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GENERAL ASSEMBLY

PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE TWENTY-FIFTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,  
on Monday, 10 October 1988, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. PIBULSONGRAM (Thailand)  
later: Mr. MOUSHOUTAS (Cyprus)  
(Vice-President)

- General debate [9] (continued)

Statements made by:

Mr. Capo-Chichi (Benin)  
Mr. Choudhury (Bangladesh)  
Mr. Charles (Haiti)  
Mr. Mbonimpa (Burundi)  
Mr. Adouki (Congo)

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In the absence of the President, Mr. Pibulsonggram (Thailand), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 9 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. CAPO-CHICHI (Benin) (interpretation from French): The delegation of the People's Republic of Benin welcomes with great satisfaction the election of Mr. Dante Caputo to the presidency of the General Assembly at its forty-third session. We ask him to convey friendly and brotherly greetings to Argentina from the Government and people of Benin, which is happy to see the representative of a country with which it shares the same aspirations to peace and social justice preside over the General Assembly of our irreplaceable world Organization.

(Mr. Capo-Chichi, Benin)

I should like to take this opportunity to convey the heartfelt congratulations of my delegation to Mr. Peter Florin, the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the German Democratic Republic, who, throughout the work of the forty-second session of the General Assembly, showed such competence, wisdom and statesmanship.

Our congratulations also go to Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, the Secretary-General of the United Nations. I should like once again, on this solemn occasion, to say how much the people and the National Executive Council of Benin admire him for the dynamism, patience, tenacity and competence, with which he has served the United Nations, and in particular for the professionalism - each day more decisive - that he has shown in finding solutions to the various crises that our world has been witnessing. On behalf of Benin, we wish to extend to him our full support in the discharge of his onerous and delicate responsibilities.

The award this year of the Nobel Peace Prize to the United Nations Peace-keeping Forces is a well-deserved tribute to the work of the Organization and the Secretary-General. This great honour conferred upon our Organization has created a new climate of optimism and confidence in the search for ways and means that might lead to peace.

The forty-third session of the General Assembly has opened in an atmosphere of détente and hope, indicating that international peace and security, which our Organization has been striving to attain, should be understood as a pre-condition for promoting development in all fields and for ensuring the right of peoples to life, freedom and dignity.

When they adopted the principles set forth in the United Nations Charter in San Francisco, in 1945, or when they acceded to them later the States represented here showed their determination to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, to promote social progress and better standards of life in fuller freedom.

(Mr. Capo-Chichi, Benin)

We thus proclaimed our faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large or small.

Three years ago we commemorated here, and in our country, the fortieth anniversary of the signing of the Charter in a political climate that was marked by many areas of tension and by the mad rivalry between the nuclear Powers.

This year we are celebrating the fortieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in an environment marked by glimmers of hope, thanks to the determination of the two nuclear super-Powers to reduce and gradually eliminate nuclear weapons, which are a real threat to international peace and security. It is therefore my honour and pleasure to state before the Assembly that my Government is preparing to implement, within the context of the celebration of this fortieth anniversary, a rich, diversified programme of events, ranging from a national seminar on human rights, which will follow up the international seminar on human rights and economic and social progress hosted by my country in May-June of 1988, to a number of cultural and sporting events in all parts of our country, information meetings about this Declaration, and its publication in French and in most of the national languages of our country.

By signing the agreements to dismantle nuclear weapons, both medium-range and shorter-range, the USSR and the United States of America established a basis for a real nuclear disarmament process and détente. On behalf of my country, I salute the initiatives taken by the President of the United States of America and the General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, and I wish the leaders of those two countries ever greater success in following up their negotiations with a view to the gradual reduction of strategic weapons until they are completely eliminated.

(Mr. Capo-Chichi, Benin)

The peoples of the whole world want peace. They want all other nuclear Powers to follow the example of the United States and the Soviet Union, to stave off, once and for all, the risk of a nuclear war, which would be the last one.

Consensus with regard to the means of achieving nuclear disarmament seems to be emerging. But the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament showed what a long way we have yet to go to establish the basis of general and complete disarmament. We must therefore rise above intransigence, national selfishness, differences and ideological barriers, in order to promote the primacy of the United Nations in disarmament.

We must recognize that there is a logical link between disarmament and development, almost a mathematical ratio between them, as the special session of our Organization, held from 24 April to 11 September 1987, established so eloquently.

So we have grounds for hope. Remarkable progress has been made in settling various regional conflicts, all of which are deadly and run counter to our aspirations for peace and progress. There is no doubt that the path leading to peace is long and difficult, but there is no alternative to peace except peace itself. Accordingly, it is good that, instead of confrontation the enemies of yesterday have today chosen the way of dialogue and negotiation, whether in the Persian Gulf, the Middle East, Western Sahara, southern Africa, Central America, Afghanistan or Kampuchea.

In Africa the apartheid system of the Pretoria régime, which our universal conscience condemns vociferously and which no country or Government could justify or legitimize, is at the very core of the tragedy suffered by the black peoples of southern Africa. The racist régime continues, despite common sense and reason, to divide the international community in its quest for peace, security and social progress.

(Mr. Capo-Chichi, Benin)

The policy of apartheid of the South African régime is still very much a crime against humanity and an affront to the universal conscience. The assassination of Dulcie September, in Paris on 29 March 1988, shows that the leaders of that country will stop at nothing to commit the most heinous crimes.

Pretoria is being obstinate, despite the protests of the whole world, in insisting on keeping Nelson Mandela in its gaols, thus seriously damaging his health. It continues to impose a state of emergency on black South Africans in order to further suppress their legitimate aspirations to dignity and well-being.

In its solidarity and unswerving support for the struggle of the African National Congress (ANC) and all other democratic anti-apartheid forces, my country appeals to the reason and common sense of all States Members of the United Nations to see to it that at this forty-third session the General Assembly will once again demand the imposition of comprehensive, mandatory sanctions against the racist régime of South Africa under Chapter VII of the Charter.

It is our collective responsibility - and one we must shoulder - to work to restore all the inalienable rights of the South African people and the independence of Namibia, and to guarantee to the front-line countries the enjoyment of security, stability and territorial integrity. The front-line countries, the South-West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO), the ANC, and all other democratic forces defending their inalienable rights in southern Africa can be assured of the solidarity and support of the entire people of Benin until their cause triumphs - the cause of justice and freedom for which they have been shedding their blood.

We hope that the dialogue that is now going on and that is developing in the negotiations between Angola, South Africa, Cuba and the United States, will result in a just peace in that part of Africa which has been ravaged by so many years of armed conflicts.

(Mr. Capo-Chichi, Benin)

In the Western Sahara, the People's Republic of Benin is pleased that the two parties to the conflict, Morocco and the POLISARIO Front, have finally chosen the path of dialogue in accepting the peace plan of the current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the Secretary-General of the United Nations, relating to conditions for the organization of a referendum on self-determination for the Sahraoui people. However, on this question, as on so many others, the international community must remain vigilant in order to avoid bitter disappointment.

We are pleased that relations between Chad and Libya have been improving. The return to peace between these two fraternal countries will enable the Chadian people to tackle the work of national reconstruction and economic recovery for the greater well-being of all Chadians.

Like other peoples, the Palestinian people is entitled to an independent homeland. Hence a stop must be put to its suffering by way of the restoration of all its national rights in a Middle East that is reconciled and at peace.

The Palestinian question is one to which my country hopes the General Assembly will attach special importance this year, especially since we shall be celebrating the fortieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Hence Benin looks forward to the convening as soon as possible of the international conference on the Middle East, under the auspices of the United Nations, and with the participation of all parties concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), on an equal footing.

In the Persian Gulf, reason and dialogue have finally replaced the language of violence in a war that for eight years has ravaged that part of the third world. We welcome the cease-fire between Iran and Iraq and hope that the Secretary-General's tireless efforts will be successful, so that the peoples of that region can finally enjoy peace.

(Mr. Capo-Chichi, Benin)

In Afghanistan, we hope that the normalization process will continue on course, thanks to the full implementation of the Geneva Accords by all parties concerned. This will permit the reconciliation of all the country's people, for it is high time to end the suffering and the dispersal of men, women and children in refugee camps.

The trend in international relations is towards dialogue and the peaceful settlement of disputes, and the talks that have been started by the political forces in Kampuchea must also lead to the establishment of a democratic, political and administrative system in keeping with the interests of a free Kampuchean people on a territory free from any hint of a return to the notorious past, as well as the return of any foreign troops.

The withdrawal of foreign troops from the Korean peninsula is a guarantee for the peaceful reunification of the two Koreas. The international community should work to ensure that this divided people can recover its unity and greatness.

In Central America, the peoples and the States of that region have the right to live in peace, harmony and mutual respect, free from interference or foreign intervention, and, above all, with each respecting the political, economic and social choices of the others. In this context, the hopes raised by the Arias plan and the Esquipulas agreements should be supported, as well as the efforts of the Contadora Group to establish lasting peace in the region.

In contrast to the relief brought about by the positive developments we have seen in various war-torn parts of the world, the rather grim picture of the international economic situation is, to say the least, distressing. Indeed, the international economic climate is now characterized - particularly with regard to the developing countries and, more specifically, the African countries - by increasing protectionism by the industrialized countries, a sharp drop in commodity prices, and the inverse transfer of financial flows. The combined cumulative

(Mr. Capo-Chichi, Benin)

effects of these trends have seriously affected development prospects for our countries and have made any efforts at economic recovery highly unpredictable.

Wars and prolonged tension have disorganized the economic and social life of many countries to such an extent that no security can be guaranteed for any length of time. In many regions of Africa and elsewhere food production has fallen below survival needs, thus bringing about a situation of permanent hunger and, in some cases, famine of catastrophic proportions in the warring countries.

