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PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE FIFTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 25 September 1989, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. GARBA (Nigeria)
later: Mr. POOS (Luxembourg)
(Vice-President)
later: Mr. GARBA (Nigeria)
later: Mr. HURST (Antigua and Barbuda)
(Vice-President)

- Address by Mr. Carlos Andrés Pérez, President of the Republic of Venezuela
- Address by Mr. Carlos Saul Menem, President of the Argentine Republic
- Address by Mr. Janez Drnovsek, President of the Presidency of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia
- General debate [9] (continued)
- Statements made by:

Mr. Ghozali (Algeria)
Mrs. Brundtland (Norway)
Mr. Ellemann-Jensen (Denmark)
Mr. Jameel (Maldives)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

ADDRESS BY MR. CARLOS ANDRES PEREZ, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF VENEZUELA

The PRESIDENT: The Assembly will first hear an address by the President of the Republic of Venezuela.

Mr. Carlos Andres Perez, President of the Republic of Venezuela, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations the President of the Republic of Venezuela, His Excellency Mr. Carlos Andres Perez, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President PEREZ (interpretation from Spanish): Mr. President, it is a great pleasure for me to extend to you the greetings and congratulations of Venezuela's people and Government on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly of the United Nations at this session. My congratulations go also to the other members of the Bureau. At the same time, we address words of thanks to the outgoing President, Mr. Dante Caputo, for the extraordinary manner in which he carried out his tasks at the last session, as well as to the Secretary-General, Javier Perez de Cuellar, for the excellent work he has done.

In the last decade of the twentieth century, we must pause to reflect on the history and experience of this century. Today we can begin to assess what these last 10 years of our century will be and should be. The super-Powers have entered into a period of détente, accommodation and co-operation, with vital initiatives, particularly with regard to nuclear and conventional disarmament, and a determination to solve and not to interfere in regional conflicts that have brought so much human and material harm to the countries of the third world.

(President Perez)

This irrational period of the cold war has also left behind a tragic situation in the world's economy and a crisis from which the great Powers cannot escape, because no economy, however strong it may be, can finance unlimited military spending. We have all paid for this, but most especially the countries of the third world.

It would seem that we can at long last discern a willingness by the international society to tolerate its own diversity and to act jointly to reduce and whenever possible remove sources of tension and conflicts we had virtually grown accustomed to living with. I wish to express Venezuela's appreciation of the initiatives of détente and disarmament undertaken by the super-Powers, and express to their leaders our confidence in their determination and perseverance. If the major blocs manage to arrive at concerted action, we shall at long last begin to overcome the cold war and the threat of nuclear warfare.

Thirteen years ago, on 16 November 1976, I came to this rostrum as President of Venezuela. On that occasion I said that the global political balance ostensibly rested on peaceful coexistence - peaceful coexistence which by its very name only meant a longer or shorter truce. I defined the separation, the dismembering, of the world into antagonistic blocs, for interdependence to achieve equality and co-operation among equals had not prevailed in the relations between powerful countries and between the powerful and the weaker countries. I then proposed, as I do today, the establishment of a new international economic order, for, otherwise, the world's political balance will continue to be in serious jeopardy.

(President Perez)

As I recall those words, I must acknowledge with deep concern, now that the sovereign will of my people has brought me once again to the presidency that, tragically, the call I then made to the conscience of the developed countries remains timely. Throughout all these years the developed countries' relations with the weaker, developing nations have deteriorated. Not only has trade between North and South become even more unfair than it was 13 years ago, but the situation has worsened substantially through the decade now ending, with the unbearable problem of debt.

As regards this crisis that undermines the stability of the debtor countries, no one can claim that there have not been enough warnings or that successive formulas for its solution have not been presented. Venezuela has always been willing to explore such formulas. It is not acceptable that debtor countries should continue to finance the growth of industrialized nations through net transfers of resources. It is essential to reverse this trend so that the developing countries may be able to finance their own sustained growth and their peoples' well-being.

Initiatives aimed at reducing both the amount of debt and the cost of servicing - particularly those embodied in the so-called Brady plan - are positive steps that confirm the political nature of the crisis and the principle of co-responsibility for its solution. However, the contributions offered by creditor nations and by international commercial banks remain insufficient - to say the least.

The efforts we can all make to solve the debt problem cannot be divorced from the general evolution of relations between the third world and the industrialized countries. The gravity of the situation, so often pointed to, lies in the fact that the existing economic relations between North and South have compromised, and continue to compromise, our possibilities for development. It is clear to all

(President Perez)

that, without sustained economic growth, the essential investment in social and political areas is impossible.

The alarming aspect of this situation is that, as yet, there is no clear vision or awareness in the developed countries of what is really at stake. What could be more brittle or unpredictable than societies that have no hope and no confidence? It is claimed that harsh economic adjustments will be sufficient. Indeed, Venezuela believes those to be necessary, but without a solution to the debt problem, without broader external support, those adjustments are not feasible, and the political stability of our countries, and even the world's political balance, are endangered.

Ultimately, crises are brought about by failure to interpret objectively existing risk indicators and by lack of willingness to commit the necessary ideas and resources to prevent them. The debt crisis requires the same long-range vision as was applied to Japan and Europe after the war. What is at stake is the destiny of mankind. Almost one third of the world's population is unable to achieve a solution to the problem of economic growth as a prerequisite to the possibility of servicing the debt. The danger of a social explosion embracing over 1 billion human beings will not be avoided, and the consequences of that explosion will be felt in the industrialized nations, which look with unprecedented coldness upon the rapid deterioration of the situation.

This year Venezuela has become a full member of the Non-Aligned Movement. In so doing, we have joined the great community of third world countries, which recognize non-alignment as the choice most consonant with our reality and aspirations, and which trust in the strength of unity to give our positions the weight they need to promote changes in contemporary politics and economics.

(President Perez)

Venezuela has always placed special emphasis on the importance of relations between developing countries. We are convinced that we, the countries of the third world, will never be able to exercise fully our political sovereignty, or to achieve equity in our economic relations with developed countries, unless we substantially enhance South-South relations, as an indispensable premise for strengthening our bargaining capacity. International society need not be condemned permanently to be governed by the patterns of the past. That is clear from what is happening today in East-West relations and from the efforts of European countries to assert their identity and explore new avenues. The international system must evolve and reflect today's pluralism. It is our aim to ensure that developing countries - our culture, our economies and our political realities - are fully incorporated into a multipolar world. It is with this vision, which transcends conflicts and highlights affinities and common potential, that we strive to equip ourselves with the institutions we need to be able to speak out and to act more effectively.

Venezuela, like other developing countries, is aware of the need to work towards revitalizing the North-South dialogue. In this regard Venezuela stated its position at the forty-third session of the General Assembly. It reiterated that position at the twenty-fifth anniversary meeting of the Group of 77, held in Caracas in June; in the Paris initiative, taken by the Presidents of Egypt, Senegal and Venezuela and by the Prime Minister of India during their meeting on the occasion of the bicentennial of the French Revolution; and, more recently, at the meeting of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, where it was firmly supported by all the Movement's members, and a group of 15 countries, representing Africa, Asia, Latin America and Europe, was established. That group will hold annual meetings, at the level of Heads of State or Government, to discuss issues of interest to the countries that make up the South.

(President Perez)

Latin America, despite the changes it has gone through, is not immune to political difficulties. Allow me to mention in particular the evolution of the Central American situation. The latest developments, as illustrated by the Tela agreements, in Honduras, confirm that, with autonomy, with confidence and with international support, the Central American countries will be able to achieve peace.

(President Perez)

We also welcome the agreement reached by El Salvador with the leaders of the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front on a suspension of hostilities and the beginning of negotiations with the Government of El Salvador which would enable those leaders to become involved in the political and democratic process of that country.

Few cases have better illustrated than those in Latin America the harm caused by foreign interference, based on false premises of strategic interest.

Elsewhere in Central America we are watching with concern developments in Panama. The abrogation of its democratic process, apart from denying the sovereign right of the Panamanian people to choose its own Government, is a factor destabilizing the vigorous process of democratization in Latin America. Nothing would be more unacceptable to us than a crisis that would call into question the Torrijos-Carter Treaties, which we consider to be an accomplishment of Latin American solidarity and a commitment uniting all our peoples.

Those of us who, like Venezuela, have a direct responsibility in this historical claim of Latin America, cannot view with indifference the build-up of elements of tension. Nothing can be more important for Latin America than to have the Panamanian community democratically settle its disagreements and to see the provisions of the Canal Treaties complied with to the letter.

I wish to say how pleased we Venezuelans are to see the beginning of a process that will lead to self-determination for the Puerto Rican people. We are linked to Puerto Rico by strong ties of history and culture. However, only the people of Puerto Rico can decide its future. This year there have been new developments, and Venezuela trusts that they will soon make it possible for the preferences of the people of Puerto Rico to be made known in a free expression of sovereign will. We cannot conceal the fact that we Latin Americans wish to see Puerto Rico become another Latin nation, like those our liberators dreamed of and fought for.

(President Perez)

In those cases, which I have mentioned, because of their importance for Venezuela and for Latin America as a whole, a fundamental role is played by the United States of America. Venezuela hopes that that friendly country will continue its present course of favouring multilateral dialogue and continued consultations. We are convinced that that is the only way for the American continent to advance towards the achievement of those values to which we all subscribe, both within the inter-American system and within the United Nations system.

Venezuela strives for close relations and co-operation in its foreign policy. We still have difficult historical obstacles to overcome. One is the reconciliation of our Latin American, continental and Caribbean identities. We had been separated from the Caribbean by colonialism and its divisive sequels. Today we can applaud the great advances the nations of the Caribbean have made in fostering their own identity and their admirable efforts at rapprochement with the rest of our region. Those countries not only are our neighbours and friends, but are also an inextricable part of Latin America with which we share opportunities and hopes in a common future.

To conclude the presentation of our views on Latin American affairs, I shall refer briefly to the Group of Eight. This year there will be held in Lima, Peru, the third presidential meeting of the permanent mechanism for political consultation and co-ordination. This mechanism has transformed the scope of our relations in Latin America and our approach to them.

Venezuela reiterates its rejection of colonialism and all forms of racial discrimination. We share the deep concern of the other Members of the United Nations, particularly the countries of southern Africa, over the persistence of the genocidal system of apartheid, which is a Nazi-style violation of human rights, a crime against humanity. We welcome with great satisfaction the holding of a special session of the General Assembly on apartheid.

(President Perez)

I turn to the subject of decolonization. We have consistently supported initiatives aimed at removing the last vestiges of colonialism, particularly those relating to the independence of Namibia and the implementation of the Security Council's plan for that purpose. We trust that the countries directly involved in solving the problem will continue to show the necessary political will to bring the process to a successful conclusion with the holding of the elections scheduled for November, under United Nations supervision.

We are watching with hope developments with regard to the problem of Western Sahara. We support the initiatives of the Secretary-General and reaffirm our conviction that direct dialogue will contribute effectively to recognition of the rights of the Sahraoui people, the resolution of the conflict and the process of integration in the Maghreb.

We Latin Americans must include in this survey the case of the Malvinas. We trust that the Argentine Republic and the United Kingdom, in keeping with resolutions of the United Nations and international law and solidarity, will initiate talks aimed at settling the controversy concerning sovereignty over those islands in the South Atlantic, which have formed part of the Argentine Republic since we Latin American peoples became independent from Spain.

I cannot fail to mention the dreadful tragedy of Lebanon, a land torn by a suicidal and diabolical conflict. The Lebanese people deserve the support and protection of the world. We commend the decision of the Arab League to set up a commission made up of the sovereigns of Saudi Arabia and Morocco and the President of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria to mediate in that horrible and absurd conflict. Venezuela appeals to the United Nations to show the greatest diligence in bringing about an end to the terrible massacres and violations of human rights, and we shall co-operate in any initiative in which we can play a useful part.

(President Perez)

In view of their paramount importance for the life of our societies and for international security, I shall now touch upon the problems of drugs and the environment. In 1984 Venezuela put forward a draft convention (resolution 39/141, annex) concerning the struggle against illicit trafficking in narcotics and psychotropic substances. We are happy to see today ever-growing support for that draft convention.

(President Perez)

At the non-aligned Summit, Venezuela, together with other Latin American countries, recently proposed other initiatives with regard to the prevention of and action against the laundering of money proceeding from drug trafficking. A systematic effort is being made in our countries and at a subregional Andean level to eradicate that evil.

This year, the gravity and extent of that crime against humanity have been highlighted by the current events in Colombia. International solidarity has remained more a matter of words than of deeds. Let us look, for example, at the behaviour of the United States. Undoubtedly, that country came to the fore in offering solidarity and material aid, but instead of such circumstantial aid, would it not have been more important to strengthen the Colombian economy by supporting the International Coffee Agreement?

