope that the principle of universality will be fully realized and that the other States of the world which, of their own volition or because of other circumstances, remain outside the United Nations will soon join in the efforts being made for the progress of the human race.

Let us do our utmost to ensure that this Organization and all its Member States strive whole-heartedly to achieve the goals set forth in 1945. Let us not be deterred by disappointments or difficulties. Let there be no force capable of making us stray from the truth, from honest and objective compliance with the principles and mandates set forth in the San Francisco Charter, which embodied a dream that we must all make a reality.

At a difficult moment, when he had doubts as to what course to follow, Abu Talib asked Mohammed whether he should support a cause even if it departed from the course that his conscience told him was right. The Prophet answered him:

"Though they might give me the sun in my right hand and the moon in my left, even then I would not let myself stray from the truth."

Let those be our words too. Let us live according to the principles that we have sworn to uphold.

Mr. MASRI (Jordan) (interpretation from Arabic): I am pleased to convey to you, Sir, on behalf of the Government and people of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, the warmest congratulations on your election as President of the General Assembly at its forty-third session. Your election to that exalted office undoubtedly indicates the high standing of your country, Argentina, and at the same time confirms your well-known ability and experience and your great diplomatic skill, which will certainly be of the greatest assistance to us in ensuring the success of our work and the achievement of the desired results.

In like manner I am happy to express thanks to your predecessor, Mr. Peter Florin, for the consummate skill with which he presided over the work of our last session, which had a major impact in terms of the marked successes it achieved.

It also gives me pleasure, at the outset of my statement, to convey to the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, the gratitude and appreciation of the Government and people of my country for his continuing efforts to strengthen the role of the United Nations and for this year's valuable report on the work of the Organization, which in our view will represent an extremely important contribution to the success of our deliberations at the current session. We wish him every success in the tasks before him.

(Mr. Masri, Jordan)

The decision to award the Nobel Peace Prize for 1988 to the United Nations peace-keeping forces is for us a source of the greatest gratification and pride. The award, coming as it does at this precise juncture, transcends any narrow sense of tribute-paying and conveys the widest recognition and strongest intimation of the vital and essential role that the United Nations continues to play in the preservation and maintenance of international peace and security. The decision demonstrates a just evaluation of the significance of the role of the United Nations and is a triumph for the multilateral principle in action. The Norwegian Nobel Committee was correct in pointing out that the United Nations peace-keeping forces represent the manifest will of the community of nations to achieve peace through negotiation, and that the forces, by their presence, have made a decisive contribution to the initiation of real peace negotiations. On this momentous occasion, I extend sincerest congratulations to the Secretary-General, to whom, because of the role he has assumed and the active contribution he has made, must go a great deal of the credit for the award of this most prestigious Prize.

We participate in the present session of the General Assembly imbued with the hope of working in co-ordination with Member States with a view to reaching the best possible results, particularly since the problems facing mankind are of a global character and thus require that the international community share in their solution. In so doing, there is no alternative to dialogue, diplomacy and negotiation, which are a moral imperative and a logical prerequisite for the creation of a better world.

My country believes that the United Nations, whose Charter was drawn up in the higher interest of all Member States, continues to be indispensable to the world's people, and that the full utilization of its capabilities and States' vigilance in being guided by its Charter in the formulation of their foreign policies will

(Mr. Masri, Jordan)

enhance the Organization's effectiveness and strengthen its role in the settlement of conflicts, the solution of regional and international problems and the maintenance of international peace and security.

Proceeding from Jordan's commitment to the Charter, we reaffirm that the principles of the United Nations and its authority are two pillars which are indissolubly linked with the implementation of the resolutions adopted by it. We therefore reject partiality and selectivity in the application of its resolutions, particularly those involving such political and moral principles as the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force, the rejection of foreign occupation, the peaceful settlement of disputes and the right of peoples to self-determination. We consider such resolutions, particularly those relating to the questions of Palestine, the Middle East, Lebanon, the Iraq-Iran conflict, Namibia, Cyprus and Kampuchea, to be vital and to be reinforced by the purport of the relevant international instruments.

This session of the General Assembly is perhaps distinguished by the fact that it comes in the midst of new developments and positive changes at the international level, as exemplified by the climate of international harmony that has accompanied the signing of the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles and made possible substantial breakthroughs with respect to numerous regional problems - in Afghanistan, Central America, Kampuchea, Namibia and Angola - and by the highly positive development in the context of the Iraq-Iran conflict represented by the cease-fire and the trend towards peace. This should encourage us and provide us with the incentive to step up the efforts made to address the long-standing issues and problems that currently jeopardize regional and international security and stability, including the Middle East problem, at the core of which is the question of Palestine, and the policy of apartheid in South Africa.

(Mr. Masri, Jordan)

We are thus hopeful that all the positive developments and all the indications of détente that we have witnessed in the past year will be channelled towards strengthening the United Nations itself, particularly the Security Council, and will enable it to fulfil the role required of it in the current situation.

There can be no doubt that the efforts made by the Secretary-General and his personal assistants highlight in an unequivocal manner the importance of the United Nations in devising solutions to pending issues. We have evidence of that in the long and sustained efforts made under the leadership of the Secretary-General until they were crowned by success in the signing of the Afghanistan Accords, the successful entry into force of the cease-fire arrangements between Iran and Iraq and the subsequent talks embarked upon with a view to terminating the state of war and achieving a comprehensive and just settlement of the conflict between the two neighbouring countries.

In this connection, and at a time when we recognize the urgent need to strengthen the role and effectiveness of the United Nations and give it the thrust it needs to have free reign in pursuing the tasks, activities and responsibilities entrusted to it, it is also evident that the Organization's financial crisis is becoming increasingly acute, to the point where it dangerously jeopardizes the continuity of the Organization's work and perhaps its very existence, and thus threatens to destroy the hopes placed in it by mankind.

We are even more saddened and concerned by the fact that the roots of the crisis do not lie in any inability to pay but stem, rather, from a serious decline in respect for the legal, political and moral commitment to the United Nations and the principles for which it stands. This being the case, the focus must be on addressing the crisis more as a problem arising out of the decisions made by States than as one of tapping resources.

(Mr. Masri, Jordan)

This does not absolve us from recalling that the immediate causes of the crisis are default, withholding and procrastination by certain States in the payment of their assessed contributions on time. This constitutes a breach by those States of one of their most important international obligations to the Organization as the focus of mankind's hopes for security and prosperity. Thus, while calling upon those Member States to respond to the appeals of the Secretary-General to pay their overdue contributions now and their future contributions on time, we are hopeful that action will be taken to ensure an effective solution to the Organization's financial crisis over the long term by devising a stable system of financing with a sound organizational structure that will prevent any party from bringing financial pressure to bear to influence the functioning or independence of the Organization.

In presenting our view of the major international issues and problems, I will begin with the Middle East region in the very midst of whose conflict, at the core of which lies the question of Palestine, my country, Jordan, finds itself. That region has become a living embodiment of the international community's state of decline and one of the most dangerous hotbeds of tension in the world, just as it has come to mirror the attempts made to diminish the role of the United Nations. There, expansionism prevails, the Organization's impotence in the face of events in the region is evident, and competition among the great Powers has found such fertile soil that the legitimate interests of the peoples of the region take second place to theirs.

More than 21 years of Israeli occupation of the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and the Syrian Arab Golan Heights have now elapsed. At the outset, Israel claimed that it was prepared to withdraw from those territories as part of a comprehensive settlement that would guarantee its peace and security. The falsity of that claim

(Mr. Masri, Jordan)

has become clear, so that all are now convinced that Israel has no intention of withdrawing from the territories it has occupied. From the beginning of the occupation it set about annexing Arab Jerusalem and implanting settlements in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, and it proceeded to destroy their separate economic structures. At the same time, it showed persistent opposition to Arab and international peace moves and initiatives and to the United Nations resolutions relating to the Arab-Israeli conflict. Deluded by its military success in 1967, Israel persisted in endeavouring to go against the logic of history and the Charter of the United Nations by changing the temporary character of its occupation into a permanent reality, without regard for the lessons of history and without calculating the consequences.

(Mr. Masri, Jordan)

These circumstances, created as they are by Israel and by the practices it has continued to pursue for 21 years, circumstances which do not provide a fitting background for the co-existence of peoples and which constitute a grave obstacle to the potential for peace rather than a sound basis for its achievement, have begotten and provoked a very major development in the context of the question of Palestine and the Middle East problem as a whole. And that is the uprising of the Palestinian Arab people under occupation in all parts of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, an event the developments of which are followed by the whole world through political news reports and the international media, which have brought out Israel's true character and revealed the horror and abomination of its oppressive practices directed against a defenseless civilian population which rejects occupation. The uprising has underscored the consensus of the Palestinian people on rejecting and resisting the occupation and has conveyed to the conscience of the world a cry for help in bringing that occupation to an end just as it has brought home to Israel that the mere passage of time since the occupation began does not mean that a fait accompli has been irrevocably established and that the question is closed. To attribute the uprising to causes other than the sense of frustration and despair at finding a way out of the impasse of occupation that is felt by citizens under occupation is tantamount to an attempt to ignore the true state of affairs. Most unfortunately, the negative and savage approach adopted by the Israeli occupation authorities in coping with the uprising indicates that Israeli attitudes are still dominated by ideas of intimidating the inhabitants of the occupied territories and using force and violence as means of settling the conflict. Instead of reconsidering its erroneous posture and responding immediately to Arab or international peace initiatives or even initiatives proposed by its friends, Israel has resorted to procrastination and manoeuvre, as well as to persistent talk of

(Mr. Masri, Jordan)

what is rejected by the Arabs and internationally unacceptable, for the purpose of perpetuating the occupation and implementing its unlawful schemes. In the same way, it has engaged in attempts to impose a blackout on what is happening in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip in order to conceal the full extent of the force and violence with which the army of occupation confronts defenseless Palestinian citizens.

Jordan, which has lived through the tragedy of the Palestinian people in all its dimensions from the very beginning and which bears the greater part of the burden of its humanitarian, economic, social and political impact, has always called for reason, moderation and the search for a just and durable solution. In adopting that course, its people has identified itself with the hopes and travails of the Palestinian people. In 1950, Jordan united its destiny with that of the West Bank voluntarily and of free choice in a constitutional unity, achieved through democratic methods, which stipulated that both banks of the Jordan would respect the historical rights of the Palestinian people and preserve their rights in any settlement in keeping with international law. The union of the two banks formed the basis in international law and the principles of international legitimacy on which Jordan relied in its political moves to end the Israeli military occupation of the West Bank begun in 1967. In its turn, Security Council resolution 242 (1967), which was adopted by consensus, also gave concrete expression to the importance and legitimacy of Jordan's legal role in working for, and demanding, an end to the occupation. Jordan nevertheless responded positively to the situation which emerged on the Arab scene in 1974 with the proclamation of the Palestine Liberation Organization as the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. Despite the fact that our acceptance of that situation created something of a duplication of roles, we coped with it by endeavouring to reconcile

(Mr. Masri, Jordan)

our role in Jordan, under the umbrella of constitutional unity between the two peoples and international law, with that of the Palestine Liberation Organization as the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. We were, accordingly, prompt to lend it our support in international forums, to co-operate with it in order to facilitate its political action and to secure its participation as a key party to international peace initiatives, particularly in the light of the declared positions of the United States and Israel to the effect that they would refuse to deal with the Palestine Liberation Organization.

Just as Jordan responded to the call made to it by the Arab States at the 1974 Rabat Summit to continue to deal with the West Bank through Jordanian institutions in order to support the steadfast resistance of the Palestinian people under occupation, it has also responded, further to the Arab Summit Conference held at Algiers last June, to the desire of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, and in accordance with the inter-Arab policy on the matter, to stress the Palestinian identity of the land of Palestine both formally and substantively by severing the legal and administrative link between the two Banks. That may perhaps also prompt the States concerned, whether directly involved or in a position to bring strong influence to bear, to face up more realistically and more seriously to the responsibilities that devolve upon them with respect to the attainment of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace and to enabling the Palestinian people to achieve its legitimate rights and to live in freedom and dignity like all other peoples of the world. For our part, we in Jordan are hopeful that this step will also support the valiant uprising and highlight the role of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, in its endeavour to

(Mr. Masri, Jordan)

establish an independent Palestinian State on the soil of the Palestinian homeland. At the same time, we resolutely assert that Jordan will continue to perform its national role as a major party to the Arab-Israeli conflict and to fulfil its duty in assisting the Palestinian people and supporting its legitimate struggle to achieve its national goals, and we shall do this on the basis of our special and distinctive relationship with the land and people of Palestine. Palestinian identity has at no time been in conflict with or opposition to Jordanian identity. Rather, when we speak of the question of Palestine and Palestinian rights, we are referring to a particular land and a specific people that inhabited that land for many centuries before Israel uprooted it in 1948 and dispersed it in the diaspora, going beyond that in 1967 to occupy the entire territory of historical Palestine and place one and a half million Palestinians under its occupation in what most resembles a horrendous prison. This, then, is the problem, and it will only be solved by Israel's withdrawal from the Palestinian and other Arab territories that it occupied in 1967, by respect for the right of the Palestinian refugees to return to their homeland, by enabling the Palestinian people to exercise its inalienable rights, principally its right to self-determination and to establish an independent State on the soil of its homeland, and by guaranteeing the right of all States of the region, including Israel, to live in peace within secure and recognized borders.