Natural disasters of incalculable consequences have often added to these scourges. Following the recent torrential rains experienced in the People's Republic of Benin, entire regions were flooded, causing considerable material damage and seriously disrupting the lives of many people. Out of the six provinces in Benin, four were particularly badly hit and declared emergency areas by the Government. Given the magnitude of the disaster, the major national effort we have made - despite my country's difficult economic situation - will not be enough to put an end to the tragedy of the people concerned. Therefore, the Government of the People's Republic of Benin made an urgent appeal for international solidarity in providing emergency assistance to the affected peoples and towns.

On behalf of my country I should like to seize this opportunity to thank all friendly countries and governmental and non-governmental organizations which, in a burst of solidarity, have started to provide valuable assistance to the victims of this disaster.

In the circumstances to which I have just referred, the determination of the developing countries to implement meaningful and economic social reforms is coming up against exogenous constraints connected with the hostile international and economic climate. In order to deal with this situation, a large number of

(Mr. Capo-Chichi, Benin)

countries have established special recovery measures through structural adjustment programmes which do not often lead to any significant improvement in the lives of their peoples.

With regard more specifically to the critical economic situation in Africa, it is appropriate to point out that two years after the adoption by our Organization of a Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990 the economic and social situation of all African countries continues to deteriorate. It must be said that the international community has not kept the pledge it made at the special session of the General Assembly devoted to Africa to provide sufficient resources to back up and supplement Africa's development efforts. The mid-term review of the Programme our Organization has just carried out should prompt Africa's partners to increase their efforts to enable us to achieve our goals.

The rich countries must be seriously concerned about the external economic factors that have so obviously compounded Africa's present difficulties. In this connection, genuine measures to relieve the enormous debt burden of sub-Saharan Africa and to increase the flow of resources to the region should be encouraged.

In spite of everything, we still hope that the present détente in relations between the two Powers and the rebirth of a climate of trust within the international community - because of the various ongoing peace initiatives on many war-fronts - can be considered as a prelude to a new era of co-operation and dialogue among nations.

(Mr. Capo-Chichi, Benin)

It is our duty to reaffirm forcefully and with faith our total commitment to the values that enhance the stature of man and underpin the ideals of our Organisation, as we celebrate the fortieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It is our duty to enhance these values, to defend them wherever they could be violated, because in them lies the survival and grandeur of mankind.

Mr. CHOUDHURY (Bangladesh): Let me first congratulate the President on his election, which was memorable and well-deserved. It redounds as much to his own personal credit as to Argentina's contribution and role in the United Nations. I record also our deep appreciation of the resolute and efficient leadership provided to the forty-second session by his eminent predecessor Mr. Peter Florin.

Our tributes extend to our Secretary-General for his patient and persistent diplomacy. His single-minded efforts to forge a greater solidarity among nations and promote a convergence of interests on the vital issues of peace, stability and development deserve our unstinted praise.

A concrete manifestation of his contribution has been the decision of the Nobel Committee to award its Peace Prize to the United Nations peace-keeping forces. We join in the praise accorded to those courageous men and women, who have contributed so meaningfully to the cause of peace. Bangladesh is proud to be part of this process. I reiterate my Government's determination to continue to contribute to this noble endeavour.

The Charter was based on the yearning of mankind for a safer, more equitable and prosperous world bound together by the inherent interdependence and sense of community. For Bangladesh that vision remains real. We believe that it is achievable, and we reaffirm our total commitment to it.

(Mr. Choudhury, Bangladesh)

It is for this reason that we welcome the resurgent public interest in the United Nations. The solid achievements of the recent past - progress in regional security issues, advances towards nuclear-arms control, moves to shore up human dignity - are but some of the hard-won fruits of the painstaking efforts of the United Nations over the decades. Propelling them was the push to pursue, not individual, but global interests, to emphasize unequivocally that security is indivisible, that military solutions are not viable, that the self-perpetuating arms race is insupportable in cost and incalculable in danger, and that prosperity cannot be achieved at the expense of others.

There is a collective awareness today that we have entered a new phase and pattern of international relations, promoted by dialogue and détente among the big Powers, by the emergence of a new multipolarity on the international economic plane, by a greater tolerance for diversity in socio-economic and political systems.

In the face of this convergence of interests the United Nations must seize the initiative to forge practical agreements through dialogue and negotiation. It must, indeed, go beyond and expand its undertakings to bring together the capacities of nations for the good of mankind, for the common benefit of all. As the Prime Minister of Canada emphasized, in this new age the differences dividing us are less important than the dangers we must face together. Concrete acts which make our world more secure must be matched by tangible commitments to reduce poverty in the developing world and to protect our common environment.

This potential for concentrating the combined efforts of the international community in the service of humanity has particular relevance for Bangladesh. The inextricable link between poverty, environment, human health and the economy is best illustrated in our immediate predicament. The worst flood in living memory

(Mr. Choudhury, Bangladesh)

overran Bangladesh this year. It has come in the wake of the disastrous cyclone of 1985 and the floods of 1987. These calamities have exposed the total vulnerability of our economy and environment to destructive forces of nature beyond our capacity to control or effectively mitigate. Their cause lies as much in the impact of nature as in the nature of poverty. The statistics of disaster in Bangladesh have always been terrifying in their intensity. They have literally anaesthetized belief in the true extent of their enormity. Nevertheless, they are real and compounded by cumulative accretion.

The international community's response has been one of heart-warming spontaneity. I express on behalf of the Government and the people of Bangladesh our deepest gratitude to all donor countries, to the heads of international organizations, as well as those of United Nations specialized agencies, to numerous non-governmental organizations and to those thousands of individuals and groups that rushed to our assistance in our hour of maximum need.

Our particular thanks go to the Secretary-General, who acted quickly in sending his Special Representative, Mr. M'hamed Essaafi, to serve as co-ordinator of United Nations agencies in the field and to mobilize their activities for purposeful and unified intervention by the United Nations.

There was optimism this year that, despite the vicissitudes caused by last year's floods, genuine progress was being made towards the achievement of a 6 per cent growth target, in comparison to the 2.5 per cent flood-depressed growth reached in 1987. Significant recovery had taken place in the agricultural sector. Following the 1988 floods our plans have gone awry. Given the already stringent adjustments made in the Annual Development Plan, the ability to manoeuvre is severely constrained, accompanied by the continuing need to pare our deficit budget, realign our balance of payments and reduce external debt, which now totals

(Mr. Choudhury, Bangladesh)

\$11 billion. The overall macro-economic picture is one of uncertainty, with the projection of growth for this year dramatically scaled down from 6 per cent to 2 per cent.

(Mr. Choudhury, Bangladesh)

Several important lessons emanate from our experience. The first is that such disasters have long ceased to be viewed in the context of humanitarian relief. They constitute an insurmountable burden on the economy and development plans of a country, causing irrecoverable setbacks in growth and necessitating impossible adjustments. The need for sustained development assistance over the long term is vital. The second lesson is that the link between economic and social development and the need for environmental supportive growth strategies is no longer subject to academic debate. It has become a bounden reality, despite the recognized complexities in balancing priorities.

Many of these catastrophes could not have been prevented now or in the immediate future in the absence of in-depth study of the cumulative factors that cause them and of massive investment over time to remedy them. It has now been widely acknowledged that there are too many aspects for any single country or even groups of countries to be able to deal with effectively. They need a global reach and outlook, supplemented by regional cooperative efforts.

The President of Bangladesh has appealed to the international community to assist Bangladesh in seeking a permanent solution to the problem. In doing so he has re-elaborated a comprehensive national programme to recuperate from the devastation caused by floods, cyclones and drought that now appear to have become a perennial visitation.

The programme includes, inter alia:

- Broad-based institutional arrangements and standing operational procedures to be activated throughout the country at the immediate onset of a disaster. They include contingency plans for pre-positioning stocks of essential supplies, in particular food grains, medicine, transport and construction materials.
- Immediate rehabilitation measures to restore flood-stricken people to normal life by concentration on such priority areas as agricultural recovery, supply of

(Mr. Choudhury, Bangladesh)

key inputs of seeds, fertilizer and irrigation; infrastructural repairs, particularly in communications and housing, and restoration of health and sanitation facilities.

- Medium-term measures for rehabilitation and reconstruction of the economy and infrastructure, with special emphasis on disaster preparedness and preventive schemes. A factor requiring major adjustment would be to change the cropping pattern from dependence on the monsoon crop to emphasis on enhancing the winter crop.

As we grapple with the gigantic task of recovery we are conscious that remedies extend far beyond our individual capacity. Our location in the delta of a vast flood plain, on a parcel of land barely above sea-level, places us permanently on the receiving end of calamities caused as much by nature as the environmental depredations of man. Recurring floods in India and the devastation of earthquakes and landslides in Nepal compound the impact of these disasters on Bangladesh in the monsoon season as rampaging waters and billions of tons of silt are carried down by the rivers that criss-cross our country. In the dry season, scarce water resources needed by hundreds of millions of people along the Gangetic plain are squeezed to a trickle by the time they reach Bangladesh, exacerbating the consequences of drought and raising the annual spectre of famine.

As we look towards approaches for a permanent solution, the primary imperative will be to harness regional co-operation among all our concerned neighbours with a view to arriving at coherent and well co-ordinated policies and plans to our mutual benefit. This needs to be backed by international support and intervention. A vital necessity is the stimulation of expert studies and feasibility reports through collation and synthesis of existing materials and through collective exchange of ideas and forward projection of practical remedies. The President of Bangladesh has already initiated the process through direct contact with the

(Mr. Choudhury, Bangladesh)

leaders of our regional neighbours and through communications with the heads of international organizations and financial institutions, including those in the United Nations system.