But that was not the case. Besieged by drug-trafficking dollars, the coffee-growing countries, Colombia and other indebted countries such as Brazil amongst them, have seen their resources dwindle as a result of the United States' refusal to subscribe to the agreements of the International Coffee Organization. Prices have plummeted. How can we fight drug-trafficking in those circumstances, with such low prices for our commodities and such heavy debts?

Nevertheless, we welcome the agreement reached at the Paris Summit. We are convinced that little can be achieved without forceful action upon demand. It is up to the producer countries to fight the trafficking, but the consumer countries must also drastically curb their demand, since that is what makes the struggle against drug-trafficking so much more difficult.

The fight against drug-trafficking must be relentless and forceful. Let us not forget that, besides the erosion of our institutions and its impact upon health, drug trafficking and consumption are linked to terrorism, clandestine arms trafficking, the revival of mercenary activities, and the violation of human rights.

(President Perez)

I must say that despite all that I have stated in a spirit of optimism, the fight against drugs must be the subject of international legislation sponsored by the United Nations in a world conference that will confront this crime which knows no frontiers and which uses them only to evade and trample upon our sovereignty and well-being.

At the Ninth Summit of Heads of State or Government of the Non-Aligned Countries in Belgrade, I proposed the convening of a world conference to discuss an international convention against drug-trafficking that would be binding on all countries of the world.

As to the environment, allow me to reiterate what I have said in other forums. Development and the environment are interrelated. Until now, they have been inimical. It is necessary for developed and developing countries to approach the problem jointly and to reconcile our perspectives in a united effort that will enable us to preserve our environmental heritage without detriment to our common right to development.

I wish to propose that the Members of the United Nations formulate a convention that will commit all of us. My country belongs to an essential region of the world, the immense Amazonia. The eight nations making up that region have established the Amazonian Pact whereby, without relinquishing our sovereignty, we have sought to ensure its conservation as a patrimony of mankind and as a legacy of nature to the development and wealth of our nations.

Venezuela fully supports the special session of the General Assembly devoted to international economic co-operation, in particular to the revitalization of the economic growth and development of developing countries to be held in April 1990. We shall be present at that important event. We also wish to express our great interest in seeing the successful completion of the preliminary work being done on

(President Perez)

the international development strategy for the fourth United Nations development decade.

Let us dedicate the next decade of the twentieth century to the preservation of children, the future of mankind in the third millenium of our world. Let us set about reducing by half the death rate of children as well as of mothers. Let us strive for a universal primary school education and the elimination of severe malnutrition.

In this forum of mankind, I should like to invite you all to subscribe to the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, which represents the consensus of all the Governments of the world as to the minimum guarantees that every society must offer to its children. That must become the new international ethic. Venezuela will support in the Assembly this agreement aimed at safeguarding the most extensively violated rights of the world - the rights of children. We shall also support the holding of a world summit devoted to childhood, as proposed by the United Nations Children's Fund. To the Prime Minister of Sweden, who was the first to support that summit, we offer our full co-operation in sponsoring it, together with the other nations wishing to join that initiative.

In April of this year, at the 12th meeting of Ministers of Health of the Andean Countries in Caracas, I suggested the convening of a Latin American regional summit. Our regional statistics are truly alarming. One million children under the age of five die every year: 360,000 in Brazil, 175,000 in Mexico, 245,000 in the Andean countries. Every Latin American child is born with an external debt of \$32,000 and a social debt of \$23,000. Every newborn child receives a historical liability of \$60,000, equivalent to more than 25 times our nations' gross domestic product per capita. In sum, in Latin America most of the children are poor and most of the poor are children.

(President Perez)

Human eclipse or social development: that is the choice facing mankind on the eve of the third millenium.

We have come to the United Nations to advocate international co-operation. Let us not close our eyes to the countless dangers that we face at this promising moment. Let us take note of the dangers and work together to further the prevalence of reason. The economic and social problems our peoples face are immense, and we have no right to postpone solutions or open the door to conflict and instability. Strategic confrontation dominated the best minds of this past century. Perhaps it is now time to turn our eyes upon ourselves, upon our peoples and our societies, to assess their condition, their moral wants, their crises, and attempt to find solutions.

(President Perez)

This will make us realize how mistaken we have been this last, turbulent half of the twentieth century, and will open a gateway of hope so that, as we approach this magical date of the third millenium, we may be confident that in the new century all nations of the world will be able to march forward together in a spirit of solidarity, with a single aim: to ensure the well being of all mankind.

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

Mr. Carlos Andres Perez, President of the Republic of Venezuela, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

ADDRESS BY MR. CARLOS SAUL MENEM, PRESIDENT OF THE ARGENTINE REPUBLIC

The PRESIDENT: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Argentine Republic, His Excellency Mr. Carlos Saul Menem.

Mr. Carlos Saul Menem, President of the Argentine Republic, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations the President of the Argentine Republic, His Excellency Mr. Carlos Saul Menem, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President MENEM (interpretation from Spanish): I should like to begin by congratulating you, Mr. President, on your election to head the work of the General Assembly at its forty-fourth session. You represent Africa, a continent linked to the most difficult and successful of the struggles of the United Nations. You also represent a country, Nigeria, that has played a significant role in promoting the principles and purposes of the Organization's Charter. We know of your efforts in the Special Committee against Apartheid, and in you we see a standard bearer in the fight to eradicate the vile practice of racial discrimination from southern Africa.

I should also like to salute the outgoing President, Mr. Dante Caputo, who, on behalf of our country, accepted the responsibility of presiding over the General Assembly.

I have always believed it to be impossible to imagine the future of one's country without reflecting upon the reality of the world around us, impossible to have a correct national vision without a correct international vision, impossible to progress if we cover our eyes and grope our way forward without knowing what is going on in a constantly changing world.

For that reason, here in this highest forum I wish to speak about some of our concerns, goals and ambitions. I wish to talk about our fears and also about our

(President Menem)

hopes. I wish to talk about risks and also opportunities. In short, I have come to share with you our dreams and our realities.

What is politics, if not the focal point of our will and our ideas? History summons us, and we cannot turn our backs on it. There is a challenge before us; there is a clamour around us; there is an inescapable responsibility. The twenty-first century must be the century of a true renaissance. It will demand greatness to do away with selfish criteria that are merely partisan, ideological, class-related, religious or racial. It will demand intelligence to understand the problems of our times from a global standpoint. It will demand resolve if we are not to confine ourselves to mere words.

Today, to defend what is ours we must be aware of everyone's world. What was a humanitarian option yesterday is now an imperative. We feel that we are all united in the face of great world problems that require co-operation and responses in a spirit of solidarity.

There is only one world. There is only one human dignity. There is only one home for all mankind. An understanding of those realities is not a minor detail of the history through which we are living. What is at stake is the difference between peace and war, between progress and decadence, between development and poverty, between life and death.

The century that is about to end has been marked by unprecedented technological and scientific progress, but it has also been marked by atrocious wars, by genocide and by new threats. We must be aware of that interplay of light and shadow, and we must prepare ourselves to ensure that the twenty-first century will be set upon the right road towards the desired harmony.

I think that the time has come to reformulate old ideas, to dust them off and update them and to make them consonant with the contemporary world; that is why the concept of international security must be readapted to the new realities.

(President Menem)

Today, insecurity is no longer limited merely to the danger of a nuclear confrontation between super-Powers. There is another world insecurity: it is the risk that the world may once again be split up, this time into North and South; it is the inability to harmonize economic development on a global scale.

There can be no peace or international order in a world given over to the irrationality of inequality. For decades we have been appealing to the conscience of universal peace, that everything be done to end the East-West split.

(President Menem)

Today, here and now, we must do likewise to avoid the equally dangerous North-South split, which would bring us into the twenty-first century with two totally opposite universes: a rich, affluent society facing a majority of increasingly impoverished countries. In the same way, it is necessary to give deep thought to the dangers threatening the ecological balance and the human environment.

For all of us, man cannot become the predator of man. Our planet is not a degradable entity. Development is not a mere mathematical equation. Technology is not a mirage that must merely destroy mankind's home. An appropriate form of production must be founded on wise management of renewable resources and decreasing consumption of irreplaceable raw materials and energy. Furthermore, it is necessary to rescue the cultural values, the quality of life, the style and tradition that are inherent in the identity of every nation. It is essential to encourage man's progressive rediscovery of nature, water, earth, air, plants and the animals of creation. These are substantive issues that require a political awareness and a resolute response before it is too late.

The concern of philosophers, sociologists, anthropologists, theologians and poets can no longer proceed independently of the mediocre universe of the policy of mere efficiency. I do not believe in the illusory domination that involves a real danger to the destiny of the world. The United Nations is the ideal forum in which to forge that conscience required by changing circumstances. It is obvious, furthermore, that the present political horizon does give us reason for hope. We can see a climate of détente taking shape not only at the level of ideological-political opposition between the super-Powers, but also in regional conflicts. In the last five years we have seen concrete steps taken along that long road towards overcoming the cold-war climate.

(President Menem)

Solid progress has been achieved in disarmament, such as the historic 1988 treaty between the Soviet Union and the United States. Such progress may point to the beginning of the definitive overcoming of the irrational arms race. That event is exemplary because it has positive repercussions on other conflicts.

I think we should all thank the Secretary-General for his determination, his wise, concrete, untiring and hopeful activities - even at times when it seemed impossible to have any reason to feel hopeful. Suffice it to recall the progress made towards peace in the conflict between Iraq and Iran, and in defusing the problems of Cyprus and Afghanistan. With regard to the questions of Kampuchea and the Western Sahara, we hope that the Secretary-General will continue to receive the support that is essential for the final attainment of peace.

It is also our hope that a fair solution can be reached on the Korean issue. We sincerely hope that next November elections will be held in Namibia and that its long-suffering people may be represented at the next session of the General Assembly and that we may welcome it to our midst as a new independent and democratic State. That will be a decisive step towards normalizing the situation in the southern cone of the African continent.

But much more is needed. Without the final eradication of apartheid in South Africa, the spark of violence will not be extinguished. What kind of peace can be guaranteed if it is based on silence with respect to the exclusion and daily violation of the most elemental human right, the right to equality?

We Argentines have a special debt of gratitude to Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar for the role he has played in regard to our regional conflict - that of the Malvinas Islands. This issue is directly linked to peace and disarmament. From the moment our Government came to power, we have sought to join in the general

(President Menem)

climate of détente. That is why we have taken positive measures. We have extended our hand, showing our willingness to enter into dialogue, while in no way casting any doubt on our historical and inalienable rights to sovereignty over those South Atlantic islands. The recent concrete steps taken at our initiative are well known. The normalization of bilateral dialogue must be followed by a firm and sensible will to bring an end to an obsolete colonial situation that is historically unsustainable.

This is the appropriate occasion for me to express to the representatives of the vast majority of countries represented here the deep gratitude of the Argentine people. On repeated occasions you have expressed your overwhelming support for our just claim. That attitude and that complete support encourage our hopes for a fair and peaceful solution of this conflict. I should like to assert that we shall struggle unstintingly and peacefully, with reason and perseverance, to recover our Malvinas Islands.

Among the regional conflicts, one which naturally involves us is that of Central America. We favour a negotiated political solution, without external interference. The countries directly involved must find their own solutions. Experience has shown this to be the proper approach. Agreements such as the Tela Declaration reached by the Central American Presidents are proof of that. There can be no solutions if we directly or indirectly disregard the principle of non-intervention. Likewise, conflicts would only increase if attempts were made to postpone the full implementation of democratic pluralism and freedom.

The question of the Middle East deserves careful reflection. That region is a historical cross-roads of culture. Like any zone of conflict, it can become and indeed has become an area of failure and danger. It is a particularly acute area of danger because of its geopolitical position and the heterogeneous interests that it involves. Our country reaffirms the need to find an urgent solution for all

(President Menem)

opposing sectors. That is to say, the solution must include respect for the rights of all parties concerned to self-determination and to live within recognized and safe boundaries. Those rights are applicable equally to Israel and to the Palestinian people. Much has been achieved in the field of intentions and declarations, but, unfortunately, Palestine remains a land of death, pain and growing hatred. Lebanon, in its unfortunate situation, is flagrant proof of the inability to attain peaceful solutions. Our country favours the convening of an international peace conference within the framework of the United Nations in order to bring peace to that region and to negotiate an eventual agreement that will include solid international guarantees until the time when the situation is normalized. That method has made it possible to find appropriate solutions in equally dangerous circumstances. In any event, we shall support any type of negotiation which the parties may agree to with a view to putting an end to the bloodshed.

Our country has sizeable Arab and Jewish communities; they coexist peacefully with their own lifestyles, traditions and religious beliefs. I myself am a descendant of one of those communities and I can bear witness to our modest but not insignificant experience. We Argentines believe, as do any people strengthened by the most heterogeneous immigration, that men can live in peace, whatever their creed, race or colour. Therefore, feeling this problem as one very close to my own heart and experience, I have offered the good offices of my Government, and my own, to work towards a rapprochement of the parties involved, if they so wish, according to the method that they deem appropriate. We are aware of the enormous difficulties of the problem, but we have not wanted to skimp in our efforts or availability with respect to any concrete initiative.