In our view, the only way to achieve such a settlement is through Israel's acceptance of and agreement to the holding of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East as the sole means of conducting direct negotiations between all the parties concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, within an international framework, under the auspices of the United Nations and with the participation of the permanent members of the Security Council, on the basis of

(Mr. Masri, Jordan)

Security Council resolution 242 (1967) and the various United Nations resolutions relating to the question of Palestine, the rights of the Palestinian people and the Arab-Israeli conflict in general. The United Nations, through its Charter and its resolutions, represents the natural and proper framework for the achievement of such a settlement, particularly since it is the forum which gave rise to the Palestinian issue. There is an urgent need for new thinking by the Israeli leadership, since it must accept the International Conference as representing the only way to a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement, thus breaking the vicious circle of violence, oppression and moral decline. The pretexts advanced by Israel, such as its fear of the possibility of bringing upon itself international pressures which would place its security in danger, have no basis in truth since one of the key goals of the Conference is to overcome mutual suspicion by guaranteeing the security of all, a security that neither of the parties can achieve at the expense of the other. Failing that, we see no secure future for Israel until it withdraws from the occupied territories.

(Mr. Masri, Jordan)

It cannot have both land and peace, and its security will not come from occupying territory or creating defensible borders. It is genuine peace with the Arabs that will ensure its future and provide it with security. The popular uprising in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip has demonstrated the falsity of Israeli claims that those areas are essential to its security; and Israel has created for itself a security impasse by persisting in its occupation and attempting to subject the Palestinian people by force.

In this connection, we should like to stress that the Security Council, having been established for the purpose of maintaining international peace and security, is entrusted with a unique mandate and accorded certain privileges; and because of its political make-up and its international prestige, it is an effective instrument of pressure and action for the convening of the international peace conference on the Middle East. This should take place as soon as possible, given the gravity of the situation with regard to the popular uprising in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, a situation which also requires the Security Council to remain on the highest state of alert and to face its responsibility by adopting immediate measures to protect the civilian population.

With regard to the situation in Lebanon, we in Jordan call for the full and speedy implementation of all the resolutions adopted by the Security Council on the question, particularly those calling for full and unconditional Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon and the deployment of United Nations forces up to the internationally recognized borders. We call for the restoration of Lebanese sovereignty over all Lebanese territory regardless of any Israeli pretexts for prolonging its occupation of southern Lebanon. This would provide the basis for reconciliation in Lebanon and the restoration of the unity, security and stability of that peaceful country.

(Mr. Masri, Jordan)

The constitutional crisis through which Lebanon is currently passing is a grave and momentous development, one that requires the co-operation of all parties concerned if they are to reach an agreement reflecting the consensus of all communities and factions in the country on the principle that democracy should be strengthened, on the election of a new President of the Republic and on adhering to an order that will guarantee the unity of the land and people of Lebanon, thereby preventing the advent of a situation that might constitute a step towards the partition of the country. The international community is fully aware of the formidable risks inherent in any partition of Lebanon and the dismantling of its social and political order. Serious damage would be done to the security and stability of the countries of the Middle East region, with a consequent negative impact on international peace and security in general. We pray God that the times of anguish the people of Lebanon is undergoing today will soon turn to times of glory in which it will triumph over the intricacies of the crisis and, through the support and assistance provided to it, achieve overall national reconciliation in a free and united Lebanon, restore the basic economic and social structures of its homeland and achieve the security and prosperity to which it aspires.

Jordan welcomes the recent developments in the Iran-Iraq war in terms of the cease-fire and the moves for peace through direct negotiations. We view these negotiations as a key mechanism with which the two parties should persevere in their endeavour to discuss all the points at issue and address all the causes and manifestations of the obstinate conflict between the two neighbouring States, with a view to reaching a just, lasting and comprehensive peace ensuring stability, good-neighbourliness and close co-operation between them and all other parties in the region. We call for efforts to be stepped up to impart to the ongoing negotiations between the two countries the political and moral thrust that will

(Mr. Masri, Jordan)

make it possible to discuss the conflict and the pending problems associated with it within a framework of judicious political and diplomatic action. While, in this connection, we call attention to the flexibility and commitment to international responsibility which has characterized the political position of Iraq since the outset of the conflict, and which also continues to guide it in the present negotiations between the two countries, we hope that that will be appreciated and reciprocated in a spirit of goodwill and lead to the signing of the treaty of peace, friendship, co-operation and good-neighbourliness guaranteeing the security, prosperity and progress of the peoples of the region as a whole.

The achievement and signing of the Afghanistan Accords has also been a source of gratification to us, and we hope that they will be implemented in letter and spirit in order to enable the people of Afghanistan to exercise its right to self-determination in such a manner as to ensure the unity, integrity, independence and neutrality of Afghanistan within the framework of commitment to the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of States. We are happy, in this context, to commend the important role played by the United Nations, and the role and efforts of the Secretary-General personally, which, with the co-operation of the parties concerned, made it possible to achieve such positive results.

Similarly, it is with much hope that we have followed the latest developments towards détente in connection with the problem of Namibia. We therefore endorse the negotiations being conducted by the delegations of Angola, South Africa, Cuba and the United States to pave the way for the independence of Namibia in accordance with Security Council resolution 435 (1978), in the hope that the Secretary-General of the United Nations will be able to announce a beginning of the implementation of that resolution as early as possible this year with a view to achieving independence for Namibia so that it can take its proper place among nations.

(Mr. Masri, Jordan)

In the same spirit of optimism and support, we have been following the positive developments with respect to the situation in Central America and the signing of the agreement at Esquipulas, in Guatemala, and we hope that a common understanding for the settlement of all the problems of the region and the establishment of security and peace there will be reached. This represents the necessary basis for overcoming the economic and financial problems from which the States of the region are suffering and ensures the security and welfare of their peoples.

In general, the principles on which my country's policies are based, particularly those relating to the right of peoples to self-determination, non-interference in the internal affairs of States and rejection of occupation, govern its positions on all other international conflicts. In this context, my country welcomes the dialogue that has begun between the parties to the conflict in Kampuchea, with a view to achieving a just and definitive political settlement ensuring the withdrawal of foreign forces and the right to self-determination of the Kampuchean people. We also welcome, in that connection, the recent efforts of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the States of Eastern Asia to promote dialogue and achieve the desired settlement.

In like manner, my country also endorses all the moves made to achieve détente and conciliation in the Korean peninsula. The process of dialogue between the two Korean parties must therefore be encouraged in order to build confidence between them as an important and indispensable foundation for the achievement of peaceful unification of the two countries. We will support and endorse that move on the grounds that a united Korea would, in our view, constitute a guarantee of peace, stability and prosperity in that important region of the world. We welcome the idea of both States becoming Members of the United Nations, especially since that

(Mr. Masri, Jordan)

would provide an opportunity for them to meet within the United Nations framework in accordance with its principles and work to bring their points of view closer together.

Jordan calls for a speedy peaceful settlement of the Cyprus problem through dialogue between the island's two communities, with a view to achieving a settlement that will ensure the unity and sovereignty of Cyprus and its non-aligned status. The recent meeting between the President of Cyprus, Mr. George Vassilou, with the leader of the Turkish community, Mr. Rauf Denktash, under the patronage of the Secretary-General, was a positive sign and indicated that the two parties to the dispute had the political will and genuine desire for constructive dialogue we hope will continue in an atmosphere of mutual confidence to achieve the desired negotiated settlement. In that connection, we endorse the continuing efforts of the Secretary-General and the good offices he is making available to the parties concerned with that end in view.

The situation in South Africa does not differ greatly from that in the Middle East because the African States suffer from the racist and aggressive policies of the Government of South Africa and because of the practices of oppression, repression and violence that this régime continues to pursue against the oppressed majority of the population in a vain attempt to suppress the national resistance and perpetuate the policy of apartheid.

(Mr. Masri, Jordan)

The Government of my country reaffirms its support for and solidarity with its brothers on the African continent in their just struggle, in which the entire international community participates in order to persuade or compel the Government of South Africa to abandon its policy of apartheid and transform the State into a democratic, unitary country. Here again we cannot fail to stress the role of the United Nations in meeting the need to monitor and condemn the co-operation that exists between Israel and South Africa in the military and nuclear fields, because of the threat that co-operation poses to the African continent and the peace and security of the world as a whole.

To complete my presentation of Jordan's viewpoint on the regional and international issues and problems that threaten the security and peace of our peoples, I must refer to the question of disarmament. In our view, disarmament is a basic element in the restructuring of all areas of international relations to establish a comprehensive order of peace, security and prosperity in a world free of violence, in which priority will be accorded to the preservation of human life and the achievement of cultural, scientific and economic progress for human society. That cannot be achieved without eliminating nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. My country welcomed the conclusion of the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles by the two super-Powers with satisfaction. It sees this as the beginning of nuclear disarmament and an important step in preparing the political climate for the continuance of efforts towards comprehensive disarmament. We look forward to the strengthening of the role of the United Nations, to enable it to give the necessary thrust in seizing this historic opportunity and making the process of disarmament and détente permanent and irreversible.

(Mr. Masri, Jordan)

In conclusion, we believe that the surmounting of the political problems and international conflicts that deplete human potential and waste financial resources will not be enough to achieve peace in the long term if it is not combined with development. This is particularly true since the world economic situation today is far from reassuring and the slow economic recovery achieved by the industrialized countries has not expanded to a degree that ensures its reaching the developing countries, whose progress is essential for the sound development of the world economy as a whole. These countries continue to face deficits in their balance of payments as a result of the fall in commodity prices and growing protectionist trends on the one hand and the rising prices of their imports of manufactured goods on the other. In combination, these factors have led to a drop in exports and foreign currency earnings and consequently aggravated the debt-servicing burdens of the countries concerned. Accordingly, the industrialized countries and the international institutions must take effective measures to enable the developing countries to overcome their economic crises, and they must do this in a context that takes account of the global nature of the world economy and the need for intensification of the North-South dialogue.

Mr. HAMUD (Somalia) (interpretation from Arabic): I should like at the outset, Sir, on behalf of my delegation and on my own behalf, to congratulate you on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly at the forty-third session, and to express our confidence in the leadership, diplomatic skills and wisdom which you bring to your high office.

At the same time, I wish to convey to Mr. Peter Florin of the German Democratic Republic my sincere appreciation of his excellent work as President of the forty-second session.

(Mr. Hamud, Somalia)

The annual evaluation of the international situation undertaken each year by the General Assembly has, of necessity, been pessimistic in recent years, reflecting a world gravely troubled by the race in nuclear and other weapons, the widening economic gap between the developed and the developing countries and the regional turmoil that inevitably follows racist oppression, foreign intervention, military aggression and the denial of the right to self-determination.

The conditions that breed international instability and insecurity are still in evidence, but the General Assembly can undoubtedly be heartened by the signs of improvement in the world situation evident today. These signs allow us all to feel a certain optimism about the prospects for international peace and security.

In acknowledging the improvement in the world situation, Somalia particularly welcomes the new spirit of rapprochement between the United States and the Soviet Union. There is an African proverb which says that when elephants fight it is the grass that suffers. Certainly, East-West rivalry has been a major factor in regional conflicts involving third-world countries, and the world's peoples, without exception, are endangered by the nuclear competition of the super-Powers. Somalia is therefore gratified that the change in East-West relations from confrontation to dialogue has resulted in progress towards the limitation of nuclear arms, and in efforts to settle some of the regional conflicts which have been of grave concern to the world community.

In this context, Somalia shares the satisfaction that has been widely expressed at the ongoing withdrawal of Soviet forces from Afghanistan. We trust that the terms of the four-power agreements concluded under the aegis of the United Nations will be scrupulously observed. The paramount considerations in the days ahead must be national reconciliation, the safe return home of refugees and the full restoration of Afghanistan's independence, sovereignty and non-aligned status.

(Mr. Hamud, Somalia)

It is also our profound hope that the changed international climate will ensure the successful outcome of agreements on the question of Namibia's independence and on an end to South Africa's military aggression and interventions in Angola. Security Council resolution 435 (1978) must, of course, continue to be recognized as the only internationally acceptable basis for Namibia's independence. We believe that Namibia's independence is the responsibility of the international community. We affirm our support for Angola's position as a sovereign State, free to negotiate in its own best interest, and we highly commend the Angolan Government for its statesmanship as it continues to play a key role in the achievement of a cherished goal of the United Nations. Namibia's independence is, of course, the moral and political responsibility of the world community, and its achievement is long overdue.

(Mr. Hamud, Somalia)

We believe that a note of caution is in order in view of South Africa's past history of reneging on its commitments with regard to Namibia. In our view, the General Assembly must continue to oppose linkages that might unduly delay Namibia's independence and must insist on continued economic pressure against the Pretoria régime to ensure that Namibia is indeed set free.

There is yet another conflict that has been the concern of the international community, that is, the Gulf war. We hope that the two countries concerned will continue to co-operate closely with the Secretary-General, Mr. Perez de Cuellar, in his vigorous efforts to secure implementation of Security Council resolution 598 (1987). The terms of that resolution provide a firm basis for progress towards a just and lasting settlement. We trust there will be no turning back on the path to peace.

The cautious optimism abroad in the world today can also be directed towards the situation in Cyprus. The patient efforts of the Secretary-General to promote a negotiated settlement and the willingness of the leaders of the two ethnic groups on the island to engage in dialogue are positive factors in the search for an end to the division and conflict. We hope that a spirit of compromise will govern the negotiations and bring about a settlement that takes account of the rights of all concerned there.

My Government regrets that in Cambodia, another troubled area, peace remains elusive. However, we believe that here too there is cause for optimism despite the apparent failure of the talks held recently in Indonesia between all those concerned. We trust that the great Powers involved will continue to exert their influence on behalf of the restoration of Cambodia's sovereignty, its national unity, and its political, economic and social stability.