Bangladesh has closely co-operated and co-ordinated its activities with Mr. M'hamed Essaafi and the United Nations agencies in the field in the preparation of a report to be submitted to the Secretary-General to elicit international assistance. We extend to him and his colleagues our heartfelt thanks for their dedication and commitment. It is our hope that a special meeting will be convened at this session of the Assembly of Member States, agencies and organs of the United Nations system and international economic and financial institutions to deal comprehensively with this issue.

The experience of Bangladesh serves dramatically to highlight a growing crisis affecting developed and developing countries alike. Desertification, soil erosion, deforestation, swollen cities and giant spill-offs of pollutants, acid rain and the dumping of toxic wastes are all symptoms of this crisis. Some are the consequences of poor people seeking to survive, others of the pursuit of economic growth at any cost.

Remedial actions have been set in train, but much more needs to be done urgently. Conferences on various aspects have been convened or are under preparation. Formal instruments have been adopted; others are being formulated, including contemplated guidelines for environmental codes of conduct. This momentum has to be maintained. It is only fitting that the United Nations has declared the decade of the 1990s as the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction. Bangladesh believes that the time is indeed ripe for the holding of an environmental summit at the highest level, perhaps as a special session of the General Assembly.

It is thus with a sense of acute foreboding that we turn to review the world

(Mr. Choudhury, Bangladesh)

economy. We share the growing anxiety over what appears to be a diminution of interest in the cause of economic development, a cause fueled over three decades by the United Nations that embraces the twin objectives of promoting equitable growth and alleviating poverty.

We find today that the gap between the rich and the poor has inexorably widened. The critical motors for raising world standards of living - economic growth, finance, trade and resource transfers - are all stalling. Their dimensions have been spelled out in numerous reports of the United Nations and pin-pointed in the statements of speakers before me. This much is true: that developing countries remain prisoners to a system where external markets, terms of trade and interest rates greatly influence their economic fate and remain outside their control.

Developed countries continue to resist negotiation on the critical issues of trade, finance, debt and development in any forum controlled by the developing countries. The resulting stalemate has exacerbated the adverse international climate and is yet to be broken.

The impact on the poorest of the poor, the least developed countries, has been devastating. The main goals of the 1981 Substantial New Programme of Action remain a distant ideal with little hope of reaching the main target of increasing official development assistance to 0.15 per cent. Per capita incomes are continuing to fall. External indebtedness has increased dramatically. Agricultural productivity has fallen far below the 4 per cent growth targets envisaged. Given rapid population growth, this has meant a continuing decline in per capita food production, the most serious challenge facing these countries in the coming decade.

(Mr. Choudhury, Bangladesh)

The African situation is a continuing case in point. Despite efforts to carry out adjustments in their national economic policies, most African countries have found little respite from harsh climatic conditions and the adverse international economic environment. Sustained and timely commitment to the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990 must be maintained.

The hope remains that we will be able to reverse the North-South polarization and reinvigorate the process of constructive dialogue. It arises from the practical reality that for as long as the socio-economic policies of the developed countries remain incompatible with the interests of the developing world, the goal of sustained and durable growth of the world economy will remain illusive. Significant opportunities to turn these hopes into practical reality in the years ahead: the 1990 conference in Paris on the least developed countries, the formulation of the international development strategy for the fourth United Nations development decade and the Montreal meeting of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) Ministers to review the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations are but a few examples. Equally important are follow-up measures for a growth-oriented debt strategy linking debt service to the creation of viable conditions for development, the convening of an international conference on money and finance for development, and efforts to stem the reverse transfers of resources that continue to impoverish the developing countries.

While gaping holes continue to riddle the fabric of world peace, a painstaking patchwork process has begun. The rapprochement of the two major Powers has had a beneficial spin-off on a wide variety of problem areas hitherto anchored in attrition.

The cease-fire between Iran and Iraq and the initiation of direct political talks under the auspices of the United Nations Secretary-General provide hope that

(Mr. Choudhury, Bangladesh)

a common understanding will be reached on the provisions of Security Council resolution 598 (1987), opening the way for a just and lasting solution.

Forward movement is discernible in Kampuchea following Viet Nam's announcement of the phased withdrawal of its troops. Regional efforts initiated by the Jakarta Informal Meeting to end the impasse have contributed to the feasibility of a comprehensive political settlement based on the declaration of the International Conference on Kampuchea.

Bangladesh looks forward to the time when we can see firmly established again a neutral, independent and non-aligned Afghanistan. We are already witnessing the phased withdrawal of foreign troops, and we support the strict and effective implementation of other aspects of the historic Geneva Accords of 14 April 1988. These constitute an essential prerequisite for a comprehensive settlement that would, inter alia, enable the return of Afghan refugees to their homeland in safety and honour, and allow the Afghan people to exercise their inherent right to determine their own destiny and choose their own Government.

There appears to be a more receptive climate in Western Sahara for an end to the conflict, with the acceptance by the parties of the peace plan submitted jointly by the Chairman of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the Secretary-General. We hope that the essential modalities governing a cease-fire and a referendum will soon be worked out.

The leaders of the two Cypriot communities have also agreed to resume dialogue without pre-conditions and to attempt to achieve by June next year a negotiated settlement of all aspects of the Cyprus problem. We hail these developments, as we do the signs of the renewal of talks between the two Koreas, and progress towards peace in the Horn of Africa. The willingness of the leaders of Chad and Libya to resolve their dispute by peaceful means marks the end of acute tension in yet another area.

(Mr. Choudhury, Bangladesh)

We are encouraged by recent diplomatic activity in southern Africa and Angola, which has increased the prospects of early independence in Namibia. As a member of the Council for Namibia, Bangladesh has no need to reiterate its consistent stand. We have already indicated our willingness to participate directly in the United Nations Transition Assistance Group in Namibia, for which contingency plans are already being drawn up, in pursuance of Security Council resolution 435 (1978).

Vital breakthroughs towards peace have thus been made. Many problems, however, remain mired in intractability.

The situation in the Middle East is intolerable. Continuation of the status quo is illegal and counter-productive with regard to peace. The Palestinian intifadah, in the teeth of brutal repression, is glaring testimony to its outright rejection. Peace in the Middle East can be guaranteed only by a comprehensive, just and lasting solution based on the resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly. Bangladesh endorses the core conditions laid down in the Fez plan of 1982 and the decision adopted by the extraordinary Arab summit in Algiers in June this year. We fully support the efforts of the Secretary-General to pursue the convening of an international peace conference, with the full and independent participation of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) as the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

The human tragedy in South Africa continues to unfold in the vicious cycle of resistance, retaliation and oppression imposed by the brutal apartheid régime. Its destructive consequences have spilled across the frontiers of South Africa and have been manifested by repeated acts of aggression, sabotage and destabilization. The front-line States which are the major victims need sustained support to counter the effect of economic strangulation and political disruption. We join in the call for the release of Nelson Mandela as a first step towards the inevitable - the

(Mr. Choudhury, Bangladesh)

dismantling of apartheid. In the face of South Africa's continued intransigence, we fully support the call for comprehensive mandatory sanctions against the racist régime.

We are meeting in the wake of the third special session of the General Assembly on disarmament. Though its outcome fell short of the adoption of a final document by consensus, it represented a significant advance in increasing awareness of the crucial issues involved and identifying areas for progress towards a negotiated settlement. Surrounding the session was the hope generated by the historic breakthrough in the field of nuclear-arms control by the signing and implementation of the Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Elimination of Their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles - INF Treaty - and the understanding reached between the signatories that they would strive for a 50 per cent reduction of strategic nuclear weapons.

Bangladesh's position on these issues was elaborated at length at the third special session on disarmament, and I wish merely to sum up its main content.

The overall goal of general and complete disarmament within a comprehensive framework of negotiations must be pursued simultaneously with efforts to resolve regional conflicts, promote socio-economic development, and build up confidence and trust among regional neighbours.

Disarmament is a joint undertaking of all States, and not the exclusive responsibility of the two biggest Powers. It is for this reason that we have strongly advocated an increase in the membership of the Conference on Disarmament to represent all shades of opinion.

(Mr. Choudhury, Bangladesh)

Further progress in nuclear disarmament remains an imperative, in recognition of the obvious truth that more weapons do not mean more security. Dependence on the doctrine of deterrence is misleading. Reliance on nuclear leverage can only perpetuate a community of fear.

We have rejected the nuclear alternative and have therefore adhered to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. We support all measures, partial or otherwise, that could promote disarmament and deter the horizontal spread of the arms race, both quantitatively and qualitatively.

(Mr. Choudhury, Bangladesh)

Immediate priorities call for the completion of the convention banning the production and use of chemical weapons, the imperative necessity of a comprehensive test-ban treaty, control of conventional-arms transfer, particularly in conflict situations, and the means to strengthen verification, including an integrated multilateral verification system within the United Nations framework.

We remain convinced that what is really threatening peace and stability is the dire incidence of poverty, hunger and destitution existing in our world. This has been exacerbated by the channelling of vast resources for the purposes of destruction, not amelioration, of the wellbeing of peoples. The adverse environmental impact of those unnecessary arsenals, both in terms of materials and resources expended on their production and in terms of the dangerous consequences of their use, cannot be minimized. In the nuclear context it embraces the content of all life on our planet.