(President Menem)

Beyond the problems of peace and disarmament, our Organization must devote its efforts to new issues which, because of their magnitude, are becoming the major universal issues of our generation.

Almost every country is the victim of drug trafficking, whether as a producer, a consumer or an intermediary. This extremely serious problem can be combated only if the international community acts in concert and energetically, pursuing with equal severity drug consumption, trafficking and production. International criminal organizations sometimes believe they are stronger than some States, but that is not true, for they lack moral force and their fight, although violent, is a terminal and desperate one. Our country - and in particular our Government - is willing to wage an all-out war on all fronts against this scourge. We want to extend our law enforcement measures to reach all those involved in drug trafficking. We are providing the Colombian Government with all possible support. On this point, I should like my words to ring out with the full force of a call for shared and joint action. Despite the enormous limitations faced by my country, we have none the less donated three fighter, exploration and surveillance aircraft to our sister republic of Colombia.

I wish now to address one of the major universal problems that affects particularly my country and our Latin American brothers. I refer to the prevailing international economic order. We are one of the countries whose volume of exports is affected by the exclusions or limitations imposed by a system of customs and tariff barriers, subsidies and other restrictions on free competition in the trade in agricultural products. This limitation coincides with demands for the payment of interest on our foreign debt. The industrialized countries which demand absolute respect for financial obligations are the very ones that are limiting our

(President Menem)

possibilities for recovery by restricting the access of our basic commodities to their markets. This means specifically that many Latin American countries are faced with a situation of having to mortgage their development or demand of their people an extremely high, indeed immoral, social cost, in order to meet their foreign debt obligations.

Our Government is committed to meeting its obligations, but of course we require the necessary reciprocal changes in the conduct of international trade in order to make our effort economically viable so that we may be able to sell our products freely, at competitive and realistic prices. We are not so much afraid of the debt itself as of the persistence of a system that keeps on postponing the prospects of legitimate recovery.

I will not go into detail about these inequities in the world economy. Many of the countries represented here experience it as terrible deprivations, and indeed, their very survival is threatened. This syndrome has been described very accurately. Data on the annual South-North flow of dollars make further comments unnecessary.

What I do want to point out to the Assembly is that in Argentina's current crisis, which is similar in essence to that of many other Latin American countries, the determining factor is the deformation of our economy, coinciding with the perversion of world trade.

In this respect, we are committed to a thoroughgoing reorganization, halting hyper-inflation, streamlining the State and replacing a ruinous economy riddled with financial speculation by what we call the "productive revolution", so that one who works in the productive chain may benefit.

We realize that it would be inconsistent to call for a fair external order while maintaining injustice and disorder within our own borders. Therefore, our mandate began with a thorough restructuring of our own economic and financial

(President Menem)

organization. Within a few weeks we have managed to curb the hyper-inflationary process, to lower interest rates and contain the dollar parity. However, we are aware that this internal reorganization would only be a partial effort if not accompanied by economic change on a global scale, because at the world level also, at least in the sphere of the capitalist countries, we suffer from a disease: the privilege of the financial circles - and that of speculation - to the detriment of the fundamental element, productivity. Currency ceases to be a symbol of values and trade becomes the dominating factor of the economy.

Confronted with this reality, our country is taking action at the regional level, from our immediate frontiers, to implement a policy of growing integration and co-operation with our Latin American brothers. Intensive work is being carried out to consolidate and integrate a system of trade, technological exchange and co-operation for production, based upon concrete agreements. Thus, the real content of this effort will be in the hands of businessmen and will not be only at the State level. We trust that in time this important initiative will become the corner-stone of this unity of peoples that is the natural destiny of Latin Americans. However, this task is not limited to our continent. We are trying to extend it to many other countries through trade and technological co-operation.

I have tried to point to some of the central aspects of our position with regard to international problems. We firmly believe that the United Nations has before it a very important task to correct deviations and find the avenues we all desire.

The Organization has a mandate, specified in Article 1, paragraph 3, is:

"To achieve international co-operation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character ...".

(President Menem)

This objective is broad and far from being achieved. None the less, we feel that more than ever it is the essential task of the United Nations to manage the major world problems to the benefit of all and not just at the discretion of a few, even though they are the most powerful.

I repeat. There are not three worlds. There are no levels of mankind that can be ignored. There are no continents that can be left out. There is no individual salvation. The twenty-first century will be built by everyone in the world or the twenty-first century will be a mere illusion. It is essential to avoid any irreparable division of the world, a division that may no longer be political but rather economic.

Our country, like the vast majority of developing countries, aspires to active co-operation with the industrialized countries which, in turn, are affected by the contradictions resulting from their technological growth. This attitude was made clear at the recent Belgrade Conference of Heads of State of the Non-Aligned Countries. There, constructive co-operation prevailed over confrontational impulses.

To conclude, I wish to make an appeal. I should like my words to reach the conscience of all, to reach each heart, without distinction as to creed, dogma, political colours or national factions. I should like each of us to look the other in the eye and to ask ourselves sincerely and frankly: Is this the world our children deserve? Can we feel proud of the world our children will inherit tomorrow? Will we be satisfied when, in the near future, the voice of history and of our blood summons us to judgement?

(President Menem)

We cannot mortgage the present. We cannot kill our hope. We cannot murder our dreams. The twenty-first century is not merely a rhetorical turn of phrase. It is not a mere publicity slogan, nor is it a new technological goal. Fundamentally, the twenty-first century is represented in each and every one of our children and young people.

(President Menem)

The twenty-first century has the face and the look of millions and millions of children and youth, who, today, at this very moment, demand that we face our responsibilities with the intelligence and greatness needed to rule the destiny of the world. The twenty-first century must not be a century of war, anguish, death, hunger, alienation, collective madness, indifference, disease, backwardness or ignorance. Today poverty prevents a billion people from having a minimally acceptable standard of living. One out of five human beings suffers this terrible humiliation. In the last 24 hours - please listen to me - some 40,000 children under the age of five have died from causes related to poor economic conditions. Faced with that situation, we cannot look the other way and feign ignorance. The future cannot be measured in terms of material wealth or poverty alone. We must fight hunger among poor children, and we must also be concerned with the despair of rich children.

In the poor countries, they cannot find the economic means for education, work or well-being, or for survival itself. In the industrialized countries, they feel threatened by education characterized by cruel competitiveness. They are denied the space and time they need for fantasy, and they are forced to enter a world where important values are not always kept alive. In both instances, the developed and under-developed, the young feel confronted by a "closed world". The twenty-first century cannot be the mere perpetuation of such a mirage.

I insist we must ask ourselves a question deep within ourselves, a question that may seem cruel and compromising: can we truly feel happy with the universe we have created? Can we look our children and young people in the eye and tell them without hypocrisy that we are going to bequeath to them a world in which it is worthwhile to live? Can we say "mission accomplished" with a sigh of relief? Can we sleep peacefully while a single defenseless human being is dying from lack of food, medicine, education or love?

(President Menem)

I know the answer will not satisfy us, but because I know the answer will bring us together in our conscience, I wish to leave you with this final appeal. Children and young people are the best measure of our behaviour and our decisions. They must be the protagonists of a twenty-first century of hope, rather than becoming the victims of a new millenium of horror. That is why I take as mine the words of His Holiness Pope Paul VI, words that are an appeal and a commitment for all men of good will: "Peace is obviously more than the absence of war. Peace is development; and without development peace is an illusion".

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

Mr. Carlos Saul Menem, President of the Argentine Republic, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

ADDRESS BY MR. JANEZ DRNOVSEK, PRESIDENT OF THE PRESIDENCY OF THE SOCIALIST FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF YUGOSLAVIA

The PRESIDENT: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Presidency of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

Mr. Janez Drnovsek, President of the Presidency of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations the President of the Presidency of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, His Excellency Mr. Janez Drnovsek.

President DRNOVSEK: It gives me pleasure to congratulate you, Sir, most cordially on your election as President of the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly. As a representative of a prominent African country, friendly Nigeria, and as a person of vast diplomatic experience and wisdom, you are eminently qualified to preside over this Assembly.

(President Drnovsek)

At the same time, I wish to pay tribute to His Excellency Mr. Dante Caputo, the representative of Argentina, for his very successful presidency of the forty-third session.

There are many reasons for which I should like to express special appreciation and gratitude to the Secretary-General, Mr. Perez de Cuellar. I have primarily in mind his important contribution to seeking solutions to the most acute problems of the world during the past year.

(President Drnovsek)

His view of the present state of international relations and its reflection upon the position and role of the United Nations, presented in his annual report on the work of the Organization, is indeed noteworthy.

The Ninth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries was recently held in Belgrade, the capital of my country. I trust that the Assembly shares our conviction that this was one of the major international events this year.

It is my great privilege and responsible duty to present to the Assembly the results of the Ninth Conference contained in the final documents and messages of that most important gathering of the non-aligned countries. I believe that in this way I shall contribute also to the consideration of the issues on the agenda of this year's General Assembly session.

The Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries adopted a Declaration as well as a number of separate documents on specific questions in the political and economic fields. The summit documents reflect the views of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries on current developments in international relations, as well as its aspirations to contribute to these processes.

In the briefest possible terms, these views could be expressed as follows. After a long period of tension over the past few years the situation has started to change; world tensions are easing, and this is having a positive effect on the process of resolving some protracted world crises and problems.

Basically what has been happening is what the non-aligned have always advocated, but the situation is still far from that which is desired. International relations today contain the characteristics of both the old and the new. Détente is far from being universal as wars are still being waged in many parts of the world. Political détente along East-West lines has not been followed by economic détente along North-South lines. The process of the pauperization of

(President Drnovsek)

the South is continuing. Technological achievements can bring about vast improvements in the quality of life, but tragic destruction as well. While human rights are in some places a basic premise of living, elsewhere they are but a far-off objective.

In the assessment by the non-aligned countries, the world is at a crossroads. There may be an acceleration in the progressive development of the international community, but there may also be drastic retrogression.

In a world of growing interdependence, the non-aligned countries have expressed their readiness to bear their share of responsibility for resolving common problems. Accordingly they have opted for dealing also with those problems which are of growing concern to the entire international community, such as, for example, the issue of environmental protection and the drug problem.

For decades we have been opposing confrontations in the world, aware of the fact that problems can be resolved only through dialogue and co-operation. We are determined to co-operate with all other countries of the world to that end, confident that realism will prevail over prejudice and dogma.

In keeping with their views, in their Declaration the non-aligned countries highlighted several areas to which they assigned priority in their future work. The first priority is efforts to keep the peace, to achieve disarmament and to settle disputes by peaceful means.

The notion of security is not confined to its military component. Closely associated with disarmament are: the observance of the principles of the United Nations Charter; the peaceful settlement of disputes; economic development; and respect for all collective and individual human rights.

Now, when the veritable process of disarmament has finally been initiated, non-aligned countries continue to work for its strengthening and expansion. The total elimination of nuclear weapons remains the primary objective. Yugoslavia,

(President Drnovsek)

together with other non-aligned countries, gives top priority to a comprehensive ban on nuclear tests. We also advocate the earliest possible adoption of a comprehensive convention on the prohibition of chemical weapons and their elimination.

At the Ninth Summit Conference the non-aligned countries also emphasized their readiness to make their full contribution to the initiation and realization of the process of conventional disarmament at global, regional and subregional levels.

I should like also to underline our full support for the central role and responsibility of the United Nations in the field of disarmament. Such a role would be further affirmed by the establishment of an integrated multilateral verification system under the auspices of the Organization.

The next priority is a common quest for effective and acceptable solutions to the problems of international economic relations.

In welcoming the positive changes in international relations the non-aligned countries at the Ninth Summit Conference pointed out that "a détente devoid of economic content is unlikely to endure". This specific assessment has been thoroughly elaborated: the ever-more-difficult position of developing countries whereby a majority of mankind is denied access to scientific and technological achievements is the major obstacle to global aspirations to integration on the basis of interdependence and equitable co-operation. Such a trend is not only an impediment to the faster and more-balanced development of the world economy as a whole, but also a latent threat to global peace and stability.

In their analysis the non-aligned countries have noted the complex changes taking place in the world economy; its increasing multipolarity; new technological breakthroughs; the strengthening of integration groupings world wide; and reforms

(President Drnovsek)

in socialist countries. These changes have new potentials for development but their course is intricate and their outcome uncertain. There are also new dangers of processes closing in and excluding third parties.

However, practice increasingly is proving that the world economy is hard to manage on the basis of agreements reached in a narrow circle. The more favourable international political climate, the greater general awareness of interdependence and the years of relatively stable growth by developed countries could indeed be fertile ground for a new beginning in the North-South dialogue and co-operation.