(Mr. Hamud, Somalia)

With regard to the developments in the Horn of Africa, there is a movement towards peace and stability. My country remains committed to the Somalia-Ethiopia peace agreement, both in its letter and in its spirit. Somalia, as a third world country and Member of the United Nations and of several regional organizations, as well as other international movements, welcomes understanding and co-operation among States, big and small, and calls for strict adherence to the principles of the Charter. It is in this spirit that Ethiopia and Somalia reached an agreement for the normalization of relations and the creation of the necessary climate to permit a permanent and just solution of the existing problems between the two countries. As a result of this agreement, positive steps have been taken in the implementation of the agreement, such as the disengagement of forces, the resumption of diplomatic relations and the exchange of prisoners of war. In this respect, it could be stated that the two countries have taken strides in the direction of peace and we hope that there will be no further set-backs in the relations between them. We look forward to fruitful relations between the two countries characterized by mutual confidence, respect and good will. We in Somalia firmly believe that stability is the corner-stone of social and economic development and human progress.

While I have voiced a measure of optimism about the international situation, I must also emphasize Somalia's deep concern over a number of questions long on the agenda of the General Assembly which continue to resist efforts for their resolution.

In South Africa, for example, the majority population remains disenfranchised and alienated in its own country; authentic leaders such as Nelson Mandela remain in prison and the mass democratic movement protesting injustice is being ruthlessly attacked by South Africa's powerful police-State apparatus. This is the reality of

(Mr. Hamud, Somalia)

apartheid, which the Pretoria régime attempts to hide under cosmetic arrangements and a curtain of censorship.

My Government reiterates its call for the imposition of comprehensive and mandatory sanctions against South Africa and for a strong international commitment in support of the front-line States as they face South Africa's aggressive and destabilizing policies.

The complex Middle East question also defies efforts to achieve a comprehensive settlement. Today the courageous uprising of the people of the West Bank and Gaza serves to underline the central realities of the region: namely, that there will be no peace until Israel withdraws from all occupied Arab territories, including Jerusalem, and recognizes the right of the Palestinians to self-determination and statehood in Palestine.

My Government strongly supports the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, at which the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, would participate on an equal footing with other parties. In our view, the Conference would provide a unique opportunity for negotiations on the basis of the constructive Middle East resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly.

I turn now to the disturbing phenomenon of an international economic system which increasingly militates against the economic progress of developing countries.

The harsh realities of the world economic situation are vividly illustrated in Africa, the continent with the largest number of countries that are both least developed and prone to natural and other disasters. The best efforts of African States to bring about their own and Africa's recovery from economic crisis are thwarted on every side by catastrophic debt, the collapse of commodity prices,

(Mr. Hamud, Somalia)

protectionism, grossly inadequate terms of trade and the stagnation of concessional flows of development assistance.

Africa's colossal and steadily growing debt is of course its most crippling problem. My Government regrets the decision of the major creditor countries to deal with the African debt on a piecemeal rather than on a comprehensive basis. This has been a heavy blow to hopes for the effective implementation of Africa's Programme for Economic Recovery, and we hope that this decision will be reconsidered.

In its international economic system, the African countries expect an increase in the assistance they receive from major international institutions, such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund in order to achieve recovery. Unfortunately, most structural adjustment programmes ignore the human dimensions of underdevelopment and thus fail to break the cycles of unemployment, malnutrition, ignorance and disease. International financial institutions must prescribe for ailing States in such a way that the patient is not overcome by the medicine.

With regard to both bilateral and multilateral development assistance, it must be said that there has been a disappointing failure on the part of donor countries to make good the commitments undertaken two years ago at the height of Africa's economic crisis. Somalia gratefully acknowledges the development assistance received, in particular from Nordic countries. However, we appeal urgently to other traditional donors which have not yet done so to respond to the plight of the least-developed countries in a manner commensurate with the gravity of their situation.

(Mr. Hamud, Somalia)

I wish to call attention to the area of development aid of particular concern to Somalia, that of assistance to refugees. In my country, my Government has for nearly a decade continued with its efforts to secure emergency assistance for Somalia's massive refugee population; and it has also promoted permanent solutions in the context of national development plans. Unfortunately, international assistance for these efforts falls far short of the need. Therefore we remind the donor communities of the pledges made at the Second International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa. We hope they will support the related programmes of action which have been strongly endorsed by subsequent sessions of the General Assembly.

My Government regrets that discussion of the larger issues on the agenda of a North-South dialogue has been suspended, and that the immediate problems of developing countries - particularly the least developed - are not being adequately addressed. It is widely acknowledged that world peace and security are ill served in a world characterized by marked divisions between rich and poor countries. There needs to be a wider understanding of the fact that development problems are an integral part of an interdependent world economy and a renewed commitment to the goal of narrowing the gap between developed and developing countries.

The most important issue on the agenda of the General Assembly is without doubt that of disarmament with its serious and wide-ranging implications for world peace and security.

My Government strongly hopes that the lessening of international tension already marked by the adoption of the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles - INF Treaty - will have a significant and continuing effect on disarmament in all its aspects. We were disappointed, however, by the failure of the third special session on disarmament to reach agreement on vital aims and priorities.

(Mr. Hamud, Somalia)

In our view the most urgent disarmament priorities must be the conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty and a freeze in the production of nuclear weapons. Conventional disarmament is undoubtedly a grave responsibility for all Member States, but it is the nuclear-arms race which overshadows and threatens all our endeavours and the very existence of mankind.

In this same context we strongly oppose the development of space weapons when our immediate environment is dangerously threatened by existing systems of mass destruction.

Somalia welcomes the progress made towards the conclusion of a convention outlawing chemical weapons. We hope that the United Nations will play a role in the verification of disarmament agreements. This is a proposal with obvious practical benefits and one which would enhance the principle of collective security.

Somalia was also disappointed that the militarily significant States have now largely disavowed the linkages affirmed by the International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development. There should be no need to emphasize once again the human tragedy implied in the expenditure of astronomical sums for armaments while a majority of the world's population goes hungry.

Not very long ago the authority and effectiveness of the United Nations were considered to be at a low ebb, but nothing succeeds like success. Today a new and welcome prominence has been given to the world Organization because of the central or valuable supporting role it has played in promoting negotiations for the resolution of regional conflicts.

I think it needs to be emphasized at the present time that the peace-keeping and peace-making abilities of the United Nations have always been available for application to conflict situations. If the function of the world body as a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations has not always been utilized, this is not

(Mr. Hamud, Somalia)

the fault of the Organization. The United Nations can function effectively only if its Member States give it the moral and material support it deserves.

Today there should be no difficulty or hesitation in giving unreserved support to the world Organization, since the extensive administrative reforms demanded by Member States have been faithfully carried out. It is certainly an anomalous situation that the United Nations should be faced with a financial crisis which threatens its very existence, while it is at the same time closely involved in the resolution of problems of the greatest international concern - in Afghanistan, the Gulf War and southern Africa, to name but a few. Somalia hopes that all Member States will faithfully carry out their financial obligations and ensure the continued strength and effectiveness of the world body.

I take this opportunity to express my Government's deep appreciation of the dedication and skilled diplomacy of the Secretary-General, Mr. Perez de Cuellar. The cause of peace is well served by the personal qualities he brings to his high office. We wish him good health and continued success.

The world community faces formidable global challenges posed by economic and political interdependence, the escalation of nuclear and conventional weapons and serious threats to our planet's environment. It should be apparent to all that these challenges cannot be met without sustained and sincere efforts for international co-operation, and that the United Nations is the indispensable centre for such co-operation. In conclusion, my Government reaffirms its full confidence in the principles and purposes of the world body and pledges continued support for its endeavours in all fields - economic, social and others - in a way that will ensure the prosperity of the world and serve the cause of peace.

Mr. PINHEIRO (Portugal) (spoke in Portuguese; English text furnished by the delegation): Allow me to begin by congratulating you, Sir, on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its forty-third session. I particularly want to express, on behalf of Portugal and on my own behalf, all the confidence we have in you and our conviction that positive results will be achieved owing to your professional skills and total commitment.

Similarly, I wish to express my gratitude and that of my country for the generous and serious work carried out by the President of the General Assembly at its forty-second session, Mr. Peter Florin, to whom I address my warmest greetings.

I should also like to join all those who have praised the outstanding performance of the Secretary-General, Mr. Perez de Cuellar, and the commitment and dedication he has shown in resolving the problems which have been of such concern to us. His actions have certainly contributed to the recent awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to the peace-keeping forces of the United Nations.*

* Mr. Huerta Montalvo (Ecuador), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Pinheiro, Portugal)

Greece, as current President of the European Commission, has made a statement on behalf of the 12 member States in which it addressed the most important and relevant issues in the present international situation. I reaffirm our support for that statement. However, I should like to recall the importance which my Government attaches to some of those issues. It will surprise nobody if I single out first the question of East Timor.

As the United Nations seems to be resuming its role in the peaceful solution of conflicts, while we welcome the successes registered in the solution of several international problems of the utmost gravity and the effective progress achieved in settling others that until now have apparently defied solution, I regret to have to refer to a question which has dragged on for years without any meaningful progress towards a just solution in accordance with the principles and fundamental resolutions of the United Nations.

The question of the decolonization of East Timor is a thorn in the international conscience and a challenge to the consistency with which the essential principles of decolonization, so often invoked and reaffirmed as a fundamental part of the heritage of the Organization, are applied and observed. It is sad to see in the case of East Timor the flagrant and direct violation of such principles perpetrated by a country which was also subjected to colonialism and which performed such an important role in the struggle for emancipation of the colonized peoples.

It is 13 years since the Non-Self-Governing Territory of East Timor, then under Portuguese administration, saw its process of decolonization interrupted when it was invaded and occupied by its powerful neighbour. Portugal does not deny its share of the responsibility for the difficulties and troubles that have affected that process since its beginnings, but we cannot accept that such events legitimize its invasion and occupation by Indonesia and the subsequent denegation of the

(Mr. Pinheiro, Portugal)

fundamental rights and freedoms of its people, including its inalienable right to self-determination. No circumstances whatsoever could legitimize the ruthless way in which repression was waged in the Territory, with an intolerable price in human life and suffering.

A small people, numbering a few hundred thousand, which saw a fourth of its citizens killed, which is subject to an authority it did not choose and whose rights, freedoms and fundamental guarantees are restricted, demands an opportunity to choose its own political destiny.

Portugal - I repeat once again - has no claim to sovereignty over the Territory of East Timor. We uphold the right to self-determination of East Timor, and we cannot understand why the occupying force, which constantly invokes the benefits brought by its administration to the well-being of the inhabitants, fears to face the result of a free act of self-determination. If, as has been argued, hearts and minds are already won over to its cause, why fear the expression of the will of the people?

East Timor is for us a moral, historical and legal responsibility. The defence of the rights, freedoms and specific identity of its people - so often proclaimed in this forum as an imperative for the international community as a whole when referring to other colonial Territories - is also the collective responsibility of us all as Members of this Organization committed to the observance of its fundamental principles. We cannot ignore the drama of East Timor without becoming accomplices in an intolerable policy of *fait accompli* imposed by force.

Portugal will do its utmost to find through dialogue a just and comprehensive solution acceptable to the international community. We are fully committed to collaborating with the Secretary-General, whose mediation efforts I acknowledge

(Mr. Pinheiro, Portugal)

with gratitude. It is in a constructive spirit, and having in mind primarily respect for the legitimate rights and aspirations of the people of East Timor, that we envisage the continuance of this mediation process. We sincerely hope that that spirit will also prevail on the part of Indonesia.

The international community views with justified apprehension the continuing deterioration of economic conditions in a great number of countries, especially on the African continent. This situation - to which the inadequacies of prevailing models of development, the seriousness of certain structural and conjunctural imbalances in the international economic order and the extreme vulnerability to natural catastrophes of many African societies, often contribute - is characterized by the stagnation of growth, high rates of inflation and a disturbing level of external indebtedness.

This question was dealt with here during the session which analysed the implementation of the United Nations special Programme of Action for Africa. Without ignoring the responsibilities which primarily rest with the Africans themselves, it is only fair to recall that the member countries of the European Community have tried to create efficient schemes of aid to least developed countries. The successive Lomé Conventions must be singled out, because they have established a relationship of co-operation, outlined in a freely agreed legal framework. They associate the interested countries in a structure of permanent consultation which is an important forum for the development of the North-South dialogue.

I should like in this context to draw attention to my country's commitment to and interest in the preparation, within the framework of the Community, of the negotiations on a new convention between the European Economic Community (EEC) and the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries. We believe that the relations

(Mr. Pinheiro, Portugal)

fostered between the Community and its 66 partners in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific are an important example in the area of co-operation and aid for development.

The perspective being defined at the Community level is that sectoral interventions should be complementary to the process of development, and not mere emergency operations lacking long-term effectiveness. This is, in our view, the most effective and responsible path to pursue to aim for a progressive balance of the system of exchange so as to achieve the harmonious development of international trade.

I believe that the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference (SADCC) deserves the continuing support of the international community, being an experiment in regional co-operation with practical achievements of major importance for the economic self-reliance of the countries of the area.

The processes of structural adjustment which are being implemented by several developing countries, in a courageous way and at an obvious political and social cost, deserve growing support from the industrialized countries, through integrated actions in co-ordination with all entities taking part in financing and in an active dialogue with the beneficiary countries.

For historical and cultural reasons known to all, my country pays very special attention to the question of development assistance. That serious problem now affecting the peoples and countries of the so-called third world is of great concern to us, and we are deeply committed to the search for means to solve it.

