



# General Assembly

Forty-ninth Session

**45<sup>th</sup>** Meeting

Wednesday, 26 October 1994, 10 a.m.  
New York

*Official Records*

*President:* Mr. Essy ..... (Côte D'Ivoire)

*The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.*

## Agenda item 24

### **Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba**

#### **Report of the Secretary-General (A/49/398 and Add.1)**

#### **Draft resolution (A/49/L.9)**

**The President** (*interpretation from French*): I call on the representative of Cuba to introduce draft resolution A/49/L.9.

**Mr. Remírez de Estenoz** (Cuba) (*interpretation from Spanish*): This is the third session at which the General Assembly has had to consider an item that constitutes one of the most obvious remnants of the cold-war period. For the second consecutive year the Government of the United States has failed to comply with the will of the international community expressed in two resolutions of this the principal organ of the United Nations.

The economic, commercial and financial blockade carried out by the United States against Cuba has not been reduced in any way; on the contrary it has been strengthened. That Government has not even attempted to moderate the extraterritorial reach of the blockade but has, by its actions, ignored the request of the General Assembly

and the international community including the opinion of ever-wider sections of society in North America itself.

Today the United States not only maintains the complex system of laws and regulations that comprise its aggressive policy against Cuba, which my delegation has placed before Member States on previous occasions, but during the time that has elapsed the Government of the United States has continued to enact measures and provisions geared to strengthening the economic, commercial and financial siege against my country.

At the same time, it has continued to carry out a series of political and diplomatic actions as well as covert actions aimed at bringing pressure to bear on independent Governments to prevent the establishment of links with Cuba in violation of internationally recognized norms, including those of the United States Government itself. Cuba's response, which is contained in the report of the Secretary-General, presents an abundance of examples demonstrating what I have said.

As part and parcel of its determination to render the situation of the Cuban people even more difficult, and perhaps in the futile hope of stimulating violent actions that would justify a response of another kind, as recently as 20 August this year the President of the United States announced new regulations designed to make the conditions of the blockade even more severe.

Those regulations intensify the broadcasting aggression against Cuba; they prohibit remittances of

money to Cuba by Cuban-American citizens and residents in the United States; they significantly limit the sending to Cuba of parcels and air cargo, consisting mainly of foodstuffs, medicines and products to meet essential needs; and they provide for an arbitrary and severe decrease in travel and exchanges between Cuba and the United States, mainly affecting Cuban citizens and the Cuban-American community, including a drastic reduction in family visits between the two countries.

After the adoption of these new regulations the United States Department of the Treasury recognized that these measures were addressed to strengthen even more the embargo against Cuba and thus to limit the capacity of the Cuban Government to accumulate foreign exchange.

Moreover, these actions constitute an enormous political paradox as they are designed to create obstacles to the process, initiated by the Cuban Government, of promoting normal relations and family reunification, bringing together Cuban emigrants - throughout the world, but especially in the United States - and their country of origin.

That process has the broad support of all of the Cuban people, including Cubans residing abroad. Those provisions make Cuba the only country whose nationals in the United States are prevented by law from maintaining normal relations with their country.

Furthermore, the interpretation adopted by the Treasury Department early in 1994 constitutes a widening of the restrictions that already existed in what it prohibits United States citizens from assisting or facilitating operations related to Cuba by companies in third countries. In accordance with this interpretation, not a single United States scientist would be able to cooperate with a foreign company to evaluate, for example, an investment project in any scientific or industrial field in Cuba.

Some figures deserve special mention. Only 15 days after the adoption of the latest United Nations resolution against the blockade, at a hearing of the subcommittee of the House of Representatives, it was recognized that, as a result of the suspension in the granting of licences by the Treasury Department to subsidiaries of United States corporations in third countries, trade with Cuba by United States subsidiaries abroad fell to \$1.8 million in 1993 in contrast to a total of \$718 million in 1991. In practical terms, trade that did not apply to luxury items, but rather, essentially, to the acquisition of medicine and foodstuffs in short supply, virtually disappeared.

As the result of other restrictions contemplated in legislation against Cuba, the Cuban economy had to spend more than an additional \$34 million in 1993 on foodstuffs alone owing to higher prices and freight costs than those to which Cuba had access.

The freight costs of tankers servicing Cuba have increased by between 15 and 30 per cent in comparison with normal prices. Something similar has occurred with regard to air freight. In general, the losses to the economy for this reason alone amounted to more than \$50 million in 1993.

According to the most recent estimates, damage to the Cuban economy in 1993 alone as a direct result of the strengthening of the blockade amount to more than \$970 million.

The United States Government also persists in the extraterritorial application of its laws and regulations regarding the blockade. It has not enough that countries with close ties and relations with the United States had adopted special provisions prohibiting foreign companies located in their territory from complying with United States law. Nor has it sufficed that in its 1993 report on trade with the United States and investment barriers, the Commission of the European Communities condemned unilateral trade measures adopted by the United States Government, in particular those affecting freedom of trade and shipping. In that regard, the report concluded that the continuation of the extraterritorial application of United States laws contributed to the creation of serious conflicts of jurisdiction between the United States and the Community and its member States; and that it also had a negative influence on the climate for trade and investment between the United States and the Community.