The messages of the Ninth Summit Conference and the ministerial meeting of the Group of 77 which preceded it unequivocally express the readiness of non-aligned and other developing countries jointly to seek effective and generally acceptable solutions to the key and interrelated problems of external debt, development, financing, trade, raw materials and technology, as well as to the specific and particularly acute problems weighing upon the least developed countries. We are convinced that today there are realistic conditions for establishing a new global development consensus and that this is an opportunity that the international community must not miss.

I should like to point out that the external-debt problem of a considerable number of developing countries is one problem whose solution can no longer be postponed.

The protracted economic stagnation of these countries and the constant outflow of capital, through external-debt servicing, to the economies of the developed countries cannot but have grave social and political effects on the debtor countries, as well as on the international community as a whole.

(President Drnovsek)

We support the evolution in the position of creditors and the signs of their goodwill to approach this problem with more inventiveness, thus offering better prospects for its settlement, but we also wish to emphasize that it is necessary to deal with this problem in a more expedient and more efficient manner, in the interests of all.

We do not expect that solutions to all problems can be found here in the United Nations. It is necessary to combine action at national, regional and global levels. The specialized agencies and forums have a clearly defined role. However, it is from this universal and most democratic forum that the very necessary political impulse and guidelines should be given to ensure that all activities are coherent and conducive to the creation of conditions favourable for the more rapid inclusion of developing countries in the mainstream of the world economy. More fruitful communication and the reaching of agreement on a larger number of key economic and development issues would at the same time constitute the best guarantee of the success of the forthcoming special session of the General Assembly scheduled for April next year.

The imperative need for a new development consensus also requires the political engagement of countries at the highest level. Therefore, the idea of regular consultations between the leaders of the North and South is a timely one and deserves our full support.

The next important priority for the non-aligned countries is support for the right of all peoples living under colonial or alien domination or foreign occupation to self-determination and independence. Stressing their commitment to the goal of complete eradication of colonialism, the non-aligned countries once again pledged to strengthen their solidarity with non-aligned and other countries facing aggression, intervention or interference in their internal affairs.

(President Drnovsek)

The greatest remaining colonial problem, Namibia, is hopefully being brought to an end. The process of gaining independence on the basis of Security Council resolution 435 (1978), which is now taking place and is the focus of the attention of the entire world public, represents a victory for long efforts made primarily within this Organization of ours to end the illegal occupation by South Africa. That process is now entering its final but most critical stage. It is our responsibility to prevent through resolute action all attempts to thwart the United Nations plan at the last moment. The people of Namibia must not be prevented from freely expressing their will at the elections.

To this end, in a special Declaration adopted at the ninth summit meeting, the non-aligned countries called upon the Security Council and the Secretary-General of the United Nations urgently to take a series of measures to counter all possible future violations of the United Nations plan. However, this time the non-aligned countries are also taking action themselves. Their fact-finding mission, which visited Namibia early in August, will return there to oversee the November elections and report immediately to the Movement. Together with its other actions of support and assistance to the Namibian people, now and in the future, and in keeping with its fundamental goals and priorities, the Non-Aligned Movement is thus demonstrating in practice its active solidarity with peoples in the process of gaining their freedom.

Consistent with the positions of the Movement, the Heads of State or Government of the Non-Aligned Countries most strongly condemned the continuous existence of the system of apartheid and supported the continuation of all existing measures and the taking of new ones for its elimination. At the same time, by adopting the Harare Declaration of 21 August of the Ad Hoc Committee on Southern Africa of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), they supported the determination

(Pres. ...)

of the people of southern Africa to put an end to apartheid by peaceful means, through negotiation. That determination is fully in line with the current situation in international relations, and our Organization is in duty bound to use all its influence to prevent this courageous and wise move of the people of Africa from being frustrated. A historic responsibility now rests upon South Africa. The road towards peace and co-operation in the region or the road towards an eruption of revolt by the subjugated people and bloodshed is the choice it has to make. All that is rational and humane in man tells us there cannot be, there must not be, a dilemma.

Other points of crisis and instability in the world also require our urgent and undivided attention. At this favourable moment, it is our responsibility, as Members of this Organization, to use every avenue to bring about the successful completion, or at least the speeding up, of the processes that have been initiated for their resolution, or to restart them where they have come to a halt.

We believe that it is indeed high time that the statesmanlike and constructive position of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, be met with an equally worthwhile and constructive response on the part of other principal factors on whom the peace process in the Middle East depends. While welcoming every partial step which might bring that region closer to peace, we feel that the remaining opposition to the convening of an international conference under the auspices of the United Nations and with the full participation of the PLO should be overcome as soon as possible. The vast majority of the countries of the world long ago expressed their support for this realistic way towards a comprehensive solution to the Middle East crisis, which would create the possibility for all countries in the region to live in safety and peace within their territories.

(President Drnovsek)

The tragic escalation of conflict further endangers the prospect of bringing unity, full sovereignty and territorial integrity to non-aligned Lebanon and prolongs the suffering of its people. Now is the time for all factors concerned to assist the continued efforts of the Arab Tripartite Committee which, enjoying the broadest support, could lead to a situation in which the vicious circle of violence might be broken and replaced by agreements.

A political solution to the problem of Afghanistan requires that the Geneva Agreements be consistently and completely implemented and that all their signatories and guarantors consistently abide by the letter and spirit of those Agreements. This would facilitate the opening of an intra-Afghan dialogue, aimed at establishing a broad-based Government comprising representatives of all segments of the people of Afghanistan.

Although this summer's conference on Cambodia in Paris did not yield a comprehensive solution, the momentum of diplomatic efforts must not be allowed to abate. Slow and laborious as it may be, the negotiating process is bringing certain results, strengthening hopes that conditions will soon be created for the people of Cambodia freely to determine their destiny. The withdrawal of foreign troops is certainly the most important step in that direction.

The recent peace agreement of the Presidents of five Central American countries concluded in Tela, Honduras, has, it is to be hoped, removed hindrances to the implementation of the Esquipulas II peace Agreement. Welcoming the actions of the Secretaries-General of the United Nations and the Organization of American States in support of international verification of the implementation of the peace Agreements, I wish to express our conviction that strict observance of those Agreements by all is essential for the achievement of lasting peace in the region.

(President Drnovsek)

The consistent and full implementation of Security Council resolution 598 (1987) remains the basis for achieving a comprehensive, just, honourable and durable settlement of the conflict between Iran and Iraq.

As regards Western Sahara, we are convinced that full co-operation by all parties with the United Nations Secretary-General and the Chairman of the OAU in their further efforts is essential if there is to be a just and definitive settlement. Despite all the difficulties, we believe that continuation of the Secretary-General's good offices and the inter-communal talks, in an atmosphere marked by an overall improvement in international relations, will lead finally to decisive breakthroughs in resolving the Cyprus problem. The way to the peaceful reunification of Korea is through dialogue and mutual confidence-building, in conformity with the principles of the 1972 North-South joint statement.

Next on the list of priorities of the non-aligned countries is the environmental protection problem. The dangers menacing the atmosphere, the seas and the forests today threaten all countries alike and dramatically highlight the interdependence of the contemporary world. Proceeding from that conviction, the non-aligned countries voiced their full readiness to contribute to the strengthening of global co-operation to protect and improve the environment. They also stressed that this objective can be realized only within the context of growth and development, and with the allocation of additional resources, giving developing countries access to ecologically cleaner technologies and making possible their active participation in global ecological co-operation. It is on that basis that the non-aligned countries will call, at the forty-fourth session, for the adoption of a final decision on convening the World Conference on Environment and Development in 1992.

The next priority is the full realization of human rights and freedoms. The non-aligned countries stress that the right of every individual to full enjoyment

(President Drnovsek)

of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights is the source of the greatest inspiration to the Movement, and one of its basic objectives. They confirmed that they share fully the wide and growing recognition of the special importance of the full enjoyment of human rights and freedoms, both collective and individual. Indeed, there can be no rights and freedoms of people without the individual rights and freedoms of every person. We in Yugoslavia believe that the extent to which an individual enjoys fundamental rights and freedoms is the measure of the degree of democratization of the society and of the possibility of their inclusion in broader democratic processes in the world to which we aspire.

In this context, one should, however, bear in mind the fact that civil and political rights cannot be separated from the economic, social and other rights and needs of man, and that in a great majority of developing countries the economic and social conditions are quite difficult.

Finally, the non-aligned countries are pledged to strive to strengthen the role and effectiveness of the United Nations in discharging its legitimate responsibility for resolving all major problems of the world. For this purpose, they will endeavour to ensure that the machinery of the Organization is reinforced, and its activities efficiently co-ordinated - convinced that, as they have stressed, the role of multilateralism is growing at both the global and the regional levels. I am confident that this view is shared by other members of the Organization.

Those are the priorities set by the members of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries at their ninth summit in Belgrade. My country fully supports and endorses them and, as co-ordinator of the activities of the non-aligned countries, will endeavour to see them realized in the near future. On the basis of their political decisions, and in keeping with these priorities and with their positions

(President Drnovsek)

on specific issues, the non-aligned countries approach the work of this session determined to make a constructive contribution.

This session of the General Assembly, like the last one, is being held in an international climate amenable to the consideration of crucial world issues. This facilitates our work, but also heightens our responsibility for future developments. It is our special responsibility, by ensuring the success of this session, to make a substantive contribution to the strengthening and further affirmation of the United Nations in resolving key global problems.

May the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly bring more genuine co-operation and less confrontation than any previous one. If we achieve that, the results will more than live up to our expectations. What is more, we might even manage to overcome some of the psychological limits that ingrained beliefs and long-established practice impose on us. Those are the factors that limit, perhaps even imperil, our future.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Presidency of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia for the important statement he has just made.

Mr. Janez Drnovsek, President of the Presidency of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

AGENDA ITEM 9 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. GHOZALI (Algeria) (interpretation from Arabic): Mr. President, the delegation of Algeria welcomes your election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its forty-fourth session. I have no doubt that in elevating you to this exceedingly demanding post the General Assembly was acknowledging your well-known personal merits and professional abilities.

(Mr. Ghozali, Algeria)

The Assembly, thus, also pays a well deserved tribute to brotherly Nigeria for its remarkable contribution to the complete liberation of Africa, and particularly to its commitment to the struggle against apartheid. A united Africa, bound in solidarity, is itself honoured by this tribute to your country, Sir, precisely at a time when it is committed to the final phase of the elimination of colonialism.

Your predecessor as President, Mr. Dante Caputo, carried out his responsibilities in a manner which has rightly earned him the congratulations of all the members of the Assembly today. We join in the unanimous expression of congratulations to him.

The whole international community is indeed grateful to the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, who, as the embodiment of the unique role of the United Nations, has made praiseworthy efforts towards the attainment of peace and development whenever circumstances have required.

Relations between the two super-Powers have entered a new phase: one of dialogue and mutual consultations. The conclusion of the first treaty on nuclear disarmament - the agreement on intermediate-range nuclear forces - marked both the effective start of that process and its first achievement.

World peace can only gain from the transformation of the ideological and military rivalry between the two blocs into a relationship of partners who significantly contribute to the establishment of a genuine international front for world peace.

It is also encouraging that inflexible attitudes generated by the cold war are now beginning to yield to dialogue. That is most promising for our common future, but further efforts are required. My country reaffirms its commitment to that concept of world peace, which should be universal and global in its approach.

(Mr. Ghozali, Algeria)

Shared development requires extended and universal co-operation. Common peace calls for common efforts.

While recognizing the influence of European security on world security, we should now become aware of the partial nature of security confined to Europe, while the demands of the integration and complementarity of civilizations require that the legitimate security interests of the southern Mediterranean non-aligned countries be taken into account.

Regional mechanisms are often capable of formulating lasting solutions to local conflicts. When regional efforts fail, however, such conflicts must receive the sustained attention of the international community. The United Nations provides the ideal, irreplaceable framework in which just and genuine solutions can be found.

The Non-Aligned Movement works constantly to promote that common, global enterprise, as it did recently in Belgrade. Present developments in international relations provide the fullest justification of its message.

Our Movement intends to play its proper role in the current changes. It is clearly unacceptable that a few should claim the dominant part in the necessary repainting of the international landscape while the vast majority of mankind are confined to being passive spectators.*

Algeria is aware of the contribution that each country must make in building a common peace and strengthening co-operation. It is in the African and Arab spheres to which it naturally belongs that Algeria is making its resolute contribution, which we hope will be significant as an act of faith and by virtue of the results it can produce.

*Mr. Poos (Luxembourg), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Ghazali, Algeria)

Ever since the first Maghreb Summit, held in Zeralda in Algeria which gathered the regional Heads of State, the Arab Maghreb has resolutely assumed its commitment to the common destiny of the peoples of the region. Since then, despite the changing international climate, objectives have come into focus and resources have been organized to meet the challenge of the future and show the way to a union that is based on a common heritage of civilization.