Here I wish to recall the proposal made last May by the Prime Minister of Portugal in the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe to create in Lisbon a North-South centre, with a flexible structure, to work as a forum for a permanent

(Mr. Pinheiro, Portugal)

exchange of views with the objective of encouraging a climate of understanding and confidence between North and South. We hope to have the support and participation of all States represented here.

My country acknowledges with appreciation the increasing value which is being attached to this aspect of international relations, because that is in line with the historical role that Portugal has played in the world and corresponds fully to the way in which we envisage our place in the community of nations.

Africa is of special importance to Portugal because of the historical and cultural ties which bind us together and which we continue to strengthen today, co-operating to the mutual benefit of and in the interest of the socio-economic progress of the countries involved.

(Mr. Pinheiro, Portugal)

This co-operation, as the practical expression of an active political relationship, is definitely more visible in bilateral actions with the African countries whose official language is Portuguese: Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Sao Tome and Principe, Angola and Mozambique. But I am pleased to note that every year Portuguese participation in the structure of multilateral machinery of great importance - namely, the Lomé Convention and the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference - assumes a wider expression of political and economic solidarity specially geared to realistic development priorities.

In this context I believe then we can emphasize the United Nations special Programme of Action for Africa, which is clear evidence of the attention and commitment of the Organization in the quest for a solution to this problem, to which none of us can remain indifferent.

In the last two months we have seen historic developments which have opened up new horizons to the peoples of Angola and Namibia, who, I believe, will overcome the long years of suffering and enjoy in the future conditions of development and progress in a climate of peace, with due respect for territorial integrity.

I congratulate all those who, by their pragmatism, commitment to dialogue and readiness to yield on accessory matters to guarantee the essentials, made possible the achievement of a breakthrough in a process that dragged on for so long.

In this context I wish to send a very special message of greetings and solidarity to the Angolan people and to reaffirm Portugal's readiness to do everything possible, at both the bilateral and the multilateral level, to help the People's Republic of Angola in its difficult task of achieving the reconstruction and development to which it is justly entitled.

(Mr. Pinheiro, Portugal)

As for Mozambique, I take this opportunity to condemn once again the intolerable situation of insecurity created by a guerrilla movement supported from outside. It is high time to allow the martyred people of that country to work in peace towards a better future. Mozambique also deserves the solidarity of the international community in its struggle for peace and development.

However, it is really up to the Government of South Africa to shoulder its responsibilities and give evidence of a true willingness to pursue dialogue and good-neighbourliness. This would prove that it remains faithful to the spirit and the letter of the historic Nkomati Agreement, which was recently reaffirmed at the Songo meeting. Nevertheless, I wish to reaffirm my country's conviction that complete détente in the region can be attained only through the elimination of internal tensions in the Republic of South Africa.

Portugal has denounced and condemned, not only in the United Nations but also on many other occasions, the immorality and injustice that are the main features of the apartheid and bantustanization systems aimed at perpetuation of the political, economic, social and cultural discrimination that is at the heart of the continually worsening internal situation in that country. Here again we appeal to the Government in Pretoria to deal with its internal problems with the open-mindedness recently shown in the Namibia negotiations and the pursuit of peace in Angola.

Any progress towards the definitive breaking-up of the apartheid system is, in this framework, a fundamental and high-priority matter. Only the eradication of apartheid will give all communities of that country access to political participation, work, security and social well-being. It is in the hands of the South African authorities, had they the political courage and awareness of the

(Mr. Pinheiro, Portugal)

irreversibility of history, to make of the Republic a multiracial, economically advanced country, a melting-pot of all its communities - in short, a real focal point for the development and progress that would undoubtedly have a positive impact on all southern Africa.

Indeed, it is up to the South Africans - all South Africans - to decide on the best way to implement reforms, the need for which is incontrovertible. But it is clear to me that freer political expression by the black majority would undoubtedly contribute to the creation of the climate of mutual confidence indispensable for the transformation of the South African society. I cannot leave this subject without referring to the deep concern in my country at the situations of Nelson Mandela, whose seventieth birthday was recently celebrated by the international community, and the Sharpeville Six - both crying examples of injustice.

Portugal, a member of the European Community and of the Atlantic Alliance, and a participant in the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE), has followed East-West developments with particular attention. I note with satisfaction and confidence the clear improvement in recent months in the relations between the two super-Powers. Today, after the Washington and Moscow summits, there is a positive spirit; dialogue is more open and frequent, and decisive steps have been taken, specifically in the areas of arms control and disarmament.

My country welcomed the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles - INF Treaty - as a positive and important step towards international détente, and therefore towards peace. In this connection we support the objectives already set by both parties of a 50 per cent reduction in the strategic nuclear arsenals of the United States and the Soviet Union.

(Mr. Pinheiro, Portugal)

Portugal is confident that in the near future decisive moves will be made on conventional arms. Specifically, we hope that the existing imbalances between East and West will be corrected through a process of negotiation. This would eliminate the disproportion, thus making possible stability and security at the lowest level of armaments. We therefore have the greatest hopes of the CSCE process. My country is confident that a quick settlement at the Vienna meeting will permit the approval of a final, substantive and well-balanced document that will make possible the beginning of negotiations on conventional-weapons stability and the renewal of talks on confidence- and security-building measures.

Nuclear and conventional disarmament - the guarantee of peace and security - is the indissoluble condition of the establishment of universal peace. We therefore welcome the significant progress registered in this area. However, we view with great concern the recent upsurge in the use of chemical weapons. My country, which is a signatory to the 1925 Geneva Protocol, is firmly committed to efficient, global and verifiable implementation of a convention that will ensure the total elimination of this type of weapon. It is our imperative duty to arrive expeditiously at the consensus needed to fulfil that requirement. In this context Portugal supports without reservation the proposal made in this Assembly several days ago by the President of the United States for a concerted international effort to ensure the elimination of chemical weapons.

I wish to express my country's satisfaction at the cease-fire recently signed between Iran and Iraq, which should allow for a just and lasting solution of that long conflict, which has claimed so many victims. I therefore pay a tribute to the endeavours of the United Nations in persuading the parties involved to abide by Security Council resolution 598 (1987).

(Mr. Pinheiro, Portugal)

As for the Israeli-Arab conflict, we note with regret that the present situation is not encouraging. The serious events in the occupied territories demonstrate the fragility of previous solutions. Any lasting solution will have to take account of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and recognize the right to exist of all countries of the region. Portugal, together with its European partners, believes that the expeditious convening of an international conference would provide the appropriate framework for the essential negotiations between the parties directly involved.

As for Latin America, I wish to reaffirm our fraternal solidarity with the countries of that vast region, and our total readiness to contribute actively to their efforts to overcome their difficulties. I am convinced that the developed countries can help significantly in ameliorating these problems and in the search, together with the countries of the region, for new and imaginative forms of co-operation. The question of external indebtedness, in particular, must be seen in the context of economic growth, given that it is important to reduce the social burden that it imposes.

I must also make a special reference to the situation in Central America, where the hope generated by the signing of the Esquipulas Agreement was followed by a stalemate in the peace process.

(Mr. Pinheiro, Portugal)

Portugal believes that the solution to this situation should be sought, in the first instance, at the regional level, in a climate of mutual trust and within the framework of strict respect for human rights, pluralist democracy and the principle of the inviolability of frontiers. We have always taken into consideration the unjust and unfavourable social conditions that have contributed to the present state of affairs in that region and we therefore believe that economic co-operation among the countries of the region and the industrialized countries will also have a determining influence in achieving the desired peace and progress for the region.

Reaching a political solution for Cambodia is also an imperative necessity for the international community and one which is daily becoming more pressing. It is time to restore peace, dignity and hope to a country that has been successively martyred by the intolerance of a minority that shows disrespect for the most elementary human rights and by a foreign military occupation that cannot be legitimized under any pretext.

On the other hand, the Geneva agreements on Afghanistan constitute a significant stride towards solution of a conflict which, for almost a decade, sowed suffering and misery among the Afghan people. I cannot but note the courage and spirit of self-sacrifice of the Afghan resistance and the humanitarian solidarity displayed by Pakistan in receiving millions of refugees displaced by the conflict.

Peace among nations and respect for human rights are the aspiration of us all and are inseparable from the well-being of each and every individual in the world community. That well-being is closely linked to economic development and is based on sound international trade, free of protectionism, be it open or concealed.

This has been the position which my country has clearly assumed. As a member of the European Community, Portugal considers it indispensable to have reciprocity in the opening up of markets. That is our practice and a fundamental feature of the Community's trade policy.

(Mr. Pinheiro, Portugal)

My Government firmly believes that we are in the final stage of the setting up of the institutions necessary for the full participation of Portugal in the world market, in accordance with the objectives of the Contracting Parties to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT).

In this perspective we recognize the importance and the opportunities provided by the Uruguay Round, the satisfactory outcome of which would, without any doubt, contribute to a better balance in the world's trade relations. I reaffirm that the goal of those negotiations will be reached only if the principle of globality is strictly upheld.

The joint declaration by the European Economic Community (EEC) and the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON) establishing official acknowledgement between the two organizations, issued in Luxembourg on 25 June 1988, ended 30 years of non-recognition of each other by the two Europes.

Aware of the historical significance of this event and of its implications for the future relationship between the two organizations and the respective member States, Portugal welcomed it and believes that a major step has been taken towards a new era of international co-operation extending to the most diverse fields.

We trust that multilateral co-operation, reflected also in the relations between the EEC and the European Free Trade Association, the Association of South-East Asian Nations and the Gulf Co-operation Council, will be expanded and intensified.

The commemoration of the fortieth anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights should provide support to the efforts of the international community to ensure the exercise of the rights and fundamental freedoms inherent in the human person everywhere in the world. Now that the United Nations already has available to it several international instruments for defining

(Mr. Pinheiro, Portugal)

and guaranteeing such rights, it is therefore important to ensure their effective implementation and the strengthening of international control mechanisms.

As a priority of its foreign policy, Portugal contributes to the promotion and protection of human rights. In the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, my country has striven to comply with the mandate entrusted to it, rejecting duplicity of criteria and working towards the strengthening of the effectiveness of existing mechanisms. To achieve full enjoyment of the fundamental freedoms of each individual, it is indispensable to keep in mind the complementary nature of civil and political rights and economic, social and cultural rights.

Throughout the past five centuries, Portugal has enriched its history, its culture and its language in all parts of the world. That would be enough to justify its interest in the international scene. Such an interest acquires a new and powerful thrust when one considers the committed and active participation of my country in many international organizations - from the United Nations to the EEC, from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization to the Council of Europe, to mention only a few.

We are aware, however, that it is not enough simply to observe the international scene and to react to events. Together with other countries of good will Portugal has a part to play in combating situations of injustice and war which, unfortunately, still occur. We have to overcome inertia and mobilize wills in order to change ineffective practices of co-operation. Above all, we must work hard to co-ordinate efforts to ensure that existing or potentially dangerous situations do not prevail. And, if present solutions do not work, we must search with daring and creativity for new ones.

Portugal, once again reiterates its availability and willingness to contribute to efforts to ensure that we may all enjoy more peace in security, more freedom in democracy, more solidarity in prosperity.

Mr. OULD N° DIAYANE (Mauritania) (interpretation from Arabic): It gives me great pleasure to associate myself with previous speakers in offering to Ambassador Caputo my warmest congratulations on his election to the presidency of the forty-third session of the United Nations General Assembly. I am confident that, under his guidance, the work of the Assembly will be carried out efficiently and with authority.

I should also like to extend to his predecessor, the Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of the German Democratic Republic, Mr. Peter Florin, our gratitude for the exemplary way in which he conducted the work of the forty-second session.

Let me also pay a well-deserved tribute to the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, for the outstanding way in which he has directed the work of the United Nations and for his tireless efforts to achieve international peace and security. Those tireless efforts have resulted in the award of the Nobel Peace Prize to the peace-keeping forces and have greatly contributed to the resolution of certain regional conflicts in the period since the last session of the General Assembly. I refer, in particular, to the Gulf, where the event that has been awaited for so long has come about - the cessation of the hostilities between Iraq and Iran. The acceptance by Iran of Security Council resolution 598 (1987) and the opening of negotiations between the two countries augurs well for peace between them.

Mauritania has always worked to put an end to this deadly, destructive war between two fraternal Muslim peoples. We sincerely hope that comprehensive, just and lasting peace will be established between them so that they may at last be able to live in harmony and devote their efforts to progress and well-being.

(Mr. Ould N'Diayane, Mauritania)

This perseverance has also produced results in Afghanistan, with the signing of the Geneva agreements last April. Mauritania welcomes the signing of those agreements and the withdrawal of foreign troops and hopes that the process that has been started under United Nations auspices can speedily restore peace and concord to the people of Afghanistan and an independent and non-aligned State.

In Western Sahara, the process of joint good offices started by the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity has made an important step forward with the submission by the Secretary-General of a peace plan to the two parties to the conflict. Mauritania supports these efforts and particularly welcomes the agreement in principle brought about in this area as well as the progress made thus far towards a just and lasting political settlement of that fratricidal conflict. The final solution of this problem will contribute greatly towards building the Greater Arab Maghreb, to which all the peoples of the region profoundly aspire. It was to that end that the Heads of State of the region met, for the first time since their independence, in Algiers last June to prepare favourable conditions leading to the Greater Arab Maghreb. This was a historic event which established the main guidelines for the integration and construction of a united Greater Maghreb. At the present time, various meetings are taking place to implement this political will which was clearly expressed by the Heads of State.

My country welcomes the relations between Libya and Chad and the good will both countries are showing with a view to normalizing their relations.