We have passed through an anxious phase when the very viability of the United Nations has been seriously questioned. The catch-phrase was "the erosion of multilateralism." That loss of confidence in the United Nations was attributed to disparate reasons as much political as administrative and financial. Assertions of the so-called tyranny of the majority, mutual accusations of repetitive and hardened postures, of outdated illusions and outmoded attitudes and attempts to preserve privileged positions - all these combined to create a picture of multilateralism under concerted attack. Since then, there has been a fundamental reexamination of the United Nations functioning and role. Concentrated reforms have been effected with a view to improving administrative efficiency and to tightening financial stringency. Those steps were accompanied by measures to streamline the capacity of the United Nations to find integrated solutions to the problems of social and economic development. We believe that that process must be continued in a spirit of practicability and accommodation.

(Mr. Choudhury, Bangladesh)

Even as the crucial peace-making and peace-keeping role of the United Nations is beginning to win back essential credibility for the world body, a host of new and mushrooming problems such as drugs, terrorism, threats to the environment, problems that respect no international boundaries, have further underscored its relevance and importance. They are global problems that call for global solutions. They cannot be dealt with in isolation. The future is fast impacting on the present at a rate of acceleration that has rendered obsolete old values, old perceptions and concepts of space and time. Together, they pose new challenges; they call for new perspectives and for a radical change of outlook on the part of world leaders.

The United Nations remains the only viable repository for pooling the world's talent, intelligence, expertise and, most important of all, its concern and compassion. Support for the United Nations is no longer an exercise in idealism. It has become a practical necessity, a hard reality. It is in recognition of that fact that Bangladesh has reposed its total confidence and commitment in the world body.

Mr. CHARLES (Haiti) (interpretation from French): I should like first of all to express Haiti's deep gratitude to the countries of our region for the invaluable support they have given us, both morally and diplomatically, in recent weeks. We are particularly grateful to the delegation of Saint Kitts and Nevis and our neighbours on the former island of Hispaniola, our brothers of the Dominican Republic, with whom we share not only geography but a common future in our two peoples' constant pursuit of dreams of peace, pluralistic and liberal democracy with a human face, based on social justice, freedom and fraternity.

(Mr. Charles, Haiti)

I am particularly happy, on behalf of the Government and people of Haiti, to extend to the President our warm congratulations and wishes for success on the occasion of his election to preside over the General Assembly at its forty-third session. We should also like to pay a tribute to the outgoing President, Ambassador Peter Florin of the German Democratic Republic, whose prestige and remarkable talents as a moderator enhanced the proceedings of last year's session.

We are happy also to associate ourselves with the tribute paid to our Secretary-General, His Excellency Javier Perez de Cuellar, for his efforts on behalf of peace and the promotion of the ideals of the United Nations in its role as the conscience of humanity.

(Mr. Charles, Haiti)

Is it not, indeed, the vitalizing source - even the special source - of the great achievements in the field of human rights in the twentieth century? Does it not also contribute to support for the community of nations as it moves towards a better world where dialogue and agreement will take the place of confrontation? The recent successes that have been scored - successes that augur well for a fruitful forty-third session of the General Assembly - emphasize once again that the Organization remains, in the bleakest times, the last bastion of the equal sovereignty of States and the right of peoples to self-determination and, finally, the special place where the people's most precious hopes are placed, at this end of the century, for a future of peace, justice and international co-operation.

The course of events has recently highlighted a clear lessening of tensions in certain regions of the world. Nevertheless, there are still many hotbeds of crises and many challenges that are of concern to the international community.

The most striking and most pernicious case is without any doubt, in our view, that of South Africa, where the system of apartheid persists. Once again we raise our voice to say no - a thousand times no - to that régime of infinite degradation, exploitation and misery. It is essential that everything be done to put an end to that unspeakable régime and thereby do away with this serious threat to international peace and security.

On the same subject, we are following with the greatest interest the progress of the talks designed to end the illegal occupation of Namibia. This is a time to reaffirm our solidarity with and support for the courageous Namibian people, who are struggling, under the leadership of the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) - their sole, legitimate representative - to break the hated yoke of colonial, racist oppression.

(Mr. Charles, Haiti)

Continuing to refer to Africa, we were very much encouraged by the results of the negotiations under the auspices of the United Nations which led to the Geneva agreement of 30 August 1988. That is clearly a large step in the right direction taken by Morocco and POLISARIO. We cannot but encourage them to continue on that course, because we are convinced that, given the good faith of the parties and the political will, the people of Western Sahara will finally be able freely to exercise their right to self-determination.

In the Middle East, the establishment of the cease-fire between Iran and Iraq and the opening of bilateral negotiations in Geneva give us reason to hope that the peace process has really begun and that it will lead to a mutually satisfactory solution.

On the other hand, we deeply deplore the wave of violence that continues to claim so many victims in the occupied territories. Nevertheless, we feel some optimism about the future because of the prospects for an indispensable dialogue between all the parties, which could finally lead to the implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). In that regard, we support the principle of an international conference on the Middle East to lay the foundations for an overall settlement that would take simultaneously into account Israel's inalienable right to exist within secure and internationally recognized boundaries and the Palestinian people's inalienable right to self-determination, including the right to a homeland.

So far as Lebanon is concerned, we endorse anything that can restore peace, beginning with the withdrawal of all foreign forces, which is a pre-condition for the restoration of the Lebanese people's sovereignty and national and territorial integrity.

(Mr. Charles, Haiti)

With regard to South-East Asia, we continue to give our full support to the constant efforts by the United Nations to find a negotiated solution in the case of Kampuchea as well as that of Afghanistan. Moreover, we continue to place our hopes in the reunification of the Korean nation and we offer our support to any initiative that could contribute to achieving that peacefully.

The solution to the problems of Central America can be found only by the peoples of the region themselves. That is the real meaning of the Arias plan, which we are pleased to support unreservedly. We regret, however, that the dialogue which has begun has not yet produced all the expected results.

We state again our conviction that there is an indissoluble link between disarmament and development, which are the undisputed bases of international peace and security. Today the expenditure on over-armament activities can be counted only in the thousands of billions of dollars - even after the recent Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles - whereas a part of those resources could have been advantageously reinvested in meeting human and social needs and, moreover, would have increased the security of all.

The Republic of Haiti protests against the practice of making the third-world countries the dumping grounds for toxic wastes from the Northern countries. It strongly condemns this new form of aggression and supports the idea of an international convention on the prohibition of and punishment for such acts.

Finally, in response to the wishes of national public opinion, the Government of the Republic of Haiti intends to struggle tirelessly against the illicit traffic in drugs and is willing to accept any assistance that may be given by the countries with some experience in this field.

My country, which is classified among the least developed countries, cannot fail to note that, despite the strength of the economic recovery in the

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industrialized countries, the gap separating the North from the South continues to widen dangerously. In view of that situation, which is of the greatest concern, it appears quite legitimate for our peoples, the producers of raw materials, to wonder how they can again have the conditions of sustained and balanced growth when the fall in the prices of their commodities increases year after year and their external debt weighs heavily on their export capacities and compromises their prospects for investment.

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We are convinced that it is urgently necessary to infuse dynamism into official development assistance and make it more accessible. We feel that it is also indispensable to set up a new international order able to respond to the expectations of the least favoured countries through the effective democratization of international economic relations. Finally, we believe that the debtor countries should be given an opportunity, over and above their debt servicing, to meet honourably the obligations arising out of the social, political and economic contract that binds their Governments to their peoples. In that way the right of those peoples to the minimum well-being that Saint Thomas Aquinas said was necessary to the practice of virtue may be effectively taken into account.

We turn now to the situation in our country following the major political events which have taken place recently, and we wish to testify to the hopes that have been aroused by the democratic renewal in all social sectors of our population. The Haitian people has just given striking new proof of its powerful attachment to freedom. Two years ago, on 7 February 1986, this people clearly indicated to the world the forcefulness of its democratic instincts and its unshakeable courage in the face of the burden of bankruptcy, an economy in ruins and social and political structures unadapted to the challenges of the end of our century. In the enthusiasm of that time, a powerful desire for national reconstruction was born. Thus in the Constitution of 1987 we adopted a new charter of rights and freedoms that defined the main outline of a new social contract and a legal framework on which the institutions for guaranteeing Haitian democracy were to be founded.

Unfortunately, our hard apprenticeship in the cause of freedom did not go forward uneventfully. Through one upheaval after another the country was plunged once more into a climate of violence and confusion in which suddenly the freedoms

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achieved and the victories in our struggle were again jeopardized. In that context the already precarious economic situation could not but worsen and social disorder increase. It was clear that we were moving towards the collapse of a régime that was incapable of undertaking the expected reforms and meeting the needs of the rural and urban masses.

From the depths of the abyss, the Haitian army once again, in the face of our national peril, responded on 17 September, to the appeal of our country. It was guided solely by the need to defend the higher interests of our nation and by its faith in the dynamics of lasting structural change in laying the foundations of democracy in Haiti once and for all. Thus a new Government was formed in which the entire country could see its views reflected. It is a consensus Government, desirous above all of the common good and national dignity. It is determined to gather together all political trends, all schools of thought and all Haitians of goodwill, without exception, so as to seize the opportunity of establishing once and for all the foundations of genuine democracy that will put an end to the structural instability of power in Haiti and prevent any return to dictatorship.

The nation has rediscovered its true nature and the State its authority. We see the new Government, in full agreement with the desires of the people, resolutely embarked on the course of necessary change, aiming to bring the people out of its period of transition to assume responsibility for its destiny through elections that at last will be free and honest, in a climate of representative democracy irreversibly founded on a multi-party system, respect for essential freedoms, the inviolability of the rights of the human person, and social justice.