Given the scope of the enormous challenges, there can be no doubt that the building of the Maghreb can only greatly benefit by a peaceful, just and lasting settlement of the question of Western Sahara. Therefore, Algeria profoundly welcomes the acceptance, last year, by Morocco and the POLISARIO Front of the joint proposals of the Chairman of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the Secretary-General of the United Nations, seeking to ensure the free and authentic exercise by the Sahraoui people of its right to self-determination and independence.

It is also a source of satisfaction to my country that the peace dialogue between Morocco and the POLISARIO Front, a dialogue that Algeria has always advocated and fervently supported, reached a historic turning-point with the meeting last January between His Majesty King Hassan II of Morocco and the leaders of the POLISARIO Front. We firmly believe that the continuation of that dialogue will be decisive in ensuring that the two brotherly and neighbourly peoples confidently go forward and contribute significantly to the building of the Arab Maghreb. All parties encourage this dialogue and hope that the process will lead to the referendum on self-determination that the United Nations and the OAU are preparing to organize in Western Sahara.

(Mr. Ghozali, Algeria)

As concerns the mandate entrusted to them by the General Assembly, the current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the Secretary-General of the United Nations know that they can count on my country's support in the fulfilment of their peace mission. I wish, again today, to reaffirm that commitment.

In that spirit and with the same conviction, we have worked unceasingly to ensure the full restoration of brotherly relations and understanding between the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and the Republic of Chad. My country was thus most satisfied to see that those two neighbouring countries have sealed their rapprochement through the agreement signed on 31 August in Algiers. By this historic completion of a process, which has been perseveringly and fraternally supported by Algeria the two sister countries have resolved to open the path to a future of good-neighbourly relations, friendliness and co-operation.

I wish to pay a well-deserved tribute here to the tireless efforts of the Ad Hoc Committee of African Heads of State for that success, which is a success for all Africa. Africa as a whole is entitled to rejoice today over the new era of harmony now initiated between the peoples of Chad and Libya, thus releasing renewed common energy with which to meet the numerous challenges facing the continent.

There is no greater challenge for Africa than that posed by the apartheid régime in all its dimensions - the racist dimension in South Africa, the colonial in Namibia, and the destabilizing in southern Africa.

The Namibian people, which for decades has fought a liberation struggle under the leadership of the South West Africa People's Organization, is preparing to rejoin the community of independent nations. However, the international community, which has constantly supported that struggle, must not lower its guard at this crucial stage, when South Africa is trying to disrupt the fair and genuine electoral process envisaged by the international community.

(Mr. Ghozali, Algeria)

The United Nations is therefore duty-bound constantly to exert all efforts to ensure the untrammelled implementation of Security Council resolution 435 (1978) and the free expression of sovereign will of the Namibian people.

In the same vein, if, as it appears, under the combined pressures of the international community, South Africa has yielded to the inevitability of Namibian independence, we must now redouble our efforts to bring about the collapse of the bulwark of racism in southern Africa. Only then will all the countries of southern Africa be able to enjoy the stability and peace necessary for the development to which they aspire.

As in Namibia, where it is the best guarantor of genuine independence, the United Nations continues to be the most suitable framework for a just and lasting settlement of the Middle East problem. Today, more than ever, the core of that conflict, the Palestinian question, cannot be overlooked. Despite the repression and oppression inflicted on it daily by the Israeli occupying forces, the Palestinian people through its heroic intifadah has demonstrated that it is willing to pay the price in order to recover all its rights, including the inalienable right to build its own State on its liberated homeland.

Proclaimed in Algeria a year ago, the birth of that State was immediately hailed and recognized by a majority of nations as an inevitable, legitimate, fitting and timely response to the national aspirations of the Palestinian people. In that connection, there can be no just and lasting settlement without the satisfaction of the national rights of the Palestinian people, nor any viable alternative to an international conference having the participation of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) on an equal footing with all parties.

(Mr. Ghozali, Algeria)

In Lebanon, another Arab people has endured a dreadful tragedy, which has aggravated an already heavy toll of death and destruction.

That fratricidal conflict has none the less not lessened the faith of the Lebanese in the rebuilding of their country once they have attained freedom and national reconciliation. Inspired by that same faith, the Tripartite Committee, consisting of President Chadli Benjedid, of the Custodian of the Two Holy Sites of Islam, King Fahd Ibn Abdelaziz, and of His Majesty King Hassan II, has worked with resolve to ensure that Lebanon recovers its unity, independence and sovereignty.

The comprehensive and definitive cease-fire that has just been established has opened the way to a brotherly dialogue and will make possible a definitive settlement of the Lebanese crisis in all its aspects. That was the objective of the Tripartite Committee, which has mobilized all its efforts, engaged in numerous contacts, explored all possibilities, and contacted all parties, neglecting or belittling none and favouring none. Algeria hopes that battered Lebanon will withstand the trials inflicted upon it, so that all its sons, in an upsurge of national patriotism, can restore the country's institutions and unity.

My country is glad to see that the conflict between Iraq and Iran is among those which have seen a distinct appeasement. Algeria hopes for a consolidation of the current cease-fire in order to promote dialogue in mutual respect and in the mutual interests of the parties. In that respect, the Secretary-General of our Organization has our full support for the implementation of Security Council resolution 598 (1987).

In Central America, the Tela meeting has confirmed the will of the peoples of the region to work together towards regional peace and security. The process thus set in motion, involving an active contribution from the Secretaries-General of the United Nations and the Organization of American States, deserves the support of

(Mr. Ghozali, Algeria)

those who have it within their power to act in order to secure its successful outcome.

In Afghanistan, Algeria hopes to see the Geneva Accords fully and completely implemented, so that national reconciliation will eventually prevail and so that the independence and non-alignment of that country may be maintained.

The gradual elimination of the nuclear threat, which is most certainly a vital objective, should not cause us, however, to overlook the necessity to combat underdevelopment, the breadth and tragic depth of which can also pose a threat of worldwide conflagration.

(Mr. Ghozali, Algeria)

While the developed countries have overcome their difficulties and are moving ahead towards new prospects of economic and technological over-development, economic deterioration continues to have devastating effects on the living standards of the peoples in our countries, which are already relegated to a marginal status. On the one hand, the present international economic system has evolved the mechanisms by which it operates to the interest of the sustained development of some parties. On the other hand, it has maintained the underdevelopment of others who are now in a situation of virtual, if not outright, economic, social and political disruption.

The unceasing deterioration of the terms of trade has already aggravated the paradoxical phenomenon of the net transfer of resources from the poorer to the richer countries. It is well known today that, far from producing the promised positive effects, economic prosperity in the developed countries has in fact generated a new situation characterized by the disintegration of certain complementary bonds which would have constituted the economic link between North and South.

Because of the absence of appropriate and timely treatment, third world indebtedness is now reaching a threshold that leaves no room for hope for future economic growth. The debt burden is exhausting all reserves, including those needed for everyday life. The measures taken by the developed countries, though conceived with praiseworthy intentions, have been too few and too late.

The use of narcotics has spread to such an extent as to cause keen concern over the very future of many societies. Although the spread of the use of narcotics has taken place essentially within the more developed consumer societies, Algeria, as a member of the international community, conscious of the bonds which unite us all, feels directly concerned by the threat of the social and ecological

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disaster inherent in the spread of narcotics utilization and trafficking. Algeria therefore hails the courageous endeavour engaged in by Colombia, and wishes to express its sympathy and solidarity towards all other major initiatives designed to wage relentless war against the use of and trafficking in narcotics.

My country, which signed the Vienna Convention as soon as it had been adopted, wishes to place on record once again its willingness to continue to contribute to the struggle against a phenomenon that truly afflicts the international community as a whole.

Having faith in a future which we shall build together, my country reaffirms its dedication to the strengthening of the incipient dialogue and to the spread of its benefits. From this point of view, the United Nations continues to be an efficient instrument for the implementation of our collective will. Our hope is that it will gain unanimous confidence in its vocation to co-ordinate our common efforts so that this session may be a fine opportunity to look forward to a promising future.*

ADDRESS BY MRS. GRO HARLEM BRUNDTLAND, PRIME MINISTER OF THE KINGDOM OF NORWAY

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

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

The PRESIDENT: I have great pleasure in welcoming the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Norway, Mrs. Gro Harlem Brundtland. I am proud to invite her to address the General Assembly.

* The President returned to the Chair.

Mrs. BRUNDTLAND: It is a great pleasure, Mr. President, to congratulate you upon your election as President of this session of the General Assembly. I feel confident that you will guide our work to a successful conclusion.

The challenges that we face together are enormous. On the threshold of the last decade of this century, we shall have to make choices and take decisions that will determine the course of human progress far into the next millenium. The unparalleled speed and scope of the changes now facing us are the most striking characteristic of our time. We are witnessing rapid globalization.

Changes involve uncertainty. But change also involves opportunity. We must seize this opportunity. We must agree and act on a global agenda for the management of change. If we fail to act, or if we act wrongly, we may soon face a threat to our future.

We are living in a transitional period. The awareness of the conflicts between human activities and environmental constraints is literally exploding. Even today, the number of poor, illiterate or unemployed people in the world is growing. This finite world of ours will have to provide food and energy for a doubled world population sometime in the next century. It may have to sustain a world economy which is five or ten times larger than the present one. This cannot be done by perpetuating present patterns.

We have made some progress in our efforts to prevent war. But while nuclear war remains a long-term threat to our survival, the process of ecological degradation constitutes a clear and present danger. We are experiencing it in our daily life. It is increasingly visible everywhere. People all over the world are not just worried about their own and their children's future: they are deeply anxious about the future of this planet.

(Mrs. Brundtland, Norway)

As we approach the third millenium, we must fashion a global concept of security that will embrace the notion of sustainable development, the need to combat underdevelopment, the unequal distribution of wealth, the degradation of our environment and the depletion of our resources. We are facing a new era which will have to be shaped by responses to common challenges which unite mankind, rather than the conflicts which have divided nations in the past. Nations can no longer attain security through competition and at each other's expense. They have to seek co-operation in order to enhance their common security.

(Mrs. Brundtland, Norway)

We are witnessing amazing changes in East-West relations. Old tensions are abating. As stated by the United States Secretary of State, James Baker, only two days ago, the United States and the Soviet Union have moved from confrontation through dialogue to co-operation, and we all heard this in the statement by President Bush in the Assembly this morning.

We welcome the commitment of the United States and the Soviet Union to cut their arsenals of strategic nuclear weapons by half. We are heartened by the progress made during the recent meeting in Wyoming. Success would serve as a recognition of the fact that nuclear weapons are not the solution to genuine security: their competitive accumulation leads to the insecurity of nations. This message is of fundamental importance to our efforts to stem the further spread of nuclear weapons.

We should urge the nuclear weapon States to further strengthen that message by concluding a comprehensive test-ban treaty. In the meantime, we welcome the progress made towards ratification of the threshold test-ban treaty and the treaty on peaceful nuclear explosions. A ban on chemical weapons is an urgent requirement. I therefore warmly welcome the new initiative presented by the United States President this morning: it is my sincere hope that this new step, and the understanding reached between the Soviet Union and the United States, will pave the way for a total ban on chemical weapons.

For the first time, the nations of East and West in Europe have sat down to deal with the dangers of their military confrontation, which have divided that continent for more than four decades. Again, it is the recognition of common interests which provides the engine. We now see the opportunity to reduce instabilities and to prevent military dispositions from blocking a promising process of peaceful change. Our task should be the construction of an open,

(Mrs. Brundtland, Norway)

equitable and co-operative political order where nations enjoy equal security at the lowest possible level of military force. We are intent on contributing actively to this all-important process of transformation, which is now fostering co-operation among all the nations which make up the security order in Europe.

By lowering and moving the military walls in Europe we are opening ourselves to a new era of co-operation. We must seek expanded economic relations on the basis of commercially sound principles and open economies. We must seek practical co-operation and common approaches to environmental protection. We must expand scientific and technological co-operation and broaden our cultural exchanges.

Countries in eastern and central Europe have embarked on a new course. They are engaging in a process of reform and democratization in their internal policies as well as in their approach to the common challenges which confront us. We welcome - and we support - these efforts. We cannot guarantee their success. They must forge their own future. They must shape their own societies. Nevertheless, we shall convey in tangible and substantive ways our will for co-operation and indeed our solidarity with the peoples of eastern Europe, who have embarked on a new quest for freedom.

Political change reflects and creates new social energies and aspirations. The quest for human freedom defies oppression. Our commitment to the protection of the universal human rights recognizes no boundaries of State. It is a transnational commitment which transcends borders in Europe and in the world at large.

I welcome the declaration from the ninth non-aligned Summit in Belgrade, with its emphasis on human rights and the rights of women and their role in development. The declaration bears witness to the broadening support for these ideals. I strongly endorse what the Secretary-General observes in his report:

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"...it is becoming increasingly plain that no Government can expect immunity from international exposure to criticism if it flouts human rights in trying to overcome political dissidence or ethnic unrest." (A/44/1, sect. VII)

This year's General Assembly will consider the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Norway has taken an active part in the process, and we urge the Assembly to adopt the Convention.