In southern Africa the series of negotiations that have been taking place over the last few months opens new prospects for peace and in particular for the end of the illegal occupation of Namibia. Security Council resolution 435 (1978) remains the only acceptable basis for a just and lasting settlement of the Namibian

(Mr. Ould N'Diayane, Mauritania)

question, for it embodies international legality and enjoys the support of the Namibian people and their legitimate representative, the South West Africa People's Organization.

In South Africa itself, the apartheid régime persists in its heinous policy and continues to inflict untold suffering on the black majority. It also continues to carry out acts of aggression against the front-line States.

Apartheid, that institutionalized system of racism and racial discrimination, is an affront to human dignity and a threat to international peace and security. It is the duty of all civilized nations to implement the strategy to oppose that system adopted by the United Nations, in particular the imposition of comprehensive mandatory sanctions.

Mauritania fully supports that strategy and naturally supports the struggle of the people of South Africa, under the leadership of the African National Congress, to establish an egalitarian, democratic and non-racial society, just as it fully supports the heroic resistance of the front-line countries.

It was in that context that my Government was honoured to host, from 16 to 18 June last, the second preparatory meeting for an inquiry into apartheid. That important meeting, which was sponsored by the Heads of State, was attended by eminent personalities of world-wide repute for their devotion to the cause of human rights and democratic principles, and largely contributed to mobilizing international public opinion with respect to the odious system of apartheid and set the stage for entering an active phase to prepare for an international tribunal to be held next year.

In the Middle East, the Palestinian people chose the double anniversary of 40 years of partition and 20 years of occupation to remind the world that it cannot disregard the national rights of a people. Because of its scope and duration, the popular uprising in the occupied territories has shown the world the magnitude of

(Mr. Ould N'Diayane, Mauritania)

the tragedy of the Palestinian people as well as its fierce determination to recover its land, its dignity and its inalienable rights, no matter what means are used by the Israeli war machine and the acts of inhuman repression carried out by the occupying forces.

The popular uprising has also shown the world that the Palestinian question is the core of the Middle East conflict and that as long as the Palestinian people is deprived of its national rights, in particular its right to self-determination and the establishment of its own independent State, peace can never be established in that region. Any just and lasting solution requires the withdrawal of Israeli troops from the occupied Arab territories, including the holy city of Al-Quds. But the régime of Tel Aviv disregards all these facts and obstinately follows its policy of aggression and expansion, in contempt for international law.

The convening of an international conference on the Middle East under the auspices of the United Nations, with the participation on an equal footing of all concerned parties, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, which is the sole, authentic representative of the Palestinian people, is the proper framework for finding a just and lasting solution to the conflict.

The violence and repression that we witness in the occupied territories make the convening of such a conference increasingly urgent and constitute a new challenge for the United Nations, which must assume its full responsibility with respect to the Palestinian tragedy.

In Kampuchea, the search for a political settlement continues and the ongoing national dialogue holds much promise. The solution to that problem must be in keeping with the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly, which reaffirm the need for the withdrawal of foreign troops from that territory and the right to self-determination of the Khmer people.

(Mr. Ould N'Diayane, Mauritania)

In Central America, Mauritania sincerely hopes for the final restoration of peace on the basis of the recommendations of the Contadora Group and the Contact Group, as well as the Guatemala agreements signed last year by the five Heads of State of the region.

Turning to the question of Korea, my country has always advocated the peaceful reunification of that peninsula in the interests of the Korean people as a whole. We support all efforts undertaken to that end.

The world economic situation is also a major item of profound concern to the international community. The gap between the developing and the developed countries continues to widen. The drop in commodity prices, the increasing debt-servicing burden and the re-emergence of protectionism and restrictions placed on the transfer of technology have had an especially severe impact on the developing countries.

(Mr. Ould N' Diayane, Mauritania)

The stalemate in the North-South dialogue has prevented us from achieving agreed innovative solutions to ensure the recovery of the world economy and the development of the third-world countries.

Aware that they have the primary responsibility for the economic and social development of their peoples, the Governments of the developing countries have adopted important reforms and made large-scale adjustments but, because of the international economic climate, those actions have not led to the achievement of the goals that were set. Action must be co-ordinated at the international level.

Africa, the least developed continent of the world, is particularly affected by the economic crisis. In an effort to confront this situation, the Organization of African Unity held an extraordinary summit conference in Addis Ababa, which undertook a clear analysis of the foreign-debt crisis in Africa. Mauritania is in full agreement with the joint African position on the convening of an international conference on the African external debt.

Only an overall, integrated strategy will enable us to resolve the African debt crisis and to give concrete form, at the same time, to the commitments undertaken by the international community in the context of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development. In that regard, we appreciate the positive decisions taken at the last summit conference of the industrialized countries, particularly in regard to relieving the burden of debt of the developing countries, and we hope that these decisions will be extended and strengthened. In particular, we are deeply grateful to the Federal Republic of Germany, which has agreed to defer repayment of the whole of our large debt. We thank also those countries that are prepared to take similar measures to help our country.

The scourges of drought and desertification are still a serious threat to the Sahelian region, of which Mauritania is a part. In October 1978 another disaster

(Mr. Ould N'Diayane, Mauritania)

occurred. I am speaking of the pilgrim locust, which has great mobility and destroys everything in its path: crops, pastureland, date palms, and so forth. In order to deal with this scourge, which specialists agree will continue to afflict us for several years, various meetings of west African and Maghreb countries have been convened to co-ordinate the policies of the various States and to advocate common action. My country, which is particularly affected by this infestation, has combined its national efforts with the international efforts. ~~Mr.~~ I also thank here the friendly countries and the international organizations for the aid they have already supplied as well as for their sensibility to Mauritania's concerns.

These natural disasters and the international economic crisis require exceptional financial efforts by my country, in a particularly difficult economic situation. Since 1985, despite these conditions, my Government has been engaged in a broad programme of economic reforms and structural adjustments. Significant progress has already been made in economic and financial recovery, but these results cannot minimize the scope of the efforts that must still be made to satisfy our countries. That is why the consolidation of the development strategies and programmes implemented in recent years in conformity with the Lagos Plan of Action and priority programme for African recovery is a major concern. Accordingly, my Government has just adopted a three-year programme of consolidation and recovery, which will be submitted soon to our economic partners. But, basically, we are relying on ourselves.

Our development policy is based primarily on mobilizing all our energies. In that context, our national leadership, our national leadership, headed by Colonel Maaouya Ould Sid'Ahmed Taya, President of the Military Committee of National Salvation and Head of State, on 12 December 1984 chose to establish a State of law, in which human rights and fundamental freedoms are guaranteed to all the citizens. Thus, a process of real democratization has been undertaken. The communal

(Mr. Ould N'Diayane, Mauritania)

experience having been extended to all areas of the country, this year municipal councils will be set up at the local and city levels. The purpose of these elections is democratic participation, which will enable the people to take part directly in development activities. In that connection, the rural sector occupies a major place. That is why the Government has given it priority by allocating 36.5 per cent of public investments to it and encouraging the private sector to carry out hydro-agricultural projects involving the free distribution of land and a guaranteed return from production.

The major economic and financial problems facing the international community show the great urgency of releasing additional resources for development. It is only common sense that this should be done at the expense of the arms race, given the flagrant disproportion that now exists between resources allocated for military expenditures and those devoted to development assistance. Indeed, it is intolerable that enormous human, financial, natural and technological resources should continue to be consumed by the arms race at a time when poverty is the daily lot of more than two thirds of mankind. That is why we emphasize the need to link disarmament and development - a link that was established by the international conference on this subject held last year.

In that regard, we welcome the conclusion by the United States and the Soviet Union of the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles, as well as its verification clauses. But it is only a beginning, and international peace and security - that is, the survival of the human race - can be brought about only through general and complete disarmament. Without that, we cannot imagine that mankind can survive on the earth.

Today's world is at a crossroads. It has to meet many challenges, in particular the persistence of armed conflicts and hotbeds of tension everywhere, as well as the arms race and the unfair distribution of wealth. Unfortunately,

(Mr. Ould N'Diayane, Mauritania)

despite great progress in science and technology, the world is still unable to ensure well being and prosperity for all. That is an intolerable situation.

We must all understand that nations are interdependent. We must understand the magnitude of the problems facing mankind. The United Nations offers us the only multilateral framework in which to channel all our efforts. It is an instrument that is indispensable to peace and international co-operation. The United Nations has an enormous potential that can be mobilized and used to achieve the noble ideals laid down in the Charter. This is demonstrated by the progress being made in the political solution of major regional conflicts on which until recently no progress had been made. The Member States, particularly the great Powers, have historical responsibilities in that connection.

Mauritania expresses again its faith in the purposes and principles of the Charter and will continue to work to improve and strengthen our Organization's role.

Mr. BAYIH (Ethiopia): Let me first extend to Mr. Dante Caputo the congratulations of the Ethiopian delegation, as well as my own, on his election as President of the General Assembly at its forty-third session. My delegation is confident that under his wise and skilful guidance this session will reach a successful conclusion. In this regard I should like to assure him of the full co-operation of my delegation as he discharges his heavy responsibilities.

May I also take this opportunity to express our gratitude to his predecessor, Comrade Peter Florin, who presided over the last session of the General Assembly with admirable skill.

I should like at this juncture to pay a tribute to the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, for the exemplary dedication and competence with which he has always discharged the heavy responsibilities entrusted to him. In reaffirming to him the deep appreciation of my Government, already expressed on a number of occasions over the last few years, I wish him ever greater success in his future endeavours.

Few are those who deny that nations are becoming increasingly interdependent. There has probably been no period since the dawn of human civilization when various societies have lived in complete isolation from each other. The growth of human progress itself would have been inconceivable without close contacts and the exchange of ideas among different societies. Ours has especially become a period in history when the various challenges facing humanity can hardly be tackled outside the context of interdependence. Ours has, indeed, become a time when the imperatives of survival dictate that we all take seriously the fact that not only are we interdependent but also that we share a common destiny.

Perhaps no one denies this incontrovertible truth, but the lack of political will to bridge the huge gap between what is asserted on the plane of declarations

(Mr. Bayih, Ethiopia)

and what is done in practice is a vivid demonstration of the fact that our actions are not commensurate with the immense challenges facing humanity as a whole. In this context two closely related challenges, among others, demand our concerted and co-ordinated action: the strengthening of peace and security on the one hand and the promotion of development and progress on the other.

This session of the General Assembly is being convened at a most propitious time from the point of view of the relaxation of international tension. There is no gainsaying that the period since the last session has been marked by a number of encouraging and positive developments on the international scene. The improvement in relations between the two major Powers and the increased level of mutual understanding between them accords fully with the yearning for peace that we have all been voicing for too long.

In this regard we view with satisfaction the Treaty concluded between the Soviet Union and the United States on the Elimination of their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles. Although only 3 per cent of the nuclear arsenals of the two major Powers are meant to be destroyed under the Treaty, the symbolic significance of the achievement can hardly be underestimated. In general we feel the Treaty represents a step forward in the area of nuclear disarmament.

Subsequent political developments likewise give us reason to view the international political scene with optimism. Among such developments is the acceptance by both Iran and Iraq of Security Council resolution 598 (1987). This constitutes a major achievement towards the restoration of peace in the area and the enhancement of international peace and security.

The Geneva Accords on Afghanistan, which came into force on 15 May 1988, are yet another step which has contributed towards the change to a better political climate than that which prevailed a year ago.

(Mr. Bayih, Ethiopia)

The positive steps that have been taken so far towards the withdrawal of South African occupation forces from southern Angola and the efforts being made to facilitate implementation of Security Council resolution 435 (1978), on Namibia, are also welcome developments. However, given the chronic duplicity of the racist régime, we feel obliged to caution that the international community should follow the unfolding situation with the utmost vigilance.

We also draw satisfaction from the resumption of the intercommunal talks aimed at addressing the question of Cyprus. We are likewise optimistic regarding developments towards seeking a solution to the problem of the Western Sahara.

It is also pertinent to mention here the concerted efforts that are being deployed to restore peace in Kampuchea and the progress that has so far been made towards the restoration of peace in that region.

It is a source of great satisfaction to us that the United Nations, consistent with the provisions of the Charter of the Organization, has spearheaded the search for solutions to the various political problems that I have just referred to. While this is testimony to the continued relevance of the United Nations, my delegation also finds it most appropriate to pay a tribute once again to the Secretary-General for his dedication and untiring efforts in the cause of international peace and security.

As we take note of the improved climate in international relations and the prevailing relaxation of tension, we are at the same time duty bound to make a realistic assessment of what has already been achieved and what remains to be done in the area of international peace and security. I should also add that whatever conclusions we arrive at must be firmly founded on an objective analysis of the state of affairs now prevailing in the world.

In this connection it will suffice to refer to the disappointing result of the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. As is well

(Mr. Bayih, Ethiopia)

known, the session closed without agreement being reached on a final document. although great efforts were exerted to arrive at a consensus. It is obvious, therefore, that we should redouble our efforts towards progress on a number of interrelated disarmament measures. A comprehensive nuclear test-ban treaty is a goal the achievement of which could go a long way in arresting the nuclear-arms race but which has so far eluded us, despite a near universal consensus on the issue. Other priority measures in the field of disarmament include steps to prevent the extension of the arms race into outer space, agreement on the prohibition of the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons and the speedy conclusion of a chemical-weapon convention.

I might also mention here the contribution that the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones in different parts of the globe could make towards the ultimate goal of a nuclear-free world. In this context I wish to express our appreciation to the Government of the German Democratic Republic for organizing in June of this year an International Meeting on Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones.