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To that end the 1987 Constitution, which was adopted by a large majority, will be restored, with the changes that the people, in its sovereignty, may feel it necessary to make to it. The institutions that it had defined to ensure the proper working of the Haitian society will be re-established to meet a twofold challenge - the modernization of our political structures and the invigoration of our economy. From now on, Haiti turns a new face to the world. Freedoms - I mean all freedoms - are guaranteed; the political parties are re-emerging; justice is resuming its rights; those who were forced to flee the country are coming back; and, above all and for the first time since 7 February 1986, a democratic dialogue has begun among all political trends and schools of thought and the Government, in a desire for complete national reconciliation, without which the reconstruction battle would be compromised from the outset.

In the present circumstances there is only one possible policy: that aimed at giving a lasting foundation to a régime of law and freedom and attacking the structural causes of absolute poverty. Those two courses are closely linked and inseparable. It is clear that it is impossible to exercise political rights in any meaningful way without full enjoyment of economic and social rights, and to that end we must tackle without further delay the major problems which the Haitian economy is now facing and which call for urgent medium- and long-term solutions.

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The grave deterioration of the physical environment as a result of the deforestation and erosion compounding the desertification of our country, deficiencies in the machinery of production and the uncertainty of income, particularly in the rural areas, are factors behind the complete halt in economic growth, while population growth is about 1.5 per cent.

It must also be emphasized that as a result of socio-political troubles during the period 1986-88 the problem of employment has only worsened, making the socio-economic situation of the needy sectors of our population even more difficult in a country that already had a highly alarming rate of unemployment.

Another point to be stressed is the burden of financial difficulties, which have been aggravated by the freeze on international assistance for a year now. That is compounded by the considerable material damage caused by hurricane Gilbert.

In short, the past eight years have been characterized by a serious, constant decline in production, employment and the level and quality of life in Haiti. We fear that the 1980s may be a lost decade for development unless energetic, timely action, strongly supported by the international community is taken to help what is the only least developed country in the Americas to break this vicious circle of underdevelopment. In this regard, the statement of the Episcopal Conference of Haiti on the events of 17 September this year was unambiguous. It reads:

"We beg you, the international organizations, to continue the assistance given to this country. But in the present circumstances we address an urgent appeal to you to increase aid for the development of our people."

In its programme of action the Government has set itself a three-part target - the establishment of a régime of freedom and human dignity, economic growth and social development - in a climate of exceptional economic difficulties. That is

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why we make an urgent appeal to the whole international community, friendly countries and the specialized agencies of the United Nations to mobilize the necessary resources to permit a return to sustained growth in Haiti after years of stagnation.

In this regard, we believe that the proposals, recommendations and commitments in resolution 39/196 of 17 December 1984, concerning a special United Nations programme for assisting Haiti, could be updated and their content could be expanded to enable our country to tackle its most urgent problems, overcome its many handicaps and deal with the structural problems that have all too often been neglected in the past.

We hope above all that with mutual respect and trust Haiti's partners will work to ensure the implementation of that decisive plan of action, which the people of Haiti believes it has a right to count on, if it is to achieve by the year 2000 a level of economic, social and cultural development compatible with fundamental human rights and the requirements of human dignity.

For our part, we shall spare no effort. That was the gist of the message of the President of the Republic, Lieutenant General Prosper Avril, when he said at the inauguration of the Cabinet:

"The task is immense and cannot be put off. Let us begin it immediately, making it a point of honour that the true foundation of our legitimacy should be the extent of our services to the community. Today a man of good will is stretching out his hand towards other men of good will; a chain of solidarity must be formed and made longer and longer, stronger and stronger, so that Haiti may live and make progress."

Mr. MBONINEA (Burundi) (interpretation from French): In addressing this international gathering, I have the honour to convey to the Assembly a message of fraternity and best wishes for every success from Major Pierre Buyoya, Chairman of

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the Military Committee for National Redemption and President of the Republic of Burundi, on the occasion of this forty-third session.

I am also pleased to express on behalf of my Government warm and heartfelt congratulations to Mr. Dante Caputo, Foreign Minister of Argentina, and the other officers of the Assembly on their election to guide our work and the unanimous expression of confidence it represents.

We pay tribute to the President as not only an eminent, skilful diplomat, very familiar with the many difficult concerns of the international community, but a fervent defender of solidarity and co-operation between peoples in a spirit of dignity and sovereign equality. My delegation is determined to give him every assistance so that his noble task may be successfully accomplished.

We join previous speakers in expressing our deep gratitude to Mr. Peter Florin, who conducted the Assembly's varied work competently and effectively as President of the forty-second session, with a devotion that rebounded to the honour of the United Nations and his country, the German Democratic Republic.

We also pay tribute to Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, the Secretary-General, for his constant, tireless efforts in the service of the international community and for the outstanding successes he has scored - to his own credit and that of our Organization - during the past year.

(Mr. Mbonimpa, Burundi)

Before stating my country's position on some of the items before this Assembly, I wish briefly to describe the situation that has prevailed in Burundi since the establishment on 3 September 1987 of our Third Republic. I should like first of all to provide some information about the painful events that have ravaged two communes in the north of Burundi and that very nearly destroyed the stability of my country's social fabric.

The international community heard of the grim events that shook Burundi in extremely far-fetched versions in that segment of the press that delights in the sensational; in most cases these accounts were in line with the version of the perpetrators of these crimes. I wish therefore to shed some light on the events so members may have as clear a picture as possible and so the international community may finally learn of the guilty disinformation put before it.

It began in the commune of Marangara in Ngozi province, where the downtrodden populace rose up armed with spears and machetes to defend themselves against a non-existent enemy; they refused to withdraw, claiming that they were in danger of being killed. For several months the provincial authorities had noted the spread of seditious writings and cassette recordings stirring up racial hatred. These were being constantly distributed by small groups of Burundian refugees who entered the country from abroad. This subversive literature made these peaceable peasants believe in an imminent massacre, and tried to make them take preemptive action to forestall the imaginary enemy.

It has now been established that these disturbed activists were seeking to sow confusion, evade governmental vigilance and cause a war with ethnic overtones in order to spread desolation throughout the entire country.

When the authorities learned of the explosive situation and of these criminal plans, they tried first to understand the reasons behind them and then to calm the

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population by showing clearly that there was no civil war and that the country was calm. The people quickly realized that they had been manipulated. They re-opened roads they had cut off as a preventive measure, and returned to their homes in peace.

All this took place very peacefully. In its spirit of tolerance, the Government did not attempt to punish the perpetrators of the disturbance. It was believed that the misfits would see reason because the twisted ideas they were spreading would be quickly discredited through dialogue and persuasion. Unfortunately, just as the Government had begun to congratulate itself on the return to normalcy, violence erupted on 14 August 1988 in the neighbouring commune of Ntega in the adjacent province of Kirundo.

This time, learning from their failure due to the peasants' refusal to believe lies, the organizers themselves took action and began the massacre. We know what happened then.

Heavily drugged and armed with machetes, spears and clubs, they began a real blood-bath, killing men, women, children and old people alike. They put a radical stamp on their crimes by burning houses and crops and slaughtering livestock.

Initially, the perpetrators of these horrors selectively attacked members of the Tutsi group and their property. They then executed those of their own ethnic group who refused to join in the massacre.

Not satisfied with their crimes in the Ntega commune, the hordes of murderers extended the horror and killing to the neighbouring commune of Marangara. There too the rebels overcame the resistance organized spontaneously by the local people of all ethnic groups, and committed more of the same atrocities, destroying all human life in their path and setting fire to houses, coffee and banana plantations and forests.

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Given this unprecedented violence and the large loss of life, the Government was compelled to send in the army to halt the massacres and protect the people. The armed forces restored order in three days and with the greatest discipline.

I take this opportunity to deny accusations made in certain press circles concerning the role of the Burundi army and to reaffirm that as of 20 August 1988 the situation was under control in the two affected communes and peace reigned throughout the rest of Burundi.

Despite the army's effectiveness in halting the killing, Burundi cannot but lament the large human and material losses. During this period 5,000 lives were lost and material damage is estimated at \$20 million. Few of the wounded survived the massacre, while large numbers of people fled to Rwanda and neighbouring Burundian communes, leaving behind them poverty and desolation in a region that had once been the wealthiest and most active in the country.

Those are the grim facts that have plunged Burundi into sorrow.

From the outset, the Government has pursued a policy of openness with respect to these facts. It regularly kept informed representatives of countries and international bodies residing at Bujumbura; it invited a delegation from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), foreign diplomats and journalists to visit the troubled areas; those who wanted to learn the facts in situ were authorized to do so. The Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) was invited to carry out a fact-finding mission in Burundi, and a World Bank mission visited the country. Similarly, the Secretary-General of the United Nations may at any time send a fact-finding mission to Burundi if he thinks it necessary.

To deal with the Ntega and Marangara tragedy, there was a great spontaneous surge of national solidarity, which enabled the Government to provide first aid to the victims of the disaster.

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On behalf of the Government and people of Burundi I should like to take this opportunity to thank the friendly countries and organizations that have so generously given emergency assistance and to reiterate our request to the international community for humanitarian aid.

Apart from the material losses and loss of life, the events in Ntega and Marangara have once again threatened to destroy the solid social tissue that had always characterized our society. The existence of ethnic antagonism in Burundi is a recent phenomenon. It has been caused by social and political rivalries between the Hutu and Tutsi élite who divided power after independence in 1962. Subsequently, this antagonism increased further and periodically degenerated into bloody upheavals that were explained by international media often in a very peremptory way, thereby encouraging the demands of extremist groups and making calm dialogue almost impossible.

We should point out that of all those who have spoken about these recent events in Burundi not one has condemned the actions of the rebels who have massacred innocent people. Many reports, and even certain official declarations, support the notion that these murderous rebels are seeking power; and that, if their demands are heeded, there will be no further violence in Burundi. However justified their demands, nothing can legitimize the deaths of innocent people. To succumb to blackmail, the blackmail of terrorists, would be to compromise for ever our search for peaceful solutions.