We have seen significant progress in the resolution of regional conflicts over the past year. My Government will present its view on these conflicts later during this General Assembly. One of the most hopeful changes has been the renewed trust in the United Nations, in viewing United Nations peace-keeping as an alternative to intervention.

Norway fully supports the Secretary-General's observations about the serious consequences of the financial shortfall affecting United Nations peace-keeping operations. Let me also stress the need for stronger political support for present operations. A special responsibility lies with the Security Council, which, in some cases, inter alia, in southern Lebanon, has failed to bring the weight of its authority to bear on those parties which defy the will of the international community and prevent the peace-keepers from fulfilling their mandate.

In Namibia, the foundation is being laid for a new independent State in Africa. Although the difficulties are manifold, we trust that the parties involved, with the assistance of the United Nations, will bring independence, and that process, forward on schedule. Norway, for its part, is ready to contribute its share to this historic development on the African continent.

The international community must rally to the task of combating the many challenges to our common security: the proliferation of nuclear and chemical arms, as well as their means of delivery; poverty; terrorism; and drug trafficking.

(Mrs. Brundtland, Norway)

Let me call your particular attention to the serious international problem of drug abuse. There are no simple solutions: we need a broad strategy encompassing the control of supplies; the reduction of demand; the suppression of trafficking; and the prevention and treatment of addiction. Resources are needed at all levels: to assist producer countries in reducing the export of illicit drugs to the largest markets; to control the demand for drugs in the major "consumer" countries; and to establish effective international co-operation, in the field of law enforcement also. Illicit drug trafficking is indeed an international problem. Its solution requires global co-operation. We need to strengthen the United Nations by committing funds and vesting decision-making authority in United Nations institutions.

Since the publication of the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development two and a half years ago, we have witnessed a surge in awareness concerning the environment. Several factors have contributed to this change. Reports of severe and lasting ecological degradation because of atmospheric, water or soil pollution are coming in from many regions of the world. Our scientists warn us that we may be facing a general global warming and significant changes in world climate.

(Mrs. Brundtland, Norway)

The stratospheric ozone shield may be in danger. Scientific and technological developments are continuously opening new possibilities for modifying nature, for example through advances in biotechnology. At the same time, we are in the process of losing global biological and genetic diversity at an unprecedented rate, particularly through the rapid reduction of tropical rain forests.

If we look at the agenda of international conferences and negotiations on environmental questions for the next three years we find an impressive level of activities. At this session we have before us the consolidated report of the Secretary-General on the follow-up to the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development. We are pleased to note that most of the United Nations organizations and many Governments are in the process of giving effect to the recommendations of the report. It is encouraging that the recent Western economic summit meeting, as well as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the World Bank and others, called for the integration of environmental concerns in day-to-day economic decision-making. Similarly, the non-aligned countries have called for urgent co-operative measures to ensure a sustainable and environmentally sound development.

A key principle in that process has been sustainability, a clear recognition and admission that economic development has, so far, not been sustainable. We need a green agenda. We need growth that respects the limitations set by nature. However, growth itself should not be limited. Poverty alleviation does not compete with sustainable development. Environmentally sound investments are necessary to sustain development. The industrialized countries carry a particular responsibility for securing growth in the world economy and opening markets to exports from developing countries. Developing countries have declared their readiness to undertake necessary policy reforms. I believe they should pursue and

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strengthen those efforts. However, to succeed we need the support of the international community.

Devastating debt burdens have for too long hampered growth and development in third world countries. It is now vital that the debt burdens be reduced to sustainable levels. We therefore fully support the view that debt reductions must occupy centre stage. The international community now recognizes the need to reduce the debt overhang. However, our strategy will succeed only if it is fully implemented. The readiness of commercial banks to play their part remains vital. We are concerned about reports that the banks are now failing to make new capital available for developing countries and thus to live up to their responsibilities under the Brady Plan.

We must agree on measures to restore development in the debt-ridden countries. Financial transfers to developing countries must be increased. The growth in aid volume has stagnated deplorably. The United Nations target of a 0.7 per cent ratio between official development assistance and gross national product is far from being met. Many countries both could and should do much much better. I see no reason to conceal the fact that, while Norway has given around 1 per cent of its GNP in official development assistance to developing countries, we are disappointed that the OECD average has declined to a meagre 0.34 per cent.

But aid alone will not suffice. The importance of increased export earnings for the economies of developing countries cannot be overemphasized. Protectionist tendencies must be halted and reversed.

The question of energy is also in fact intimately linked both with economic growth and with environmental protection. We have lacked an energy dialogue in the

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past. We have felt the shock waves that sharply fluctuating oil prices have sent through the world economy. Norway sees the need to start a new dialogue on energy issues that will also address related environmental concerns.

Regional action is a central part of the processes of follow-up to the World Commission. African Ministers of Economic Planning, Education and Environment met at Kampala in June to set priorities for action to implement the recommendations of the report. In the Kampala Declaration they frankly state that economic development that is not sustainable should no longer be called development. We look forward to similar action from the conferences scheduled for Asia and the Pacific and for Latin America in 1990.

The industrialized countries account for the bulk of the world's accumulated pollution and resource depletion. Next May the countries of Europe and North America will meet at Bergen, Norway, for the regional follow-up meeting for "Our Common Future" in the region of the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE). We expect that conference to adopt a strong ministerial declaration that will reflect the commitment and political readiness of ECE Governments to set new national and regional targets for concrete action.

Next year the Second World Climate Conference will convene at Geneva. The spectre of global climate change is increasingly emerging as the most alarming environmental problem facing us. The abnormal variations in weather patterns we have witnessed during the 1980s and the human suffering and the enormous damage caused by floods, drought or hurricane in the course of the past few years have only underlined the need for action.

The Hague Declaration in March of this year called for new and wide-ranging principles for international co-operation to protect the atmosphere. Some 40 countries have now signed the Hague Declaration, and many others have indicated

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their support. The Declaration defines the need for new institutional authority, either by strengthening existing organizations or by creating a new institution, but within the framework of the United Nations. It calls for specific emission standards and targets, as well as for dispute settlement procedures binding on the parties. The establishment of new mechanisms to secure genuinely additional financial resources is a matter of priority. Such financial compensation would enable poor countries to adjust their economies more successfully to a sustainable development pattern.

The Norwegian Government has proposed the establishment of an international climate fund with individual industrialized-country contributions in the order of 0.1 per cent of GNP.

The work of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), under the leadership of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), is of crucial importance in the elaboration of strategies for combating global warming. The Panel's report, which is due by September of next year, will form the main basis for the preparation of a global convention on climate. I urge full support of the work under way in the IPCC.

(Mrs. Brundtland, Norway)

We are encouraged that an increasing number of developing countries are now taking part in that process. There is no competition or conflict between the Hague initiative and the IPCC process. On the contrary, the Hague Declaration is intended to strengthen and supplement processes already under way internationally to protect the world climate.

The follow-up process of the report and the intensive research and negotiations now in progress concerning climate both point forward to the 1992 conference on environment and development. The forty-fourth session of the General Assembly will take important decisions on the preparatory process leading to the 1992 conference. We have noted the support of the Belgrade non-aligned summit for the candidacy of Brazil to host the conference. We feel confident that this would be a good choice, and we support it. It underlines the message that the conference should be addressing the vital linkage between environment and development.

Let me briefly outline my views on what we should aim for during our preparations for 1992.

First, the 1992 conference should be based on the concept of sustainable development. There is no way that we can solve the global environment problems now facing us without a direct linkage to a broader economic and social development process.

Secondly, and for those reasons, the preparatory process should address the need for additional financial resources. Cleaning up accumulated pollution and reversing present processes of ecological degradation are clearly going to be expensive. The alternative of doing nothing or too little, however, will be even more expensive. The developing countries will need increased assistance to help them avoid making the same mistakes that the industrialized world has made over and over again. I welcome the proposal made by Prime Minister Gandhi at the last

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non-aligned summit conference in Belgrade for the establishment of a planet protection fund. Several other financial mechanisms could also be explored, such as a system of consumer tax on non-renewable resources and users' fees on harmful emissions. We must be willing both nationally and internationally to apply such rules and principles.

Thirdly, we should set a timeframe for the negotiations on a global climate convention which would enable us to sign it during the 1992 conference, if at all possible.

Fourthly, we should make a new and committed effort to strengthen our institutions. Here, again, I attach particular importance to the creation of effective instruments which can deal with the challenges to the world climate. Perhaps that could be done through a strong monitoring mechanism for the forthcoming climate convention.

The 1980s have been characterized as a lost decade for development. This is true, even if there are notable exceptions. At the same time, we have experienced a crisis of multilateralism as nations have turned away from international institutions when concerted action has been most needed. The global vision has given way to fragmented outlooks and unilateral impulses.

But we have also seen economic globalization on an unprecedented scale. The revolution in information, biotechnology and other technologies, the liberalization of capital markets, and the ensuing integration of trade and financial movements constitute but a few examples. Governments run the danger of losing control. National Governments are increasingly unable to cope with a situation of global interdependence, and our international institutions are still not given sufficient authority or resources to meet the new generation of problems. We face the reality of a global economy that is unbalanced, fragmented and interdependent at the same time.

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We support the idea of convening a North-South summit under the aegis of the United Nations, with the aim of moving towards a more equitable and effective system of co-ordination and co-operation between industrialized and developing countries in linking economic and environmental tasks of global importance.

The time has come for a recommitment to multilateralism, to the search for global solutions. And we need to adopt new approaches. I believe we face an era in which the new threats to our security must be given the same high-level attention as the traditional issues concerning war and peace. Our founding fathers saw the need for a strong institution to deal with threats to international peace and security. I believe that certain elements of supranationality should now be considered at the global level. The challenges from the environment are a case in point. In regional co-operation, nations are gradually learning to accept majority decisions that on occasion may be viewed as contrary to narrowly defined national interests. The long-term view must come to prevail also in our global co-operation.

The international community is rediscovering the United Nations, how indispensable it is and how useful it can be, provided nations furnish it with the means to function as required. A global agenda for the management of change requires a strong United Nations.

Collective management of global interdependence is no empty slogan. It is, very simply, the only acceptable formula for enlightened statecraft as we move into the last decade of this millenium.

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

Mrs. Gro Harlem Brundtland, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Norway, was escorted from the rostrum.

Mr. ELLEMANN-JENSEN (Denmark): I congratulate you, Sir, on your election as President of the General Assembly at its forty-fourth session. Your wide experience and diplomatic skills will no doubt be very valuable to us in our efforts to attain fruitful results at this session. I should also like to express my appreciation to the outgoing President for his leadership during the past year.*

The world of today is a better world than it was last year, and it is changing rapidly. New challenges seem to emerge each day; old ones acquire new dimensions. Some conflicts continue to fester; but others, fortunately, are on the brink of peaceful resolution.

So, on balance, we can look to the future with optimism, but not with complacency. Much remains to be done, and we are increasingly looking to the United Nations for assistance.

It is against this background that the General Assembly will have to address a number of burning international issues, including regional conflicts still in need of solution, the environmental challenge, the promotion of human rights, the debt problem, drugs and terrorism.

Speaking here in the General Assembly I am particularly happy to note that the positive trend towards multilateralism continues. A growing number of Member States avail themselves of the United Nations machinery in trying to solve regional and international conflicts.

In southern Africa the United Nations is playing a crucial role in Namibia's long overdue transition to independence. In Central America the United Nations is assuming ever more important tasks. In other areas of conflict, such as Cyprus, Iran-Iraq and Western Sahara, the United Nations continues its steady efforts towards peaceful solutions.

*Mr. Hurst (Antigua and Barbuda), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Ellemann-Jensen, Denmark)

We welcome the fact that more and more Member States realize the urgent need to make it possible for the Organization to fulfil the role originally foreseen in the Charter by its founders.

Full respect for the principle of universality is one important prerequisite, if the United Nations is fully to play this role. But it is also important to improve the practical application of the United Nations machinery, especially to make better use of the peace-keeping operations.

Denmark remains a staunch supporter of the United Nations peace-keeping operations, as evidenced by our participation in most of them. Most recently Denmark placed a contingent at the disposal of the United Nations Transition Assistance Group in Namibia (UNTAG).

It is regrettable that the problems affecting the financing of peace-keeping activities - most notably the United Nations forces in Cyprus and Lebanon - have not been solved. Member States must recognize their collective responsibility for the financing of this essential work and demonstrate political will to meet their obligations.

United Nations peace-keeping operations should be carried out effectively and with flexibility. They must be of a temporary nature and they must support political efforts aimed at achieving a final peaceful solution to the conflict in question. They must not become guardians of an unacceptable political status quo.

Denmark will evaluate its contributions - present and future - to the peace-keeping operations on the basis of these factors: financing and effectiveness.