In any discussion of the subject of nuclear-weapon-free zones it is appropriate to refer to the initiative that the peoples of Africa have taken to keep the continent free of nuclear weapons. It was 24 years ago that the Heads of State or Government of the Organization of African Unity adopted, at their summit conference in Cairo, a Declaration on the Denuclearization of Africa. This initiative represented one of the first regional attempts at the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone. Since then, the General Assembly has adopted a series of resolutions calling upon nuclear-weapon States to respect the wishes of the peoples of Africa to protect the status of the continent as a nuclear-weapon-free area.

(Mr. Bayih, Ethiopia)

However, it has now become clear that the African peoples' commitment to free the region from the nuclear-arms race has been challenged by the reckless policy of the racist régime in Pretoria to acquire nuclear-weapons capability. In fact, it now appears from available evidence that South Africa has indeed achieved the capability to produce nuclear weapons.

The implications of this ominous development for international peace and security cannot be over-emphasized. Such capability, acquired by a régime that would have no scruples in using them, should be viewed with alarm by all who have genuine concern for the maintenance of international peace and security. There is, of course, little doubt that it would have been practically impossible for South Africa to achieve this capability without the support it has been able to get from those who, with characteristic myopia, regard South Africa as an indispensable partner.

As if this were not enough, the people of Africa are also being challenged by a new and grave development. In recent years it has become clear that some in the West have started to engage in activities that pose imminent danger to the African peoples and to the African ecosystem. I am referring here to the dumping of nuclear and industrial wastes in African countries by some Western transnational corporations.

The indignation of the African peoples at the callousness displayed by those who perpetrate this crime has been echoed by the Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), meeting in its forty-eighth ordinary session in May of this year. My delegation deems it appropriate that the dumping of nuclear and industrial wastes in Africa has been inscribed as an item on the agenda of this session of the General Assembly. We are confident that the session will give serious attention to the matter and adopt decisions reflecting the gravity of the problem.

(Mr. Bayih, Ethiopia)

Much as we are encouraged by the significant political achievements registered during the first half of 1988, we remain none the less concerned by the continued use or threat of use of force, under any pretext, against the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of small States.

No better example of this can be provided than the prevailing situation in Central America where, despite the various regional peace efforts and the decision of the International Court of Justice, Nicaragua still finds itself under constant threat to its independence, territorial integrity and sovereignty. Thus the international community's solidarity with the people of Nicaragua must be strengthened so that that country can be totally free of the covert and overt intervention to which it has been subjected for too long.

Similarly, there are a number of other issues relating to international peace and security, as well as to the rights of peoples and to justice for those facing egregious forms of discrimination that still cry out for solutions.

The problems posed by the evil system of apartheid in South Africa clearly demonstrate how long indeed is the distance that the international community has yet to travel in laying the foundation for international relations based on justice and basic human decency. The noble goal of eradicating this abhorrent system continues to demand unremitting struggle. Apart from the call for comprehensive and mandatory sanctions against the racist régime, for the success of which the international community needs to deploy greater effort, final victory against it requires all those who stand for justice to continue to rally behind the struggle being waged by the people of South Africa. As in the past, Ethiopia will continue to provide concrete assistance to the people of South Africa until apartheid is dismantled and justice and democracy are firmly established in South Africa.

(Mr. Bayih, Ethiopia)

It is also appropriate to emphasize here that continued solidarity with the front-line States is part and parcel of the struggle against apartheid. In that context, we are all duty bound to render the fullest possible assistance to these countries to enable them to withstand the military intervention and economic pressure of the racist régime.

In the Middle East, the problem that emanates essentially from the denial to the Palestinian people of their rights as a people still awaits a just solution. I should like to take this opportunity to reaffirm Ethiopia's continued support for the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, with the participation of all parties concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organization.

The situation in the Korean peninsula is one other problem that requires the attention of the international community. I believe we are all aware of the fact that the quest for reunification by the people of the peninsula is still frustrated by certain major impediments. Ethiopia fully supports the desire and efforts of the Korean people for national reunification without foreign intervention.

While the past year has witnessed a number of encouraging developments in the sphere of disarmament and the resolution of regional conflicts, it is regrettable that existing negative trends have persisted in other areas.

Far from showing improvement, the issues of development and progress that represent another challenge to the international community have instead become a cause for ever greater concern, both for their serious implications for international peace and security and for the immense human tragedy they entail.

The deteriorating economic and social conditions in developing countries, especially in the least developed among them, obviously require concerted action from the international community to be contained and reversed. Instead, what we

(Mr. Bayih, Ethiopia)

have been witnessing is lack of sufficient political will on the part of many developed countries to create the necessary economic environment for developing countries to rehabilitate their economies.

It has now become clearer than ever before that the serious difficulties facing the developing world emanate mainly from the external economic situation, over which they have very little control. The policies pursued by some developed countries, particularly in the areas of trade, money and finance, have further aggravated the problems, which are deep-rooted in the prevailing international economic system already characterized by unjust and unequal relations.

Developing countries are endeavouring, within the limits of their resources, to revive their economies and to ensure a decent life for their peoples. But to no avail. Some of the reform measures required of developing countries have, in fact, become potential causes of political and social instability. Furthermore, the determined efforts made by these countries have invariably been frustrated by such external factors as the decline in commodity prices and export revenue, unfavourable terms of trade, widespread protectionism, accumulation of external debt and decline in net resource flows, the combined impact of which has seriously impeded their overall development process.

In the case of African countries, most of which belong to the group of least developed countries, these externally induced obstacles to development have further compounded the difficulties they have encountered as a result of widespread drought, desertification and other natural calamities.

It is to be recalled, in this connection, that it was in response to the economic plight of African countries that the thirteenth special session of the General Assembly devoted to the critical economic situation in Africa was convened more than two years ago. The result of that session was the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990.

(Mr. Bayih, Ethiopia)

While the Programme of Action is intended to help improve the performance of African economies, the full implementation of the reform measures it requires has been rendered difficult owing to various factors. Significant among these is the unfavourable international climate characterized, among other things, by accelerated deterioration of the terms of trade, the low level of resource flows, mounting debt-servicing, and the inadequacy of external support for our efforts.

(Mr. Bayih, Ethiopia)

The recent mid-term review conference has clearly shown the constraints faced by Africa in the reform process. We are therefore hopeful that the international community will be more forthcoming in supplementing the efforts of African countries towards the desired objective of improved productivity and rapid economic recovery.

As Ethiopia is a country already confronted with immense problems caused by natural calamities, it should come as no surprise that the negative impact of the external economic environment on its efforts towards economic recovery has been enormous. Although the amount and distribution of precipitation during the main rainy season this year appear satisfactory, the adverse effects of the series of droughts my country has experienced for almost a decade and a half can hardly be tackled with our own resources within a short period of time. However, Ethiopia will continue to exert every effort to make effective use of available resources with a view to overcoming its economic difficulties and accelerating its development.

In this connection, it is indeed regrettable that some continue to display a glaring lack of judgement as regards my country in their assessment of the problems in our sub-region. Rather, they see fit to subject Ethiopia to their habitual criticism, which is as biased as it is unwarranted, and in sharp contrast to the prevailing reality in the country.

Fairness and objectivity would have demanded that they should, at the very least, recognize the maximum efforts Ethiopia is exerting to offset the consequences of the drought, the attainment of food self-sufficiency and accelerated development while at the same time coping with the problem created by the huge influx of refugees into the country.

(Mr. Bayih, Ethiopia)

In the circumstances, it would have been most appropriate to sensitize the international community to this reality with a view to supporting Ethiopia's efforts to meet effectively the manifold challenges it is facing.

When I had the opportunity to address this Assembly last year, I expressed, inter alia, Ethiopia's readiness:

"to forge and strengthen relations with all countries, particularly those which are in our region and with which we have had difficult relations".

(A/42/PV.22, p. 19-20)

In that statement, I expressed Ethiopia's commitment to peace and its determination to do as much as possible to help relax the tension in our region. We have always been willing to muster the necessary political will to take two steps forward towards the normalization of relations with all peace-loving countries for every one step they may take towards the same goal.

Today, it gives me immense satisfaction to refer to the highly significant step that has been taken by my country and Somalia towards improving our relations. An agreement on normalization of relations between the two countries was signed on 3 April 1988. In accordance with this agreement not only have we restored diplomatic relations and exchanged prisoners of war but we have also embarked at a rapid pace on the normalization of relations, which, we are confident, will create the necessary conditions for both countries to devote their resources and energy to their economic development. This demonstrates our good will to bury the hatchet with a view to promoting regional peace. I should like to take this opportunity to reaffirm that Ethiopia will be second to none in its determination to build a bridge of friendship with all countries on the basis of equality and mutual benefit.

(Mr. Bayih, Ethiopia)

In this regard, I should like to acquaint this Assembly with the fact that, consistent with its commitment to ensure durable peace in our region, Ethiopia is at present engaged in sustained and painstaking negotiations with the Sudan with a view to identifying the root causes of the problems between the two countries and to finding appropriate solutions. For its part, my Government is determined that the Joint Expert Committee which the two countries have established will soon complete its tasks and present its recommendations. Given a similar commitment on the part of our Sudanese brothers to lasting peace between the two countries, my Government remains confident that all outstanding issues could be resolved in the interest of peace and co-operation in our part of the world.

We derive satisfaction from the national, regional and international appreciation and support of our peaceful endeavours. On the other hand, we find it hard to comprehend the view of those who still fail to grasp the significance of these achievements as steps towards the restoration of peace by the countries of the region themselves, and continue to express lingering anxiety about tension in the area.

In opening my statement I referred to the fact that the challenges of development and progress, on the one hand, and of international peace and security, on the other, could be tackled only within the context of interdependence. Thus, it becomes obvious that our well-being lies only in multilateralism. As a founding Member of this Organization, there is nothing that gives us greater joy than to see the United Nations become increasingly effective in the quest for solutions to the major challenges facing humanity.

In recent months, the United Nations has shown how truly effective it could be in implementing and promoting the purposes and principles of the Organization as enshrined in its Charter. We are, indeed, encouraged by this positive trend.

(Mr. Bayih, Ethiopia)

At the same time, the financial situation of the Organization continues to be a cause for concern. Putting pressure on the United Nations by withholding assessed contributions to the regular budget of the Organization constitutes a violation of a treaty obligation on the part of Member States. My delegation is hopeful that such a state of affairs will not be allowed to continue and that the growing efficacy of the United Nations will not be adversely affected by a financial crisis.

In the interest of global peace and security, and in the interest of the prosperity and well-being of the human race, let us therefore rededicate ourselves to strengthening the viability and effectiveness of the United Nations. As for Ethiopia, it will always remain committed to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Mr. BARRIOS TASSANO (Uruguay) (interpretation from Spanish): I should like to begin by extending our warmest and most heartfelt congratulations to the Foreign Minister of the Republic of Argentina, Mr. Dante Caputo, upon the occasion of his election to the post of President of the forty-third regular session of the United Nations General Assembly. We consider him to be a friend of our Government and of our people and we recognize his great experience and ability. We can therefore say that his presidency represents an assurance that the work of this Assembly will proceed in an orderly fashion.

It is also my pleasure to thank Mr. Peter Florin of the German Democratic Republic for his brilliant and efficient work as President of the Assembly during the previous session.

(Mr. Barrios Tassano, Uruguay)

I should also like to express our admiration for the Secretary-General for the efforts that he has been making for peace. His activities, intelligent, prudent and, at the same time, bold, notwithstanding the institutional and financial constraints upon the Organization, have represented an invaluable contribution to the resolution of various regional conflicts and they are eloquent testimony to the value of the United Nations as a forum and instrument for the maintenance of international peace and security.

(Mr. Barrios Tassano, Uruguay)

The lengthy agenda of this session of the General Assembly reflects all the major issues of concern to mankind today. Taken as a whole, it shows that in fulfilling the purposes and principles laid down in Articles 1 and 2 of the Charter 43 years ago, we are continuing resolutely to search for and to safeguard international peace and security, which continue to be the raison d'être of the Organization and which determine all its other activities and objectives.

Peace has been declared to be a human right. Consequently, all the efforts made to preserve and to restore it are simply the consequences of this right, and the attainment of its objectives becomes a duty for the Organization and all its Member States.

Today, as in the past, the efforts for peace call for direct action by the United Nations, which presupposes, in turn, that States must respect certain principles, such as non-intervention, renunciation of the use or threat of force, self-determination, and the peaceful settlement of disputes.

Ever since the early years of the United Nations, Uruguay has complied strictly with those principles which underlie the Organization and has promoted respect for them. It has also done everything within its modest means to contribute to the success of the United Nations peace efforts.

At this time, as we celebrate the well-deserved awarding of the 1988 Nobel Peace Prize to the United Nations peace-keeping forces, I cannot but recall with pride that Uruguayan officers have been present since 1948 in the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP), and recently in the Iran-Iraq Military Observer Group (UNIIMOG). Our effective participation in these efforts reflects our unswerving faith in the Organization as an instrument for peace.

(Mr. Barrios Tassano, Uruguay)

The progress that the United Nations has made in the cases of Afghanistan, Angola and Namibia, in the Iran-Iraq conflict, and in the question of Western Sahara, must be hailed as a happy resurgence of the capacity for action and the negotiating ability of the organs and mechanisms operating within the framework of the United Nations. We earnestly hope and trust that the processes currently under way will culminate in a just and lasting peace for the nations currently embroiled in conflict.

Unfortunately, we cannot be so optimistic with respect to the present situation in Central America and that in the Middle East. In the case of Central America, Uruguay believes that only by full compliance with the Esquipulas II agreements and the Arias Plan, and by strict compliance with the principles of non-interference, self-determination and non-use of force, combined in a process of international democratization in the countries in conflict, will it be possible to achieve a stable peace in the region.