The official response given by the Director of the Office of Foreign Assets Control of the United States Treasury Department reaffirmed that his Government would continue to apply United States law in the way in which it has been laid down and would require companies subjected to that legislation to fulfil the provisions of the blockade against Cuba.

But above and beyond the consequences deriving from the extraterritorial dimension of the blockade, it is the impact of the blockade on the most varied facets of Cuban life that arouses international repudiation.

The situation created by the strengthening of the blockade continues very seriously to affect such matters

as the health and nutrition of the population. It is the children, the elderly, women and the sick who are the most seriously hurt. Moreover, the capacity to provide transportation, electric power and other services is also significantly curtailed.

The sufferings of the Cuban people, the day-to-day deficiencies, difficulties in purchasing the most basic staples to ensure life and even the deterioration of sectors that have for years been an example for all of the third world — such as health and education services - are inevitable consequences of the cruel blockade imposed against Cuba.

In this regard, the observations of the United Nations Children's Fund are especially significant. They appear in the report of the Secretary-General (A/49/398) on this item and they are illustrative of the effects of the blockade on Cuba's children. The damages pointed out in that document, which are directly associated with the reduction in the availability of foodstuffs and medical supplies, the deterioration of the nutrition levels and the quality of the drinking water, have been detected in the last two or three years, coinciding with the reinforcement of the blockade.

Cuba's efforts to purchase medicines or medical supplies continue to be grossly abused. Restrictions are still in place forbidding any company anywhere in the world from selling to Cuba medicines or medical supplies of any kind containing components or technology originating in the United States. This even includes the purchase of items as simple as pacemakers for people with heart conditions.

Given these facts, it is undeniable that the persistence of the economic, commercial and financial blockade against my country constitutes a flagrant and general violation of the fundamental rights of the Cuban people to independence, sovereignty, and self-determination, as well as its right to development, health, nutrition and employment, and even to life itself.

Only the development achieved by the country in 35 years, the social policy it has followed, the programmes it has adopted to try to counter the negative effects of the strengthening of the blockade and the measures and changes adopted to encourage the integration of the Cuban economy into the new world economy - have prevented the consequences of the blockade from taking on disastrous dimensions.

Precisely because of those efforts and the results achieved, my country has been able to resist this criminal blockade and the disappearance of its international

economic links forged over more than 30 years. They have not only ensured the survival of our nation but, in the course of the present year, several sectors of the economy have begun to show clear signs of the beginnings of recovery.

It is not idle to reaffirm that of all the limitations besetting Cuba the only one that responds to a political initiative on the part of a foreign Government and the only one that could also disappear as a result of a political act is the United States blockade.

In spite of this, Cuba reaffirms its decision to continue along the path it has chosen independently and in all sovereignty — that is, the path of transformations to support its reintegration into the world market and to reactivate its productive structure. We will not agree to anything being imposed on us, but will continue this process, ensuring the preservation of the most important social achievements of more than 35 years and, above all, maintaining the defence of our independence and national sovereignty — a sacred victory that we will never renounce.

At the same time, we reaffirm our readiness to work to find political and negotiated solutions in order to overcome differences with any country, on the sole basis of sovereign equality and mutual respect; we have clearly and unequivocally demonstrated this willingness both internationally and bilaterally. The agreements on migration issues recently concluded here in New York between delegations of Cuba and the United States are proof of this willingness, and they demonstrate what can be achieved when there is a serious sense of responsibility on both sides.

Nevertheless, in spite of those results, the only substantive solution that can eliminate all the existing differences continues to be the dismantling of the aggressive policy against Cuba, a policy whose backbone is the economic, commercial and financial blockade.

Today, when the many arguments that have been officially brandished for more than 30 years to maintain the blockade against Cuba have been disproved and left behind by history and by recent developments in United States policy, the blockade against Cuba constitutes not only one of the greatest injustices but also one of the greatest anachronisms in today's world, lacking any sense or rationality whatsoever.

Since that policy violates fundamental principles that are enshrined in the United Nations Charter and constitute the very cornerstone of this Organization, as well as other internationally recognized principles such as the freedom of trade and navigation, we once again address the General Assembly with the aim of obtaining a new decision by the United Nations that will contribute to putting an end to the illegal blockade which is directed against Cuba today but of which any other nation could be the victim tomorrow.

I have the honour therefore of introducing the draft resolution in document A/49/L.9, which has been the subject of wide consultations with delegations here and has been published in all the official languages of the United Nations. It basically maintains the structure, language and scope of resolution 48/16, adopted by the General Assembly at its last session; the only changes consist in updating the situation by referring to the most important developments that have taken place over the last year.