But a solution must also be found to the financial problems of the United Nations in general. The United Nations can play a strong and effective role in meeting the global challenges of the 1990s only if the financial problems of the

(Mr. Ellemann-Jensen, Denmark)

Organization are solved. It is encouraging that the financial situation has improved this year. But a durable solution requires that all Member States pay promptly and in full.

With regard to the international situation much has been achieved in the relations between East and West over the past few years. We have seen a continuation of high-level meetings between the United States and the Soviet Union and a general intensification of the dialogue over the East-West divide.

More important, this positive development seems to be acquiring a momentum of its own. I hope and trust that after having taken the most difficult first steps, we can now reach out for still more.

We attentively follow the encouraging endeavours for change in the Soviet Union, Poland and Hungary. The reforms under way in these countries increase prospects of intensified international collaboration in all spheres: in multilateral forums as well as in bilateral contacts.

Denmark whole-heartedly welcomes this development. We are prepared to take on our share, nationally as well as in co-operation with other Western countries, to support and further encourage the reform process. We will do this through an intensified political dialogue and through a significant expansion of economic and commercial co-operation.

We are faced with an historic development. We must all seize the opportunity to help bring about positive change, both for individual citizens and for the general situation in Europe.

In this context I wish to highlight one particular event: the successful conclusion of the follow-up meeting of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) in Vienna.

(Mr. Ellemann-Jensen, Denmark)

Its concluding document provides a basis for important steps forward within all the areas covered. One of the most important results of the Vienna meeting is the prominent position now occupied by the human dimension in the CSCE process.

I am convinced that the decision to convene a conference on this important aspect will prove to be a wise one. The Conference had a promising start in Paris this summer; and I very much hope that the meeting in Copenhagen next year will result in further progress to the benefit of East-West relations.

Recent developments in the arms control and disarmament field have also been quite promising. Prospects for real breakthroughs seem brighter now than ever before. The negotiations on conventional forces in Vienna came off to a good start. Although we do not underestimate the problems still ahead, we remain optimistic that an agreement on conventional armed forces in Europe can be worked out in the near future.

Disarmament, however, is not the prerogative of the super-Powers - or of the European countries. Disarmament and the building of greater confidence and security is needed in all parts of the world. All Member States bear a responsibility.

The United Nations can play a very important role in promoting disarmament world wide. However, if we wish the Organization to fulfil its role, Member States must act accordingly.

Next year the Fourth Review Conference on the non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) will take place. The existence of a strong non-proliferation system has contributed to maintaining international peace and security during the last 20 years. This has been to the benefit of all countries - including those which have not yet signed the NPT. And the time has come for those countries to acknowledge their responsibility and to join the Treaty.

(Mr. Ellemann-Jensen, Denmark)

Negotiations over the last years on chemical weapons give rise to the hope that an agreement on a global ban can soon be concluded. All parties must participate whole-heartedly and constructively in these negotiations. We must not get lost in technical details but continue to keep the political goal of a global ban before us.

And now, let me turn just briefly to some of the regional conflicts.

In the Middle East the more constructive policy of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) presented at last year's session of the General Assembly has brought new momentum to the peace process.

However, the prevailing atmosphere of violence and the devastating mutual mistrust still represent serious obstacles to the establishment of security for all States and justice for all peoples in the area.

(Mr. Ellemann-Jensen, Denmark)

The tragic situation in the occupied territories clearly demonstrates the need for all parties to exercise the utmost restraint. Confidence-building may be a slow and sometimes painful process requiring intensive efforts and courage, but it is necessary.

Concrete steps must also be taken to get the peace process off the ground. The suggestion to hold elections in the territories occupied by Israel could bring the peace process forward if the elections are conducted under circumstances and guarantees acceptable to the Palestinians.

The repressive measures taken by the occupying authorities in violation of international law must cease. Not only would such a step alleviate a serious humanitarian problem; it would also serve to reduce the atmosphere of mistrust.

The tragic situation in Lebanon has recently deteriorated beyond the most pessimistic predictions. It is our common responsibility to do our utmost to contribute to securing the independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Lebanon. But the most urgent task is to ensure a stable and lasting cessation of hostilities and to attend to the basic needs of the Lebanese people on humanitarian grounds and impartially. We applaud and support the efforts of the Arab League to this end.

Denmark deeply regrets that the international conference on Cambodia, in Paris, did not succeed in reaching an agreement on a lasting solution. We hope that all parties will show restraint, and we urge that all avenues be utilized to allow the people of Cambodia to exercise their right to self-determination and also to re-establish Cambodia as an independent, sovereign, neutral and non-aligned State.

In southern Africa we have been greatly encouraged by the progress towards independence in Namibia through democratic and free elections.

(Mr. Ellemann-Jensen, Denmark)

This historical development is not least a result of the tenacious and dedicated efforts of the Secretary-General and his Special Representative as well as the presence of the United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) in Namibia.

It is the firm hope of the Danish Government that the elections will lead to the formation of democratic institutions in Namibia in accordance with Security Council resolution 435 (1978). We look forward to welcoming a free and independent Namibia as a member of the international community next year.

In sharp contrast to the developments in Namibia, the abhorrent system of apartheid in South Africa has continued without significant changes. Many South Africans are still imprisoned for their political beliefs and activities. The state of emergency has this summer, once again, been prolonged. And the South African régime continues its flagrant violations of fundamental human rights. There is now - maybe more than ever - a crucial need for a national dialogue between all groups in South Africa.

After the elections on 6 September we look to the new President to implement the urgently needed fundamental changes. Apartheid must be dismantled. We urge the new President to show wisdom and courage and to realize that nothing short of the total abolition of apartheid will meet the aspirations of the black majority. Until this goal has been reached the world community must continue to apply pressure, including economic sanctions, on the South African Government.

One of the most urgent challenges facing mankind today is probably the global environmental problems. A proper response to the environmental challenges is of paramount importance for development and for the survival of humanity. Our planet should not be regarded as an inheritance from past generations, but rather as a treasure held in trust for future generations.

(Mr. Ellemann-Jensen, Denmark)

Scientists have clearly and convincingly demonstrated the threats to our environment posed by the depletion of the ozone layer, the greenhouse effect and other forms of environmental degradation, including deforestation and desertification.

The world economic summit in July 1989 called for a determined and concerted international response to the environmental challenge. And for the early adoption world-wide of policies based on sustainable development. It was furthermore stated that environmental protection is integral to issues such as trade, development, energy, transport, agriculture and economic planning. Environmental issues will become an integral part of the economic decision-making process both at national and at international levels.

Many of the processes already under way will be integrated in the preparations for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992. It is imperative that the Conference both define the sources of environmental degradation and underdevelopment and agree on concrete actions to deal with the major environmental issues.

Participating Governments must make political commitments to act individually and together to restore the global environment. The transfer of appropriate technology and additional financial resources to the poorer developing countries will be essential if those countries are to participate actively in this global effort.

As a follow-up to the recommendations in the Environmental Perspective and in the Brundtland report, Denmark has adopted a comprehensive national action plan and a specific action plan for development co-operation.

In meeting the environment challenge we must not lose sight of other basic problems facing the developing countries in particular. The debt problem is among the most prominent.

(Mr. Ellemann-Jensen, Denmark)

During the past year new steps have been taken to deal with that issue. The International Monetary Fund and the World Bank have approved support for the reduction of private debt and debt service of highly indebted middle-income countries. Those decisions constitute an important and welcome development.

The success of the arrangement depends, however, to a large extent on the willingness of commercial banks to agree to significant debt reductions and, in many cases, to provide new money as well. We hope that the banks will respond positively. This would be in their own interest as well as in the interest of the indebted developing countries. It is generally recognized that the severely indebted low-income countries need concessional debt relief. We welcome the implementation by the Paris Club of the concessional rescheduling terms agreed at the Toronto summit.

We also welcome the decision of several creditor countries, including two of the largest ones, to waive the official debt of low-income countries in sub-Saharan Africa. This is an important addition to earlier actions by other donors. Nevertheless, we urge all donors to join us in waiving all official debt to all least developed countries in accordance with resolution 165 S-IX of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

Finally, we note with satisfaction the decision of the World Bank to allocate \$US 100 million of its net income to the support of debt reduction efforts in countries that receive only international development assistance.

Those arrangements are useful additions to the measures helping developing countries to manage their debt burdens. But the arrangements will not be effective unless the indebted countries continue structural reforms aimed at making their economies more efficient, restoring creditworthiness and attracting foreign investments.

(Mr. Ellemann-Jensen, Denmark)

Solving the debt problem is important, but more aid of good quality is very much needed as well. Denmark, together with the other Nordic countries, has recently urged all donor countries to take certain concrete steps to achieve as soon as possible the United Nations objective of .7 per cent, an objective Denmark has already met, seven years ago, as we expect to reach the 1 per cent goal in 1992.

(Mr. Ellemann-Jensen, Denmark)

Promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms without discrimination continues to be one of the basic obligations of the United Nations. Over the years the United Nations has developed a considerable number of conventions on human rights. Our main task today is to ensure their full implementation. All countries are unconditionally obliged to respect human rights in accordance with the Charter and the conventions to which they have freely acceded. Human rights are by nature universal. They should not be given different meanings or interpretations in various regions of the world. The global society has the right - even the duty - to see the individual and respect for his rights as a relevant concern.

Human rights take a natural and central place also in development co-operation. Each individual's possibilities of influencing his or her own situation have to be taken into account. Only then can we expect a development process to become truly sustainable - and humane.

My Government sincerely believes that promotion of the democratization process should become fully integrated into the development strategies of the coming years. I trust that international agencies for development assistance will also give due consideration to human rights issues.

During this year we have witnessed a serious escalation in the illicit drug traffic. Still-more-sophisticated methods are being employed by the drug merchants, leaving States and the international community with no alternative but to combat this evil. The machinery is at hand to attack this global problem. The international community's response should be firm and co-ordinated, leaving our adversaries in no doubt that they will be apprehended, prosecuted and punished and, if necessary, extradited to a State where prosecution will take place. There must be no safe haven for drug terrorists.

(Mr. Ellemann-Jensen, Denmark)

Every few months the world community continues to receive reports about new terrorist incidents. My Government urges the Assembly to stand united in its condemnation of these criminal acts wherever and by whomever committed and to encourage intensified international co-operation at all levels in this field.

It is not always easy to recognize the importance of international events as they unfold. Many factors are at play and the outcome of their interaction is often only appreciated years later. By now I think many would agree that we are entering a new era in international politics. People in many regions of the world are becoming more aware of their democratic rights. And many Governments are introducing domestic reforms to meet popular demand. Governments and individuals are becoming increasingly aware of the interdependence of the community of nations and hence of the need to find common solutions to our common global problems.

I am not saying that the future is without dangers. Regional conflicts - such as those in the Middle East and southern Africa - pose a threat not only to the peoples of those regions but to us all. But the general trend of positive change must be seized to tackle the problems before us. We must intensify our efforts to solve the various serious regional conflicts. We must encourage the trend towards democracy in many parts of the world and undertake all possible endeavours to promote and protect human rights. We must spare no effort to solve the economic problems of the developing countries. We must pool our resources to eliminate poverty and illiteracy. We must accelerate the process of disarmament, not only in Europe but in all parts of the world. We must fight the scourges of terrorism and narcotic drugs. We must act swiftly - before it is too late - to save our environment for future generations. We must do all this - and much more.

(Mr. Ellemann-Jensen, Denmark)

When I consider the many positive developments since I spoke from this rostrum a year ago, I am optimistic about our possibilities for progress. But we must act together - and act now.

Mr. JAMEEL (Maldives): It is indeed a pleasure for me and the members of my delegation to extend to Ambassador Garba our sincere congratulations on his election to the presidency of the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly. His election to this high office is a well-deserved tribute to his personal qualities and experience. I am fully confident that under his able and wise leadership the Assembly will further consolidate the gains achieved during the past year.

My delegation associates itself with previous speakers in expressing its appreciation of the dedicated efforts of his predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Dante Caputo, for the exemplary manner in which he discharged his duties as President of the forty-third session of the General Assembly.

As in previous years, my delegation wishes to note its satisfaction with and gratitude for the assiduous and unrelenting efforts exerted by the Secretary-General of the United Nations in the cause of peace and international harmony. We pay a tribute to him for his untiring efforts to promote conditions conducive to the realization of the noble principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. We praise and congratulate him on the successes the Organization has achieved in recent years. More particularly we praise him for the renewed faith and regeneration of confidence in the Organization and its ability to play an instrumental role in the peaceful settlement of disputes.

Today we find ourselves at an important crossroads. Recent years have witnessed a welcome positive change in the international political climate. The confrontational tone evident in super-Power relations not too long ago continues to

(Mr. Jameel, Maldives)

show signs of thawing. At the same time, a number of regional and subregional conflicts have taken momentous strides towards resolution. Many more protracted conflicts show signs of hope and movement. Though one might argue that the present situation continues to be delicate, the progress made can hardly escape notice and is indeed worthy of recognition.