We note that awareness of ethnic origin, which is ages old in Burundi, is not a source of conflict that our oral pre-colonial traditions were aware of. Under the political régime before colonization, the royal families that ruled used the two main tribes, the Hutus and the Tutsis, in guiding the affairs of state. The

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colonial régime, in its search for greater effectiveness of the indirect administration system, chose to deepen ethnic rifts by assigning to each tribe specific hierarchical roles. The system of modernizing the political régime eliminated the Hutus from the administration of the country.\*

Mr. Jean Paul Harroy, the former Governor-General of Rwanda-Urundi, in his book "Burundi", stated:

"We should not simplify judgments, speaking of the dominant Tutsis, the oppressor Tutsis and the dominated oppressed Hutus. In agricultural Burundi, which is a land-locked, over-populated country, we saw two main groups facing each other, each made up of both Tutsis and Hutus, led by dynamic Baganwas."

Further on, the author, speaking of the colonial administration, said:

"The political programme that advocated strengthening the authority of Mwami and the chiefs unfortunately eliminated many Hutu chiefs by eliminating the small fiefdoms."

From 1957-1958, when the movement for independence was gathering strength in Africa and, in particular, in Burundi, the colonial agents did an about-face and sought an alliance with the Hutu elements in order to thwart nationalism, the nationalism of the young cadres of whom the majority were Tutsis. They financed and created many parties, based for the most part on tribal ideology, whose objective was to oppose the Uprona party, which was alone calling for immediate independence. Those living in Burundi at that time will recall the many tracts dropped from 'planes provided by colonial agents that, inter alia, carried such

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\*Mr. Moushoutas (Cyprus), Vice-President, took the Chair.

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slogans as "Bwengebuka na Rugorihenda" which means, literally, the stupid and the clever people. The two adjectives were applied, respectively, to the Hutus and the Tutsis. The Tutsis were called "Nilo-Hamitic" and "lords", whereas the Hutus were called "Bantu negroes" and "serfs"; and a whole pseudo-scientific literature was developed on the basis of their respective height.

That ideology, assisted by the goal of replacing the colonial agents in power, finally won over extremist elements from the Burundi élite who reached the point where they believed that they belonged to another race and that they should accede to power by exterminating the other ethnic group.

That is the ideology being spread by the detractors of national unity - particularly the activists who have taken refuge abroad and who still refuse to return to the country to participate in its construction, despite the appeals, and guarantees of security and jobs offered them by the Third Republic.

The evidence is very clear that these same terrorists organized the Ntega and Marangaras events. At some time they infiltrated Burundi, particularly the border communes, to preach hatred and genocide by means of tracts, cassettes and secret meetings.

The motives of these misfits of Burundi society are clear. Their concern is to thwart the policy of national unity, social justice, democracy and progress being established by the authorities of the Third Republic under the guidance of His Excellency, Major Pierre Buyoya, Chairman of the Military Committee for National Salvation and President of the Republic. This policy, whose main points I now outline, was intended to deprive the terrorists once and for all of an audience within the country and to stop the flow of funds generously provided, ostensibly to serve a good cause, that of the "oppressed majority" freeing itself of the "minority of oppressors", or "lords". Anyone who is familiar with the real

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situation in Burundi can attest that our country is free of this social stratification.

In internal policies, the Government of the Third Republic has, since 3 September 1987, been pursuing a policy of harmonization and dialogue on all problems facing our country. In this context the question of national unity is being thoroughly debated in party meetings and during visits that the authorities of the Third Republic, headed by the President, have regularly paid to the provinces, the communes and the hilly areas.

Many national cadres have been appointed to responsible posts in the administration of the party without any distinction as to ethnic origin. In order to strengthen this national unity, the Military Committee for National Salvation has just established a commission which has been asked to make a thorough study of ways and means to strengthen national unity.

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It consists of people chosen for their patriotism and integrity, representing all sectors of national life in Burundi.

Political prisoners were released upon the establishment of the Third Republic, and the Church-State conflict has been satisfactorily resolved. Thus, freedom of religion has been restored, religious leaders expelled under the Second Republic have been allowed to return to Burundi and seminaries and property requisitioned have been restored to the Church.

The National Party for Unity and Progress, which for a long time now has been the crucible of national unity, has been restructured to serve as an ideal framework for the practice of democracy in Burundi. General elections, with universal suffrage and secrecy, have been successfully organized to establish the basic organs of the party, and this democratic process will apply at the highest levels of the party and the administration.

In foreign policy, the Government of the Third Republic, faithful to its principles of good-neighbourliness, non-interference in the internal affairs of other States, international co-operation, non-alignment and support for national liberation movements, has been conducting a policy of clear-sightedness, trust and ongoing dialogue. The authorities of the Third Republic were quick to normalize relationships with all neighbouring countries, and enjoy relations of friendship and co-operation, free from suspicion and any other psychological barrier, with other countries and friendly organizations.

With regard to economic and social matters, the Third Republic has given priority to developing the rural sector, where 90 per cent of our people live. Accordingly, the sixth five-year plan for social and economic development gives priority to the Ministries of Agriculture and Rural Development. Efforts are

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under way to develop social infrastructures, such as schools, health centres and drinking water facilities.

Since the advent of the Third Republic, the approach taken by our President and our Government has been consistent: first, to recognize the problems, then to put them forward for discussion, and finally to carry out the solutions proposed and encourage the commitment of everyone to their success. The problems of Burundi must elicit responses by Burundi.

In officially opening the work of the national commission to study the question of national unity, the President of the Republic said:

"If there is one way that foreigners can help to resolve Burundi's problems it is by becoming thoroughly familiar with them; by questioning the people and the facts, observing the phenomena and studying the history. That is the effort that is necessary from all who wish to judge the situation with respect for the truth."

Speaking of the recent tragedy, he went on to say:

"We are capable of fighting, we are capable of transforming our past weaknesses into assets in ensuring solidarity and fraternity, where before there were suspicion and hatred."

We welcome the wise advice of friends, but we deny anyone the right to settle Burundi's affairs except those mainly concerned - that is, the people of Burundi. We do not believe in the effectiveness of solutions imposed from outside, whatever the size of the group of countries and the organizations from which they emanate. It should be clear to all that advocate sanctions or pressure of any kind against the Government of Burundi that their initiatives go against the policy of national reconciliation advocated by our President, Major Pierre Buyoya, and his Government. Such sanctions, if applied, would hit the people of Burundi

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indiscriminately and seriously compromise peace not only in Burundi but in all the other Great Lakes countries.

Despite this troubled short-term situation in my country, Burundi is very alive to and concerned by the many problems that threaten international peace and security. Fear of a nuclear catastrophe, the ravages caused by armed conflict throughout the world, colonial oppression, racial segregation and the deplorable world economic situation, are problems of vital concern that disrupt our world.

The Republic of Burundi follows with keen attention all the efforts made by the international community to preserve peace and security among peoples. In particular, we welcome the increasing tendency of the two super-Powers to place the question of the prevention of a nuclear holocaust at the forefront of their concerns. We greatly appreciate their determination in the last few years to engage in constructive dialogue, which led recently to the ratification in Moscow of the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles - INF Treaty. This was a political result of vital importance, since it could contribute to giving a fresh impetus to the process of disarmament and co-operation in matters of international security.

However, unless all the nations of the world, collectively and individually, are committed to the success of the great and noble task of disarmament in all its dimensions, we shall still tend to doubt the effectiveness and the value of initiatives taken to prevent the frenzied arms race, which could threaten mankind, whether through cynicism, mistake or tragic accident, according to chance.

We believe that the highly desirable multilateral process of disarmament offers a number of advantages. Generally speaking, it would certainly allow us to examine objectively the various aspects of the problem. At the same time, it would

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help us to change the views on disarmament of States that possess nuclear arsenals, as well as the position of this question on the scale of priorities of those States.

In this context, we welcomed the convening of the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament last June. To its credit, that session, among other things, reaffirmed that international peace and security cannot depend on the relations between only two States, however powerful, but are the concern of all Member States of the United Nations.

At the regional level, we appreciate the combined efforts to put an end to armed conflicts that have afflicted many third world countries for many years.

(Mr. Mbonimpa, Burundi)

Burundi welcomed the signing in Geneva on 14 April 1988 of the Geneva Accords relating to Afghanistan. We pay a tribute to Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, the Secretary-General, for his patient and fruitful efforts in seeking a peaceful solution to the critical situation in that country. This was, of course, made possible thanks to the flexibility shown by the main parties to the conflict.

We express profound feelings of solidarity with all front-line States that have spared no effort, at the price of great sacrifices, to provide all necessary support for a people oppressed, exploited and dispossessed by the racist apartheid régime of South Africa.

Still on the subject of southern Africa, we are particularly interested in the negotiations that have been started between Angola, the United States, Cuba and South Africa. These quadripartite negotiations between Angolans, Americans, Cubans and South Africans could lead to a process to establish peace in that part of Africa.

For Burundi, the independence of Namibia cannot be subordinated to any condition that runs counter to the aspirations of the peoples concerned for self-determination, as expressed by the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO), the sole, authentic representative of the Namibian people.

That is why we once again call upon Pretoria's allies to recognize the imperative need to implement without further delay Security Council resolution 435 (1978), regarding Namibia's accession to independence.

It is out of the same sympathy and solidarity with all genuine liberation movements that our delegation expresses the firm hope that the Sahraoui people will in the near future exercise its inalienable right to self-determination.