Our country has participated in the efforts of the Contadora Support Group with sincere enthusiasm, encouraging the parties to comply with the Esquipulas II agreements, and it is willing to continue to do so because it feels that the pacification and democratization of Central America are essential objectives for the harmonious development of all of Latin America, which is, in the end, an objective that is shared by all.

As for the Middle East, it is clear that there can be no lasting peace in the region without recognition of the right to exist of all the States in conflict, and without recognition of the full validity of the principle of self-determination of peoples. But at the same time, we must remember that the rights of those peoples are inexorably linked to the establishment of adequate safeguards, that the borders that have been set, or are to be set in the future, will be duly respected by all.

(Mr. Barrios Tassano, Uruguay)

Likewise, the continuation of artificial political divisions, such as those affecting the Korean people, do not contribute to the attainment of lasting peace in the region.

At the special session devoted to disarmament, Uruguay confirmed its conviction that the arms race could lead to a world war, and that we must continue the efforts already under way to bring about general and complete disarmament. This is essential for the creation of a climate compatible with the search for peace, in the hope that when this is achieved the resources that today are spent on weapons may be put to constructive uses, such as the economic development of the non-industrialized countries and their technological modernization.

Latin America has given the world the example of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which proscribes the proliferation of nuclear weapons among developing countries, without affecting the use of atomic energy for peaceful purposes and scientific and technological progress. In this respect, we emphasize our support for the Declaration of the South Atlantic as a Zone of Peace and Co-operation, and we hope that the zone of peace in the South Pacific will soon become a reality as well. We think that the establishment of these zones of peace constitutes a promising attempt to preserve vast stretches of sea and ocean free from the tensions and conflicts that arise from the threat or use of force or from the dangers resulting from the deployment of nuclear weapons.

Among the conflicts that are still unresolved, we should like once again to emphasize our position with respect to the Malvinas Islands. Uruguay has supported Argentina's claim of sovereignty over the Islands. But we also are mindful of our historic ties with the United Kingdom, with which Uruguay has maintained relations of friendship and co-operation for over a century. We should like now to reaffirm our willingness to co-operate in the search for solutions to a conflict that, with

(Mr. Barrios Tassano, Uruguay)

its recent military events, opened a painful breach throughout Latin America. The wounds must as a matter of urgency be healed through negotiation and dialogue.

The world is currently undergoing an unprecedented process of rapid change. We have fully entered the information age and are witnessing the end of the so-called industrial age with no sense of loss. The United Nations must adapt to this process of change in order to be able to continue to fulfil its mission and to ensure the equitable distribution of technological resources and the enjoyment of their benefits by all States. The monopoly of advanced technologies in the hands of a few countries is turning a majority of nations into compulsory purchasers of imported technology. As a result of this, their political sovereignty is as much endangered as it would be by an act of war. Consequently, we need to universalize the availability of the new resources that are being produced through science and technology. This means an attitude of universal openness, on the part of all countries of the world, industrialized and developing, to the free circulation, not only of goods and services, but ultimately of ideas and knowledge.

If this objective is not faced with all its political implications, any attempts to overcome the world's current economic and financial crisis will be impossible.

Today, we cannot think of the work of the United Nations without thinking of the question of human rights. These never were - and certainly are not today - a matter within the jurisdiction of States. The international promotion and protection of human rights, on the basis of the Charter and of many international instruments is an objective to which mankind as a whole is committed. In this context, we once again repeat our condemnation of apartheid, a shameful doctrine based on inequality and racial discrimination, which is a clear, institutionalized violation of human rights.

(Mr. Barrios Tassano, Uruguay)

In this connection there are other scourges in the world today, such as terrorism and drugs. Terrorism is not merely a factor that contributes to international insecurity and a form of action that violates fundamental principles of civilized coexistence; it is essentially a flagrant violation of human rights, an attack upon the freedom and dignity of man, and especially on his right to life. We consider that the action by the United Nations against terrorism must be firm and clear, based on the view that terrorism is a crime against humanity, one that calls for the co-operation of all States.

(Mr. Barrios Tassano, Uruguay)

As for the fight against the illegal use of drugs, international action must be greatly expanded in order to confront this plague, which is particularly severe today. The United Nations is the appropriate setting for the adoption and promotion of economic, social, cultural and legal measures for its prevention and sanction.

But such measures should not be considered as negating the responsibility of producer countries, nor of consumer countries since, if there were no large consumer market, there would not be any drug-producing market. We should also call attention to the responsibility of the countries that allow their territory to be used for drug trafficking. Our country confirms its determination to co-operate in the international fight against the narcotics trade and pledges its support to any co-ordinated effort at the regional or international levels.

Conservation of the environment is a matter of growing concern for the international community. The quality of man's life on Earth and his very existence are at stake.

We reaffirm our support for the recommendations in the report entitled "Our Common Future", prepared by the World Commission on Environment and Development, and we agree with the basic principles of maintaining the steady productivity of the ecosystems and the biosphere as a whole. We are convinced of the need to increase efforts and to act in a co-ordinated fashion to avert the grave danger of altering the ecological balance and the progressive and rapid physical and chemical deterioration of the environment that is affecting the infrastructure of planetary life.

The achievement of full economic development has been the basic challenge of the last years of our century. Without balanced and global economic development, there can be no firm and lasting peace; the existence of both highly industrialized

(Mr. Barrios Tassano, Uruguay)

countries and countries hindered by underdevelopment is, over the medium- or long-term, a constant source of instability and tension and a threat to world peace.

Even if one recognizes that development is also the responsibility of the developing countries themselves, at this time in our century it seems clear that, even in those developing countries that are willing to absorb the social and political costs of painful adjustments in their economies, there eventually comes a time when national instruments of economic rationality are exhausted.

Hence there arises the indispensable need for greater international solidarity, which starts with clear and stable trade regulations - free from irritating protectionism - and greater flexibility and co-operation in solving the financial problems caused by the current foreign debt crisis, the weight of which is frustrating the efforts of the debtor countries to promote their economic growth and placing the stability of their democratic institutions at risk.

Nevertheless, it must be said that the overwhelming debt burden is monopolizing international attention, pushing into the background the urgent need to discuss new resources necessary to promote the scientific and technological modernization and development of the non-industrialized countries.

Naturally, the problem has transcended the mere economic nature of the issue. It is now time to recognize that the world's financial problems - the past debt and the future debt - are also political problems that must be faced from an international perspective based on a faithful and honest commitment by creditors and debtors alike, in which both recognize their due share of responsibility for the past and the future. To this end, I believe that it is constructive to highlight the recent commitment of the President of the Spanish Government at the close of the twenty-fifth meeting of Latin American Governors, Spain and the Philippines before the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

(Mr. Barrios Tassano, Uruguay)

It is useful to recall this here because it shows that the sensitivity which we have been calling for is starting to emerge among the leaders of industrialized creditor countries as well.

President Felipe Gonzalez began by recognizing the failure of the strategy thus far pursued to resolve the debt crisis and recognized that from 1982 to date the situation of the banks and creditor countries has improved sufficiently for them to assume a more realistic and flexible attitude in this matter. Consequently, he feels that the time has come for the creditors to redefine their debt strategy by specifically proposing the capitalization of interest and the reduction in outstanding debt, along the lines, I suppose, of explicitly recognizing the devaluation of the debt in the securities market.

I believe that this is the appropriate forum and time to welcome views such as the one expressed by the President of the Spanish Government, which tend to bring balance into international attention by recalling that, in spite of the progress in political terms observed at the international level, at this level there still persist serious problems - with no clear solutions - affecting not merely the quality of life of millions of inhabitants of the world but also the possibility of building a world at peace.

Soon, two international events will occur expressing our active commitment - Uruguay's - at the regional and international levels.

The first is the meeting of Latin American Presidents of the Group of Eight to be held at Punta del Este. This group, which was created in Rio de Janeiro, emerged out of the conviction of its democratic Governments that it is important for Latin America as a whole that there be a mechanism for co-ordination and consultation enabling it to harmonize its international activities, promote regional democratization and act in unity in analysing all the problems affecting

(Mr. Barrios Tassano, Uruguay)

the region. There can be no doubt that this group has acquired clear international standing and can now play its part in maintaining relations with other international organizations and countries outside the region. The forthcoming summit meeting at Punta del Este will undoubtedly provide a timely opportunity to analyse what has been done since the Acapulco Declaration and to define a realistic plan of action to pursue in the future in the political, cultural, educational and technological fields.

The second is the Uruguay Round of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), a result of the Punta del Este conference, where discussions were held which, we hope, will serve as an example of international wisdom, promoting international trade free from discrimination and protectionism and capable of promoting international trade exchanges on the basis of which the shared objective for development of all States on Earth can be solidly established.

Within this broader picture, the importance of multilateralism and the transcendental role of the United Nations is clear.

But for our Organization to be active and respected, it is necessary that it have the wherewithal necessary for the attainment of the goals assigned to it by the Charter and the resources efficiently to conduct the operations for which its machinery was established.

We recognize, therefore, that in order to revitalize the Organization once and for all, we need to start with honest self-criticism aimed at eliminating inefficiencies, lessening bureaucracy and improving existing systems.

In saying that, we also realize that the way to achieve this objective is surely not by suffocating it financially to the point of undermining not only its functioning but also its very existence.

(Mr. Barrios Tassano, Uruguay)

Hence it is the duty of all Member States, particularly the large industrialized countries, to reconsider their position as contributors to the United Nations budget and to make the necessary efforts to keep the Organization going and functioning.

In summary, my country reaffirms its commitment to the United Nations. Uruguay is today living in peace, free from conflicts with other States. It maintains relations of friendship and co-operation with States of all political and economic systems in the world; it has developed a strong democratic life that fully respects human rights and is governed by leaders elected through the free expression of the will of the people.

That is why we are able to come before the Assembly today and express our views on foreign policy as the result of national consensus, on the basis of which the country is participating at the regional and international levels in the search for the reaffirmation of the fundamental principles that gave birth to the Organization.

(Mr. Barrios Tassano, Uruguay)

In closing, while confirming my country's confidence in the results of this session, let us recall that the difficult challenges we are currently facing and will have to face in the future can only be overcome through decisive and clear international action without unrealistic rhetoric or expressions of one-sided intent.

This call for pragmatic and rational action includes strict observance by all Members of the Organization of the fundamental principles of the San Francisco Charter, because these principles are not merely rhetorical phrases but rather inescapable legal duties that all States must observe in order to ensure the credibility and efficiency of the United Nations in accomplishing its basic objectives.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): We have heard the last speaker for this afternoon. I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply. I would remind delegations that, in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to five minutes for the second and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. SERRANO CALDERA (Nicaragua) (interpretation from Spanish): I find myself obliged to speak in exercise of my right of reply pursuant to the Assembly's rules of procedure and I regret having to do so.

I regret it inasmuch as I must do so in the presence of the Foreign Minister of a brother State in response to what was said by Don Rodrigo Madrigal Nieto, the Foreign Minister of Costa Rica. I regret even more, however, what was said by the head of the Costa Rican delegation.

I am sorry that in his reference to the crisis in Central America the words he used were inconsistent with the general tone of his address, which was made with

(Mr. Serrano Caldera, Nicaragua)

great concern for equity and balance. He took an accusatory attitude on this issue, which was unjust and, furthermore, in no way served to strengthen the peace efforts being made in the isthmus of Central America.

We never imagined or hoped that the statement of the Foreign Minister of Costa Rica on this matter would be consistent with those of my own Government. However, we did hope that the facts would have been viewed or portrayed more objectively with a more balanced approach to the issues and a fairer view of events. I refer to "fairness" because what was said was unfair, unjust, and does not contribute to the climate of peace or to the efforts being made by appropriate bodies to attain peace. Furthermore, they were unilateral and biased observations.

We would have hoped that there would have been greater objectivity and an awareness of the overall context. The facts referred to were mentioned in a partial and incomplete fashion. A great number of matters were overlooked, which must be borne in mind, since otherwise the result is a negative, partial description of events.

Where was the question of the aggression waged by the United States in Don Rodrigo's statement? This was an open, public policy of aggression, responsibility for which has been borne without embarrassment by the President of the United States. Their responsibility is known to all because of their repeated calls for military assistance to the contra revolution. Their activity was not clandestine; rather, it was open and official.

Likewise overlooked were the activities in my country of diplomatic representatives of the United States aimed at producing internal political destabilization; and I can tell the Assembly today that this was a point made by Jim Wright, Speaker of the United States House of Representatives himself. This is a well-known fact in Central American events, but the Costa Rican Foreign Minister made no mention of it.

(Mr. Serrano Caldera, Nicaragua)

Where were the principles of self-determination and sovereignty, which cannot but be fundamental pillars in any analysis of the situation in Central America? It is elemental justice to recognize the right of a small State to protect itself against attacks by the largest Power in the world. What President Reagan, speaking at the same rostrum, said also did not serve the cause of peace. Where was the reference to that or the reference to the millions of dollars voted for the contras by the United States Congress recently? No mention was made of that. Or of the \$16.5 million in military aid that is part of the same package. Where is that? Or the \$2 million recently voted for the internal opposition in Nicaragua, which has been causing destabilization. Where was that?

The omissions and unjust comments have prompted us to offer our thoughts at this stage in order to give a more balanced and thoughtful analysis and to reaffirm strongly that Nicaragua, more than any other nation, has lived up to its obligations under the Esquipulas agreements. Esquipulas is not a forum by which to put Nicaragua in the dock nor to put other Powers on the bench. Rather, there are mutual and general obligations under the Esquipulas agreements affecting all five countries of Central America.