(Mr. Jameel, Maldives)

Developments in southern Africa, and more particularly in Namibia with regard to the implementation of the United Nations independence plan, are welcome signals of hope, but amidst the hopes there are still dark reminders of the precariousness of global political reconciliation. A number of problems remain unsolved and several of these, such as the conflicts in the Middle East, continue to simmer.

We are therefore at an important crossroads. We feel that there is enough good will to set in motion the process of evolution towards peace and stability. We see signs that the human intellect is resourceful enough to devise ideas that are conducive to our survival. Fresh concepts of peace and security have gained currency, but at the same time we continue to live under the dark shadow of nuclear devices. The proliferation of nuclear weapons, both horizontally and vertically, is a tragic reminder of the difficulties and obstacles which stand between mankind and lasting peace.

On the economic front hard choices need to be made. The 1980s have witnessed one of the longest spells of growth for the industrialized countries, while the situation in the South, particularly in the least developed countries, continues to deteriorate. Benefits of trade continue to be disproportionate. Commodity prices have not regained their value in real terms. Aid flows continue to be inadequate. The debt burden borne by many third world countries is stifling economic growth and efforts for development, causing political instability. The link between economic development and the environment has recently been recognized and it is encouraging to note the high profile given to environmental issues at the Paris summit meeting of the Group of Seven in July this year. In this regard, it is of particular interest that there is an increasing awareness and acceptance of the fact that certain technologies have a deleterious effect on the environment. The question is how these technologies can be replaced through a global programme of co-operation.

(Mr. Jameel, Maldives)

No single fact, no single object, defines our moment in civilization more than does the existence of large nuclear arsenals. We have the horrible capacity to destroy our planet several times over, either by accident or by design. Nuclear weapons instil fear and beget mistrust and insecurity. They have a remarkable tendency to set hostile relations in concrete. They aggravate the security dilemma of States and perpetuate a conflictual mode of behaviour. This, therefore, fuels the arms race and defence budgets soar while expenditures that are benevolent tend to plummet.

The United Nations Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development served as a timely reminder of the opportunity costs of armaments, both nuclear and conventional. However, the opportunity cost of nuclear weaponry is not only development. The international political climate and the security perceptions of States, as well as the environment, are actual and potential sacrifices to nuclear weapons. Furthermore, the potential horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons issues the stark and grim warning that regional rivalries would be on an ever shorter fuse and that cataclysm would be that much closer.

It is in view of these strong objections to nuclear weapons and their proliferation and deployment that my delegation has consistently and strongly supported United Nations calls for disarmament.

The confidence that can be derived from genuine arms reduction has a pervasive effect on the security environment. The transition that many of the world's conflicts are making towards negotiations and understanding owes a great deal to improved relations between the super-Powers, which were themselves in part inspired by the historic arms reduction agreement of December 1987. It is for this reason that Maldives has always supported all efforts with a view to general and complete disarmament, including the total elimination of chemical and bacteriological weapons and reduction in conventional armaments.

(Mr. Jameel, Maldives)

We also believe that nuclear-weapon-free zones and zones of peace could inspire trust, good will and co-operation amongst States, transforming the regions into secure communities contributing to global peace and security. We therefore support calls for the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones and zones of peace.

I express my delegation's fullest support for the people of Namibia, with our sincere hopes that 1989 will go down in history as the year in which the people of Namibia achieved their independence.

Apartheid is an affront to mankind and a crime against humanity. No amount of tinkering with it can placate the sense of outrage and indignation felt by the world community for this immoral practice. No amount of cosmetic change can restore justice and dignity to the oppressed majority in South Africa. We in the Maldives express our solidarity with the oppressed majority in South Africa in their struggle against apartheid. We condemn unequivocally the system of apartheid and condemn the Pretoria régime for its continued defiance of the resolutions of this Organization and world public opinion. It is unfortunate that the international community has been less than unanimous on the implementation of sanctions against the racist régime in South Africa.

By far the greatest conflict in our time has been and continues to be the conflict in the Middle East. At the heart of this conflict is the question of Palestine. However, it is only in recent years that the Palestinian issue has evoked even a reasonable amount of concern in some key States. The search for peace continues to be frustrated by the hard-line and obstinate policies of Israel. Meanwhile, the situation in the occupied territories continues to deteriorate. The 22-month-long intifadah emphasizes the intensity of the situation posed by Zionist occupation of Palestine and other Arab territories, including Jerusalem.

(Mr. Jameel, Maldives)

The Government of Maldives strongly condemns the use of brutal force and the blatant abuse of human rights by Israel against the Palestinian people in the occupied territories. We also deplore the continued defiance by Israel of United Nations resolutions and its violation of international law and all norms of civilized behaviour. We reiterate our full support and solidarity with the people of Palestine in their just struggle for self-determination and independence. We therefore welcome the overwhelming international support for the uprising, which is being viewed as the just and valiant struggle of the Palestinian people for the restoration of their inalienable rights. We extend our whole-hearted support to the proposal for an early convening of an international conference on the Middle East with the full and independent participation of Palestine.

The situation in Lebanon remains volatile. The civil war, now in its fifteenth year, continues to take an increasing toll of human life. We fervently hope that, with the developments taking place in the region and elsewhere, the question of Lebanon will be solved in a manner which will restore its independence and national integrity, and alleviate the sufferings of its people. We welcome the efforts undertaken by the members of the Arab League, both past and present, to resolve the situation in Lebanon and we request the international community to give their support to the people of Lebanon in their efforts to solve their problems.

On a more hopeful note, we are pleased that, contrary to some early pessimistic assessments, the cease-fire agreed on between Iran and Iraq in the Gulf has held firm, indicating the sincerity of the parties to the conflict. We welcome the commitments undertaken by them to resolve the conflict by peaceful means. In particular, we applaud the efforts of the United Nations Secretary-General for the resolution of this conflict and urge both parties to maintain the momentum of peace created and envisaged by the cease-fire.

(Mr. Jameel, Maldives)

While we welcome the positive developments in Afghanistan - I refer to the withdrawal of foreign troops - we regret that the situation has not been completely settled. We reiterate our call upon all parties concerned to adhere strictly to the provisions of the Geneva Agreements in order not to frustrate the prevailing opportunities for a just and lasting solution to the problem. We urge the international community to provide humanitarian and economic assistance for the relief and rehabilitation of refugees, as well as for the long-term reconstruction of that ravaged country.

Positive strides have been taken towards a solution of the Kampuchean problem. We welcome the withdrawal of the Vietnamese troops from Kampuchea, and we appreciate the diplomatic efforts to obtain a comprehensive and lasting solution to the dispute, including the Jakarta Informal Meeting as well as the recent International Conference in Paris. However, realizing the delicacy of the current situation, we call upon all parties concerned to exercise restraint, to demonstrate good faith and to work towards national reconciliation and a comprehensive political solution.

The process of reunification of peoples should be through peaceful means and by the creation of conditions conducive to reconciliation, peace and stability among those sharing the same aspirations. We remain optimistic about the prospects for peaceful national reconciliation in the Korean peninsula. Maldives, however, reiterates that this can be achieved only by direct dialogue and negotiations between the peoples concerned and that the solutions reached should be entirely at their discretion, without outside interference. The good offices of the United Nations could be utilized in these peace negotiations.

(Mr. Jameel, Maldives)

Another issue that needs our attention is the situation in Cyprus. That prolonged intercommunal dispute should be solved urgently, with due regard to the national integrity of the nation and the aspirations of its peoples. We welcome the recent high-level contacts between the two communities and hope that the revived intercommunal dialogue will lead to intercommunal reconciliation on the basis of equality and integrity for both communities. We commend the tireless and sincere efforts of the Secretary-General in searching for a settlement to the conflict.

As I have already noted, the world economic situation continues to be bleak for the developing countries. Their situation has been worsened by the limited flow of aid since the early 1980s, rampant domestic inflation, crippling debts and the exorbitant burden of debt-servicing. The situation is aggravated by their falling share in international trade, by persistent negative trends in the terms of trade, owing to protectionism, and by the upsurge in unilateralism and other practices that jeopardize the multilateral nature of trade. It is regrettable that, on the whole, despite recent measures whereby the resources of the international finance institutions have been increased by the plans of some of the most developed countries to recycle part of their surplus into the developing countries, the internationally agreed target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product (GNP) as official development assistance has not been met. Moreover, as regards the least developed countries, which continue to register negative growth rates, the official development assistance target of 0.15 per cent of GNP has not been met either.

Economic insecurity is not the only visible threat facing many of us in the world today. Indeed, we consider the environment to be one of the most important aspects of the quality of life that we have to address now in our quest for

(Mr. Jameel, Maldives)

economic and industrial development. We welcome the proposed United Nations conference on environment and development and regard the event as a valuable opportunity which should be fully utilized to promote a comprehensive approach to the environmental problems related to the development activities of mankind.

While serious efforts are being made at global, regional and national levels to protect the environment, my delegation is particularly concerned about the effects of the degradation of the environment, especially the depletion of the ozone layer and the consequent global warming and rise in sea level. Maldives is a low-lying archipelagic State, entirely dependent upon its surrounding seas. Any degradation of the marine ecosystem, or any rise in the mean sea level, is a matter of grave concern to the Maldives. It will be recalled that two years ago we witnessed the fury of tidal eruptions, which caused extensive damage. With the assistance of friendly countries, we have embarked upon a programme of protecting the populated islands from possible natural calamities. Tidal waves, hurricanes and typhoons are increasingly frequent phenomena, and today there is a greater awareness that man's tampering with the environment and certain technologies inimical to the environment do have a direct bearing on the behaviour of the global weather system.

Maldives therefore strongly supports the call for environmental preservation and is already a party to the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer and the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer. Our interest in the issue continues undiminished, and we welcome the universal interest that has been expressed in the preservation of the environment. I should like also to mention that in November this year the Maldives will host a conference of small States on sea-level rise. We are confident that the conference will contribute to the global efforts in addressing this important issue.

(Mr. Jameel, Maldives)

It is an old and true maxim that the best indicator of the strength and stability of an international security system or political order is the survival of its weakest members. That being the case, and in view of the implications, the ever-increasing dangers of terrorism and mercenarism to the sovereignty of small and weak States are appalling.

Terrorism is not simply a minor irritant to anybody - least of all, to the small nations whose sovereignty is not only held hostage but can be easily usurped. The very existence of this possibility in the first place does not augur well for the security of the international community. The cherished principles that have so long contributed to the survival of the present State system and that are indispensable values of our global civilization are at stake. Today it may be we, the small States, whose sovereignty can be robbed by a handful of mercenaries or a gang of bounty hunters. Tomorrow it could be the larger countries, which, even at present, face some erosion of their sovereignty and security by similar acts. The difference is that when a small State is subjected to a terrorist onslaught or an invasion by mercenaries the consequences can be irreversible, both in political and in economic terms. We in the Maldives were close to becoming the victim of such a dastardly attempt last November.

It is evident that peoples engaging in acts of terrorism and mercenarism, which endanger the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States, need to be deterred. The security of small States is too weak to be taken care of by mere self-help. The implications that efforts to strengthen their own security have for the prospects of economic development through the severe, if at all affordable, opportunity costs and the impact on social and political values, as well as the long-term implications for the sustenance of democracy in a militarized society, are negative. By requesting the inclusion on the agenda of the Assembly of an item related to the protection and security of small States, we sought to highlight the

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issue that I have just mentioned. We brought the issue to this forum not because we are unwilling to defend our values; nor have we taken it up here because our peoples lack valour.

Small States do have as friends States that can assist, and have assisted, in strengthening their security. While we are grateful for the sense of duty that these friends have shown, it is with regret that we note that bilateral security arrangements in the international system have not yet evolved to a level of maturity whereby the interests of the weaker partner can be safeguarded. Nor are the socio-political identity of the weaker State and the principle of sovereign equality strong enough to be impervious to the possible vicissitudes of unequal relationships.

(Mr. Jameel, Maldives)

Moreover, our political systems continue to be afflicted by misconceptions which can distort actions taken with the best of intentions. Consequently, the greater the power differential, the greater the propensity to misconceptions and the more hapless the predicament of the weaker parties. It is for this reason that we believe that multilateral frameworks are the most feasible modes of a sound security mechanism for the weakest Members of the Organization, even if the actual support or assistance in a given situation is rendered at a regional or bilateral level.

As I noted earlier, it is my humble opinion that we are at a pivotal point, an important crossroads in our global political development. It is our belief that we are at a particularly auspicious moment in history to forge ahead in strengthening the norms of our global political and security systems. Thus it is our sincere hope that the Organization will take a similar momentous step, a leap forward in ushering in a new era of security for the small States. We trust that this critical step will be taken to safeguard the principles which are espoused by the Organization and on which the survival of a large number of this community depends.

The meeting rose at 7.15 p.m.