(Mr. Mbonimpa, Burundi)

Burundi also warmly welcomes the commitment undertaken by the Islamic Republic of Iran last July officially to accept Security Council resolution 598 (1987) which constitutes a peace plan for the two States that have for years been engaged in the Gulf war. We are happy to see the opening of direct negotiations between Iran and Iraq to put an end to the hostilities between those two fraternal peoples.

With regard to South-East Asia, we support all the peace efforts now being made to bring about a normalization of the situation in Kampuchea in keeping with the profound aspirations of the people concerned. Furthermore, we welcome the common political determination manifested by the leaders of the north and south of Korea to reach peacefully negotiated solutions, which should inevitably lead to the reunification of the Korean nation.

On the subject of the Middle East, we are firmly convinced that the conflict in that region can come about only within the context established by Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), so that the Palestinian people can enjoy their right to a homeland.

Turning to Latin America, we hope that the peoples of that region will finally come to the necessary agreement to establish stability and peace there, in keeping with the political will expressed by the Guatemala Agreement signed by the five Presidents of Central America in August 1987.

Many previous speakers have emphasized the dangers of the present economic situation. Since the 1970s, third world countries have constantly been forced to have recourse to foreign loans to meet their increasing budget deficits. It is apparent that loans entered into in international markets and granted by various financial institutions have placed the recipient countries in a situation of dependence, at first imperceptible and then very marked.

(Mr. Mbonimpa, Burundi)

The most disturbing aspect of this dependence lies in long-term obligations that are very costly in terms of political economic control.

We are fully aware that proposals and initiatives have been put forward to overcome the serious debt problems that paralyse many third world countries. But they all seem very limited to us, including the structural adjustment programmes, the United Nations Programme of Action for Africa, North-South Co-operation and the regional economic integration policies.

That is why my delegation once again makes an urgent appeal to the United Nations to consider in depth the question of establishing a new international economic order.

We sincerely hope that international economic transactions can be carried out in a way that can generate investment capital for the developing countries. That would enable them to train the needed competent manpower and to produce the technology and capital goods these countries need to deal with the extreme poverty of their peoples.

Another problem, that of the environment, has been added to the matters preoccupying the international community. I refer to the export of toxic waste to third-world areas in general and to sub-Saharan Africa in particular. Western corporations are proposing that countries of the region receive millions of tons of toxic waste for a pathetic amount of money.

The mortal danger to human and animal life and to vegetation involved in such speculations is very clear, as are the unfortunate long-term consequences for future generations in the countries concerned. We urgently draw this matter to the attention of all the specialized agencies of the United Nations, in particular the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the World Health Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations,

(Mr. Mbonimpa, Burundi)

the United Nations Environment Programme, the World Meteorological Organization and the International Labour Organisation, which must continue to play their noble roles in sensitizing world public opinion on environmental issues and finding, urgently and concertedly, verifiable measures with regard to the international regulation of the serious problem of exporting industrial waste.

Success in meeting this challenge of course requires the unanimous commitment of all nations of the world collectively and individually to fight pollution. We hope that in the cases of other scourges also, such as war, terrorism, hunger, disease, poverty and ignorance, there will be a collective will to promote the building of a world of peace, justice and security.

Mr. ADOUKI (Congo) (interpretation from French): The Government of the Congo is at present involved in a process of negotiations whose goal is to resolve the question of Namibia and to establish peace in southern Africa. This is a historic moment. The whole world expects it to lead to a new era for the peoples concerned and for the whole international community.

In coming to this rostrum I am deeply conscious of the great honour that the highest authorities of my country have done me in appointing me to speak on their behalf at the forty-third session of the General Assembly.

It is in the nature of nations to conceive of great designs; this memorable law, of course, did not take shape at the founding of the United Nations, but found in it satisfactory expression, and today its most exalting hour has come. Rising above threats and insults, after the cataclysm of a total world war, the United Nations has succeeded in pursuing what is clearly its goal of goals: the search for and the maintenance of international peace.

We are glad to see that for 43 years this goal has been achieved, and that mankind as a whole has been preserved from atomic annihilation. But this year, 1988, our Organization bears within it a magnificent hope, and all nations of the world, in trust and in confidence, are looking towards it. That hope offers our Organization new opportunities for constructive action.

My delegation wishes to express its gratitude and pay a tribute to the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, for his readiness and perseverance in the area of peace and international security. When we read what he has written we see that the principal organs of the United Nations have been working more and more in the way the Charter intended. As he notes, the working relationship of the Security Council and the Secretary-General has rarely, if ever, been closer.

(Mr. Adouki, Congo)

The events of recent months - in regard to which we feel we must express the Congo's appreciation and indicate what our country wants for the future - have highlighted the potential of our Organization and the legitimacy of the hopes that the peoples of the world have pinned on it and on multilateralism.

Before I begin, however, I wish to extend to the President the very warmest congratulations of the delegation of my country to the forty-third session. Argentina, which, thanks to Mr. Caputo's remarkable qualities and high diplomatic office, has recently acceded to the eminent place it now occupies in Latin America, belongs, like my country, the Congo, to the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. I note, for example, that our two countries have recently taken an active part in ensuring the success of the first meeting of States of the Zone of Peace and Co-operation of the South Atlantic, which was held in Rio de Janeiro. My delegation cannot but be delighted to see Mr. Caputo presiding over the forty-third session of the General Assembly, which will be considering, among other things, the conclusions reached at that meeting.

I should like also to express our sincere gratitude to his predecessor, Comrade Peter Florin, President of the forty-second session, for the competent manner in which he conducted the work of the Assembly.

The people of the People's Republic of the Congo, like all the peoples of the world that cherish peace, felt a sense of justified pride when it learnt that the Nobel Committee had decided last month to award the Nobel Peace Prize to the United Nations peace-keeping forces.

I should like here to recall with satisfaction that a few months ago the People's Republic of the Congo held a non-permanent seat on the Security Council, and directly contributed, in that position of privilege, to the performance of the

(Mr. Adouki, Congo)

tasks of that most prestigious organ of the United Nations, which has very special responsibilities in the maintenance of international peace and security.

The Congo is, then, well aware that the tribute thus paid by the Nobel Committee to those men and women, those guardians of peace, and to their bravery and courage as they work for peace in many, often dangerous, theatres of operations throughout the world, was well deserved.

This Prize, this most distinguished award, encourages the Secretary-General in his constant attitude of tireless patience and in the efforts he makes with a persistence rarely equalled today, particularly in the Persian Gulf, Afghanistan, Western Sahara and Namibia.

(Mr. Adouki, Congo)

How could my delegation not once again pay a tribute to Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar for those achievements which strengthen our Organization and its role in the cause of peace? It is encouraging to see our Organization's name now closely linked to the settlement of complex conflicts that have been up to now stalemated. Most of the significant negotiations on them have been begun either within the United Nations or through its intervention.

There is no doubt that there are still many hotbeds of tension in the world. A heavy toll in death, destruction and atrocities of all kinds continues to be taken, in particular in the occupied Arab territories, in Lebanon, in South Africa and in Latin America, where, despite the activities of the Contadora Group and the Lima group, the Esquipulas II Agreements, are being put to the severest tests, even though it is essential that they be respected and implemented.

In the case of South Africa, a country still governed by absurdity and still under the rod of a minority upholding the hateful régime of apartheid and its iniquitous laws, the black majority of the population continues, in the midst of the fiercest repression exacerbated by the state of emergency, courageously to seek its path and to struggle.

The illegal military occupation of Namibia by South African troops has not come to an end. It has for ten years been hindering the urgent and unconditional implementation of the United Nations peace plan contained in Security Council resolution 435 (1978) which is to lead Namibia to independence.

So we see how in many areas of the world the exercise of democracy and the enjoyment of fundamental human rights are still seriously hindered by dictatorial powers and practices. What is more, policies of confrontation have not disappeared. Tempered by political realities, we have learned that one cannot change the nature of things by simply recalling principles but only by translating those principles into practical reality.

(Mr. Adouki, Congo)

And yet today the international situation does reflect several important changes and signs of détente.

The dialogue begun between the Soviet Union and the United States of America and the agreements reached by the two super-Powers have, with the help of the determined will of the peoples of the whole world for peace, generated this indispensable climate of détente.

The United Nations, taking the best advantage of this improvement in relations, has opened up new avenues for its own activity. Thus, thanks to this flowering of diplomacy, the process for settling various local or regional conflicts has been strengthened.

By way of example, the guns have really fallen silent between Iran and Iraq. The Congo is pleased that those two countries, which are among the eminent members of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, should have agreed to begin direct talks under the auspices of the Secretary-General.

This exercise, certainly a difficult one, on which the parties embarked no later than last week in New York, shows that the chances for the establishment of a lasting peace are real and that the prospect of reconstruction is drawing closer.

This success is of considerable importance for the region. It does honour to the parties concerned, and my country invites them to persevere in this course and to continue to co-operate closely with the Secretary-General. Like the cease-fire established on 20 August last, the progress being made equally rewards the sustained efforts of the United Nations. Security Council resolution 598 (1987) - which the Congolese delegation knows well since as a member of the Security Council, it assisted at the time in its adoption - provided the basis for the current negotiations. Once again I would like to stress the role of wise mediator played by the Secretary-General in this process of settling the Iran-Iraq conflict.

(Mr. Adouki, Congo)

The course of events with regard to the situation in Afghanistan is also promising. The allied troops have indeed withdrawn from that country in conformity with the Geneva Agreements of last April. My country welcomed those Agreements as a contribution to peace and a decisive step towards a solution that will enable all Afghans to exercise their right to self-determination. In regard to the Geneva Agreements, the Secretary-General stresses that this is the first time that the two most powerful States of our world have become guarantors of an agreement negotiated under the auspices of the United Nations Secretary-General.