What was said this afternoon prompts me to wonder about what was said by the Peace Commission, which cannot be accused of partiality or ideological bias. Was that not a demonstration of Nicaragua's fulfilment of, and commitment to, its obligations and to human rights? Did it not show that the verification measures were such as to prevent a worsening of the crisis and to provide concrete means towards peace? Who was it that proposed those measures?

(Mr. Serrano Caldera, Nicaragua)

Can it be forgotten that it was Nicaragua that proposed emphasis on the verification machinery, with the participation of Canada, the Federal Republic of Germany and Spain, as well as the United Nations, providing the Secretary-General with a very relevant paper on this matter? Finally, it was Nicaragua that, in a letter from the President of the Republic to the Secretary-General, proposed the involvement of the Support Group and the Contadora Group.

These are not just words; they are specific expressions of will; they represent specific positions and advocate practical steps.

We re-emphasize our commitment to peace. We have faith in dialogue. We know that only political and diplomatic machinery can shed light on the thorny path towards peace in Central America. But we cannot accept condemnation of the just use of David's sling while Goliath's unjust use of brute force and violence is disregarded. We believe in peace and desire it. We believe in adopting a constructive position and we have faith in the future of the peoples of Central America on the basis of respect for the sovereignty and right to self-determination of all.

Mr. SUTRESNA (Indonesia): My delegation has asked to speak in exercise of the right of reply because we are constrained to take strong exception to the reference made to East Timor by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Portugal. It is truly regrettable that, after successive sessions of the General Assembly, including this session, decided to defer consideration of and debate on the matter in question, Portugal still cannot control its seemingly incurable habit of subjecting this Assembly time and time again to this routine exercise, which has scarcely made any constructive contribution to the truth about the decolonization of East Timor or the safeguarding and promotion of the genuine interests of the people of East Timor themselves. On the contrary, the substance of the reference

(Mr. Sutresna, Indonesia)

made by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Portugal reflects the extent to which Portugal is still willing to go in misrepresenting the facts about East Timor. For its part, Indonesia certainly does not wish to be drawn into an acrimonious exchange with Portugal on this question, which in its view would serve no useful purpose whatsoever. We shall therefore attempt to respond briefly and in the most restrained manner possible.

The Portuguese Foreign Minister just alluded to Portugal's share of responsibility for the difficulties at the beginning of the decolonization process. It has to be pointed out that Portugal, and it alone, must bear that responsibility for the breakdown of the orderly decolonization process and the fratricidal civil war that ensued - a tragedy of great magnitude that befell the East Timorese people in the latter part of 1975. As representatives are undoubtedly aware, my delegation has in the past presented a comprehensive, factual account of the process of decolonization in East Timor and Indonesia's role in it; how that process was sabotaged by a minority group and miserably botched by the former colonial authority; how the colonial authority in Dili simply abandoned East Timor in August 1975 after allowing the situation in the Territory to deteriorate to the point of civil war, which Portugal itself instigated by clandestinely turning over its arms and munitions to one particular political group; how consequently the East Timorese people considered themselves no longer bound to any decolonization covenant as envisaged by the erstwhile colonial Power and took upon themselves the exercise of their legitimate right to self-determination, deciding to be independent through integration with Indonesia on the basis of and in full compliance with General Assembly resolutions 1514 (XV) and 1541 (XV); how throughout the process of decolonization in East Timor Indonesia, by its pronouncements and its action, clearly demonstrated its adherence to the principles

(Mr. Sutresna, Indonesia)

governing the due process of self-determination and decolonization, while endeavouring to respond as correctly and as restrainedly as possible to the chaotic and tragic circumstances that unfortunately accompanied that process in East Timor; and how Indonesia's singular contribution to the process was to help the East Timorese majority defend its expressed will against the terror of a minority that was armed by Portugal and, directly and indirectly, encouraged to use violence and intimidation in a bid to seize power unilaterally. These are facts pure and simple, and no amount of convoluted arguments and misrepresentations can change this reality.

It is most gratifying for Indonesia that more and more Member States have come to recognize and appreciate that today the East Timorese are enjoying fully the political freedoms and economic and social progress that are their birthright, under the constitutional guarantees accorded to every citizen of every province in the Republic of Indonesia. We again urge Portugal to consider objectively the political, social and economic realities pertaining to East Timor today and to recognize that it is by respecting the decision of the majority of the people of East Timor that their genuine wishes and their basic human rights and interests can best be served.

Finally, my delegation noted the Portuguese Foreign Minister's support for the ongoing discussions with Indonesia, under the auspices of the Secretary-General, to arrive at a comprehensive and internationally acceptable settlement. Indonesia sincerely hopes that the new round of talks, specifically with regard to the terms, modalities and timing of a visit to East Timor by a delegation from the Portuguese Parliament, will be successful. Regrettably, the statement by the Portuguese Foreign Minister this afternoon gives rise to doubt as to the real intention of Portugal with regard to the ongoing talks here in New York. For its part,

(Mr. Sutresna, Indonesia)

Indonesia remains prepared to continue to co-operate with the Secretary-General, and there should be an unequivocal assurance from Portugal that it too remains genuinely committed to this process of dialogue.

Mr. GUTIERREZ (Costa Rica) (interpretation from Spanish): The response by the Permanent Representative of Nicaragua to the statement by the Minister for External Relations of my country compels me to refer to what was said by him. As the statement by the Costa Rican Minister for External Relations with regard to the problem of Central America was made at a time when the room was beginning to fill, it might be useful to repeat what he said, which was the following:

"the progression of that peace process has been halted and the international community, though encouraged by the trend towards dialogue and détente evident in other hemispheres, anxiously wonders why that crisis has not been resolved, since it is much smaller than certain others in which a solution is beginning to be found. There is a lack of genuine political will among some of the principal parties concerned. Although we can record progress in some areas, the fundamental commitments leading to democracy, national reconciliation, the sacrosanct protection of human rights and the non-use of territories as military sanctuaries have not been fulfilled. In the midst of all this, unfortunately, we must note that as the months have gone by we have seen the Nicaraguan Government step up its repression, fail to fulfil its commitments and attempt to reduce the crisis to a problem of security, showing obvious contempt for democratic values.

(Mr. Gutierrez, Costa Rica)

"Perhaps in no other country of the region is the situation so chaotic, and perhaps no other Government has shown less will to solve it. But, what is worse, that situation has serious repercussions on neighbouring countries, which have to take in the thousands of persons who are fleeing in an attempt to find freedom, food and shelter." (supra, pp.5, 6)

That is the end of the quotation from the statement by the Foreign Minister of Costa Rica, which prompted the reply by the representative of Nicaragua.

The Government of Costa Rica is interested in compliance with the agreement entered into by the Central American residents, known as Esquipulas II.

A full analysis of the situation in Central America will be given when we reach the relevant agenda item. I wish to make it clear that we are not interested in provoking controversy; we are concerned with the search for peace, but according to the terms of Esquipulas II, in which peace, democracy and development are regarded as inseparable elements of a solution to the Central American crisis.

We consider that the peace process is impossible without democratization. Therefore, we cannot but regard with alarm the measures taken recently by the Nicaraguan Government, long after the report by the International Verification and Follow-up Commission. They represent a setback on the path to democracy, involving restrictions of human rights and imprisonment of opposition leaders for speaking out publicly at a demonstration.

It was because of that lack of democracy and those retrogressive steps that Foreign Minister Nieto felt obliged to mention the case of Nicaragua and to express regret about events in that country.

The need for democracy and the fact that there cannot be peace without it have been made clear in a number of statements in the Assembly, most recently by the Foreign Minister of Uruguay, in the excellent statement that he has just made.

(Mr. Gutierrez, Costa Rica)

We deeply regret what has happened and that the situation is as it is. But because of the commitment that the President of Costa entered into when he put forward the peace plan we must point out failures to fulfil obligations whenever they occur. We do so not to pass judgement - that is not for us - but because in proposing the peace plan and working for peace we must always call a spade a spade.

Mr. REINO (Portugal): The representative of Indonesia saw fit to exercise his right of reply to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Portugal on a question he addressed in his statement today: East Timor. The reasons invoked are not new; in fact, they merely repeat well-known assertions already made in the past, not only here, but also in other international forums. Therefore, I shall try to be concise, with the sole objective of setting the record straight and not engaging in any kind of sterile exchange of accusations or useless rhetoric.

First, I recall that Portugal is not alone in referring during the present debate to East Timor. The statement delivered a few days ago by Greece on behalf of the 12 member countries of the European Community also addressed the issue, as did others during the debate.

The question under consideration concerns a Non-Self-Governing Territory under Portuguese administration included in the list of Non-Self-Governing Territories approved by the General Assembly to which Chapter XI of the Charter is still applicable. We cannot see how it can be said that East Timor has ceased to be an issue of decolonization or self-determination. The item is included on the agenda of both the General Assembly and the Special Committee, which means that the United Nations does not recognize its process of decolonization as having been completed. No "acts of free choice" have ever been endorsed by the Organization, which has reaffirmed the right of the East Timorese to self-determination, in

(Mr. Reino, Portugal)

accordance with resolutions 1514 (XV) and (1541) (XV), the latter still remaining to be applied to the Territory.

As we have said before, we hold no territorial claims whatsoever on East Timor and we are not engaged in any kind of dispute with Indonesia regarding sovereignty over the Territory. We also consider it futile and fruitless to argue about who is to blame for events that so unfortunately affected the implementation of the decolonization programme set up for East Timor. As my Minister said, Portugal does not deny its share of the responsibility for those events. I doubt that one can say the same about others, but in no circumstance can we accept foreign military invasion and occupation as being legitimate means of so-called redressing the situation in the Territory. The resolutions adopted by the Security Council and the General Assembly are self-explanatory in this regard.

What is at stake now is still the need to ensure to the people of East Timor the exercise of their inalienable rights and the enjoyment of their fundamental freedoms. We are not here to find out whether the responsibility for what occurred in 1974 or 1975 falls upon Portugal or Indonesia. It will be up to history to judge. In blaming others for the past, Indonesia seems to be trying to find an escape, an excuse for not living up to its present responsibilities as the country which is stubbornly denying to the people of a small and defenceless neighbouring colonial Territory the right to choose freely and validly its own political future. If as is argued, Indonesian occupation has been so beneficial to the people concerned and has brought about so much progress and improvement in their living conditions, the outcome of that choice would confirm Indonesia's assertions and claims.

(Mr. Reino, Portugal)

As usual, Indonesia contends that denunciations of human rights abuses in the Territory are baseless. We will not, of course, quote here the numerous reports at different times throughout these 13 years from a wide variety of sources, from Amnesty International to the United States State Department, denouncing such situations.

(Mr. Reino, Portugal)

But it is not possible to argue that one is dealing with mere fabrications and, at the same time, restrict access to the Territory to a very few carefully cleared and duly escorted visitors. Recent statements by highly responsible Indonesian officials when expressing publicly their views on the desirability of opening the Territory to the outside world seem to confirm this situation.

Many of the regional conflicts and colonial situations that not long ago were regarded as irreversible are nowadays considered by the international community to have a real chance of being settled.

From a moral and legal point of view, one cannot seek to play a role in Cambodia, or in certain specific situations in the Pacific or elsewhere, and at the same time refuse to comply with certain fundamental principles and resolutions of this Organization.

Let us take advantage of this extremely propitious momentum to continue serious negotiations under the auspices of the Secretary-General, in accordance with the mandate entrusted to him by the General Assembly, to which mandate we remain deeply and firmly committed.

Mr. SUTRESNA (Indonesia): I must say that the same argument applies to the representative of Portugal; he has just repeated the same baseless accusations as he has levelled against my Government in the past. Since my delegation has had ample opportunity on various occasions to respond to similar accusations, it is not our intention to give an elaborate reply at this stage.

Permit me, however, to say that, as to the evolution of the decolonization process, following the change of Government in Portugal in 1974 and the new Government's attitude to its colonies overseas, including East Timor, the policy of Indonesia was to support the Portuguese efforts to decolonize the Territory. Indonesia consistently maintained that it had no territorial claim on East Timor and would respect any decision made by the people of East Timor, and only sought

(Mr. Sutresna, Indonesia)

assurances from Portugal that the process of decolonization and the act of self-determination would reflect the true aspirations and will of the East Timorese people. In this regard a series of meetings between Indonesia and Portugal was held: in New York, 1974; in Lisbon, October 1974; in London, March 1975; in Jakarta, August and September 1974; and in Rome, November 1975. At those meetings Indonesia time and again reaffirmed its readiness to co-operate with Portugal in the peaceful and orderly implementation of the policies of decolonization on the basis of Portugal's own plan, subsequently promulgated as constitutional law 7/75 of 1975. The facts are that of the five political parties in East Timor at that time FRETILIN was the only one that persistently refused to co-operate in the peaceful and orderly decolonization of the Territory. It boycotted the Macau meeting of June 1975 organized by Portugal and attended by the four other political parties - namely UDT, APODETI, KOTA and Trabalhista, which together represent the overwhelming majority of the people of East Timor. Thus it was FRETILIN's action to circumvent democratic procedures, its blatant attempt to seize power by force of arms, and the subsequent refusal by the East Timorese to submit to such a fait accompli that plunged the Territory into violent confrontation between the people and FRETILIN.

As for the reference to the European Economic Community (EEC), it is certainly the right of every delegation to respond to any statement about its country. We did not respond to the EEC because it formulated its statement in a positive manner.

I want to repeat that East Timor has ceased to be an issue of decolonization, simply because the people have exercised their right of self-determination. The Portuguese representative suggested that we should repeat that exercise of self-determination. That would be a negation of the act of self-determination already carried out by the people of East Timor.

The meeting rose at 7.10 p.m.