What is more, the general feeling with regard to situations of armed conflict is that the intensity of those conflicts has declined. The possibility of finding peaceful solutions to the situations in those troubled regions has thus been considerably strengthened.

The prospects for a settlement in South-East Asia, in particular in Kampuchea, in recent months have benefited from many initiatives, among them the recent talks in Indonesia. Diplomatic efforts should lead to the establishment of institutions with the broadest possible national representation.

We have noted many diplomatic efforts with a view to finding points of agreement on the question of Cyprus. The good offices of the Secretary-General, employed under a mandate from the Security Council, are beginning to give rise to favourable reactions. My country encourages the parties concerned in this course.

The number and variety of so many positive and important talks show how it is possible to build peace among nations that agree to enter into dialogue, and there are no conflicts or situations threatening international peace and security, however complex or acute they may be, that are irremediably stalemated.

In Africa, N'Djamena and Tripoli are irrefutable proof, if proof we need, of this. The two capitals have announced that they will begin to restore diplomatic relations between their two countries. Congo encourages the authorities of Chad

(Mr. Adouki, Congo)

and Libya to pursue their efforts and, in the interests of their two peoples and the neighbouring countries, to find a peaceful and lasting solution to the border conflict between them.

The Congo welcomes these prospects for peace and reasonableness, which observers unanimously agree they were unimaginable to some a few months ago. These prospects for peace consequently contribute to a particular strengthening of the peace ideals of our Organization, which so many nations support, and also the general role of the United Nations, which is becoming more and more active.

The improvement in the general climate of international relations and the areas of agreement now voluntarily acknowledged - for example, one on which we concur and which has been mentioned at this rostrum: the subject of chemical weapons - cannot hide the fact that there are conflicts yet unresolved and situations of tragic actuality that continue to affect developing countries.

(Mr. Adouki, Congo)

In this regard my delegation would like to dwell first on the unbearable situation in southern Africa. Everything leads us to believe that Pretoria intends to uphold the system of apartheid and thus to continue its repression of the people and, what is more, its aggression against the front-line countries. The international community cannot forget that apartheid is a crime against humanity. Hence it must maintain and step up its pressure on South Africa and adopt comprehensive, binding sanctions against that country, particularly now that we are preparing to commemorate the fortieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. If South Africa wants peace it must recognize the most elementary rights of the majority of the people in the country. The banning by the ruling white minority in Pretoria of the activities of non-violent organizations and the arrest of all kinds of pacifists, including clergymen, betray the inherent incapacity of the apartheid régime for reform. In fact, that régime must be totally dismantled and it must give way to a democratic and multiracial system of Government.

Furthermore, the international community must continue to exert all forms of pressure on the South African Government to ensure that the emergency measures now in force are lifted and to obtain the release of all political prisoners, including Nelson Mandela.

Angola, a country that is a friend and brother of the People's Republic of the Congo, has been deeply afflicted, but recently it obtained encouraging results in Geneva towards a cessation of hostilities in the war of aggression being waged against it by the apartheid régime of South Africa. The new prospects for peace now emerging must, however, be consolidated. My country, on the initiative of its President, Colonel Denis Sassou-Nguesso, actively supports the efforts being made in this regard. Thus Brazzaville, our wonderful capital, long known for its hospitality, is host to the latest series of quadripartite talks between Angola,

(Mr. Adouki, Congo)

Cuba and South Africa, with the mediation of the United States. After three rounds of negotiations, which produced some progress, my country has high hopes of seeing the parties concluding their talks in Brazzaville very soon. No one will be surprised to see the People's Republic of the Congo playing such an active role in such an important process. This only reflects the customary policy of peace and international co-operation advocated and carried out by President Denis Sassou-Nguesso.

It gives me great pleasure to recall here that in April last year, in Brazzaville, the dialogue between the United States of America and the People's Republic of Angola was resumed. It was also in Brazzaville on 13 May that a bilateral meeting between Angola and South Africa was held.

Our tradition of struggling against domination, colonialism and all forms of injustice, and our readiness for solidarity, as well as the commitment of the Congolese people to everything that concerns peace, progress and security in southern Africa, have combined with the efforts being made by the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) to create this climate which has led to our country's becoming the meeting point and place of dialogue the international community was seeking. Over and above the immense benefits expected from this event that we see in the quadripartite talks in Brazzaville, I can confirm that the spirit of Brazzaville will always remain a source of peace and security in our region.

The prospects for independence for the international Territory of Namibia, which is still under illegal military occupation by South Africa, are clearly improving in the light of current diplomatic contacts, and 1 November 1988 is a date we eagerly look forward to for the implementation of the United Nations peace plan for Namibia. It should open an exhilarating period in the lives of the Namibian people, under the leadership of the South West Africa People's

(Mr. Adouki, Congo)

Organization (SWAPO). Namibia would thus achieve independence.

I turn now to the conflict in the Middle East, a conflict whose complexity has often been stressed. My country shares with others the conviction and the hope that only an international peace conference with the PLO taking part could create in the region chances for the establishment of a comprehensive, just and lasting solution. We are pleased that certain countries, which previously were openly hostile to such an international conference, now accept the principle. It is high time to make this conference more than merely the subject of talk.

In the Korean peninsula, the direct contacts that have been established between the two Koreas, despite the modesty of the results, contribute to the creation of favourable conditions for the establishment of a new climate free of tension and conducive to the unification of the Korean homeland.

In the Western Sahara, Morocco and the POLISARIO Front have accepted the peace plan of the OAU and the United Nations, which advocates a referendum on self-determination for the Sahraoui people. The Congo supports the joint efforts of the Acting Chairman of the OAU and the Secretary-General of the United Nations, which flow from the decisive action taken by President Denis Sassou-Nguesso when he was Chairman of the OAU.

The new era that is opening in Soviet-American relations and for peace in the world confers particular importance on the question of disarmament. Moscow and Washington have shown clearly their determination to call a halt to the arms race. The conclusion by the two Powers of the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles, and the verification measures it contains open up interesting prospects for stability in the world. The developing countries, however, are aware of what was, after all, the minor impact those prospects had at the time of the third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. It is unfortunate that the results of its work were so meagre.

(Mr. Adouki, Congo)

The insupportable cost of the arms race not only threatens international peace and security, but also continues to swallow up colossal sums of money that could serve the goals of economic and social development, particularly the economic development of developing countries. Only a change in perceptions and attitudes, which we have heard described in contradiction one with another during the course of the debate - which must, of course, continue - can lead to an eventual evolution in the situation. If the economic situation of the developing countries is to improve, such contributions are necessary. Immediate solutions are called for, of course, but they must be appropriate solutions that take into account the long-term development goals of our countries.

The major industrialized countries meeting in Toronto advocated various initiatives, among them the setting up of a multilateral fund to guarantee debt servicing. There was also discussion of measures to cancel a portion of public indebtedness. According to one eminent participant in the Toronto meeting, "the international community must show greater realism and imagination". We can agree with that, for the problem of foreign debt has served only to intensify the considerable pressure on the young and fragile economies of our countries, as well as to increase the uncertainty prevalent in the international financial system.

The mid-term review of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990 by the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the General Assembly concluded that the economic and social situation in Africa had deteriorated, notwithstanding the considerable sacrifices made by the African States in implementing the Programme. Lack of resources, indebtedness and the unfavourable external economic environment have been identified as the principal obstacles to recovery efforts.

(Mr. Adouki, Congo)

At a time when the General Assembly is planning to declare the 1990s the fourth United Nations development decade and to prepare an international development strategy for that purpose, my delegation cannot refrain from noting that the preceding decades so solemnly proclaimed from this rostrum have to a large extent remained a dead letter. The experience of the 1980s, the Third - or lost - Development Decade, which will soon draw to an end, corroborates that bitter acknowledgement, given the discouraging predictions for the world economy in 1989. The crisis is serious and deep-rooted. It calls for bold and lasting solutions, not mere cosmetic tinkering that leaves untouched the very foundations of relations based on gross injustice.

The 1990s are the doorway to the third millenium. If present adverse trends continue, the scope of the economic and social crisis in the developing countries is likely to mean the exclusion of the majority of mankind from the inexorable march towards the year 2000, which relies upon economic and technological capability, and to preclude their entering into that third millenium.

New efforts must therefore be made in our deliberations on international co-operation for development. For many reasons the thorny problem of nuclear and toxic waste being surreptitiously dumped in various parts of the world will be one of its aspects. Africa condemns the dumping of such wastes on the territories of its States. As a result, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) has called for and obtained the inclusion of this item on the agenda of the present session.

Not too long ago the convinced partisans of strengthening the United Nations role in world affairs were fearful - and quite rightly - that the Organization might go down with all hands under the blows to its work and to its very principles by the advocates of a return to the values of individualism and triumphant bilateralism.

(Mr. Adouki, Congo)

Faced with that threat, but determined to survive, the United Nations embarked on a process of careful re-examination and healthy streamlining of its own bodies and their modus operandi. The Secretary-General spared no effort to awaken States Members to the seriousness of the situation and to obtain from them an active commitment to preserving the achievements of more than 40 years of efforts and experience, and renewed determination to ensure future success.

Today we feel that we can see the dawn of better days for the Organization. That is what the delegation of the Congo has, in part, been saying in its present statement. Such cautious optimism can be justified by various events, in particular by the payment of part of the arrears owed by States Members who had fallen behind in their contributions to the regular working budget. Nothing, however, will have been truly accomplished if those optimistic signs do not survive beyond the present situation.

Thus, as the general debate at the forty-third session draws to a close, we are proud to note the strengthening of a fortunate overall trend of hope that the United Nations can continue to forge ahead in the service of mankind, for whom it is an indispensable tool.

The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.