The decision that the General Assembly is to adopt shortly remains fundamental for the very existence of the United Nations and for the preservation of its guiding principles. Moreover, it affects the existence of an entire people.

We therefore hope that, by the decisive and overwhelming adoption of this draft resolution, the General Assembly will once again reaffirm its commitment to those principles and its support for all those who, small though they may be, are struggling to defend their independence.

**Mr. Sardenberg** (Brazil) (*interpretation from Spanish*): There have been major changes in the international system in recent years. Relations between States are losing their markedly ideological nature, opening a path to the strengthening of cooperation. In regard to trade, there are signs of the opening of international markets and the liberalization and freedom of trade instead of discriminatory and obstructionist practices. At the same time, we are witnessing instances of the extra-territorial application of laws and measures with legal, political and economic effects that distort relations between States.

The General Assembly, in adopting resolution 48/16 last year, reiterated its appeal to all States that they refrain from promulgating and applying laws and measures whose extra-territorial effects affect the sovereignty of other States.

The imposition of embargo measures has grave repercussions on the economic life of the country affected, because it deflects normal flows of trade and promotes

unjustifiable rises in the price of imports. It also has direct effects on the well-being and health of a people — from changes in priorities to a deterioration in the quality of public services. The organs and agencies of the United Nations system have produced significant data in that respect, as the report of the Secretary-General in document A/49/398 indicates.

With regard to the specific case that is of concern to the international community, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Brazil, Ambassador Celso Amorim, stated during the general debate of the present session of the General Assembly that

“Political, economic and commercial isolation, apart from being unjustifiable, only contributes to aggravating the hardship endured by the Cuban people at a time when we perceive positive indications of democratic reform and reconciliation” (*Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-ninth Session, Plenary Meetings, 4th meeting, p. 2*)

Brazil bases its foreign policy on the promotion of the principles of the sovereign equality of States, non-intervention and non-interference in the domestic affairs of other countries, and freedom of international trade and navigation.

We believe that States should give pride of place to dialogue and that any problem that arises between them should be solved in conformity with the United Nations Charter and international law, not by unilateral measures.

My country will vote in favour of the draft resolution before the Assembly for the sake of defending the principles of international law and promoting peaceful and friendly relations between nations, and as an affirmation of the principles of cooperation. Cuba should not be deprived of the opportunity to participate freely and without hindrance in international economic and commercial relations.

**Mr. Lopez-Pulecio** (Colombia) (*interpretation from Spanish*): My country's foreign policy is based on a firm commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the charter of the Organization of American States. Colombia believes that international relations are based on the sovereign equality of States; respect for their identity, sovereignty and independence; compliance in good faith with international obligations; the peaceful settlement of disputes; and non-intervention in the domestic affairs of States.

Throughout my country's history, various Governments, led by diverse political parties, have maintained a tradition of respect for and compliance with the principles and norms of international law and a deep-rooted conviction that the inviolability of States' autonomy is the basis of concord among them.

Another deep conviction of my country is that the strengthening of democracy is intimately related to stability, peace and especially development, with a view to satisfying the needs of society and guaranteeing well-being and economic and social equity. Democracy flourishes in the favourable environment of an internal, politically mature process, an essential condition for democracy's stability and durability.

An important part of this democratic climate is free trade. There is no more formidable force for demolishing privileges than the exercise of free trade and the equality of opportunity it generates. We have expressed this view at a number of opportunities offered in important international forums.

Inspired by the principles of the Charter, the General Assembly of the United Nations has expressed its view in two resolutions on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba. Indeed, through its resolutions 47/19 and 48/16, the General Assembly called on all States to refrain from promulgating and applying laws and measures whose extraterritorial effects affect the sovereignty of other States and the legitimate interests of entities or persons under their jurisdiction, as well as the freedom of trade and navigation. Colombia voted in favour of those resolutions.

Similarly, and also with Colombia's support, a statement was issued by the Ibero-American Heads of State or Government at the Summits held in Salvador de Bahia in 1993 and in Cartagena de Indias in 1994. The Heads of State or Government, in conformity with the principles of international law and General Assembly resolutions, voiced the necessity to eliminate the coercive unilateral application of economic and trade measures which affect the free flow of international trade and harm the living conditions of Ibero-American peoples.

Furthermore, the Heads of State or Government of the Rio Group, meeting in Rio de Janeiro on 9 and 10 September this year, expressed their determination, within the framework of the principle of non-intervention, to proceed with a constructive dialogue with Cuba and

stressed the need to lift the embargo against that sister Republic.

Colombia takes this opportunity to reaffirm its longstanding policy on a matter that has been the subject of pronouncements by the United Nations General Assembly and the Heads of State or Government of the Ibero-American Summits and the Rio Group, as well as once again to express its adherence to the principles and laws governing relations between States.

**Mr. Flores Olea (Mexico)** (*interpretation from Spanish*): This year has seen important steps taken towards dialogue and peaceful coexistence. In regions that were long affected by disputes and conflicts, we have seen surprising progress made in negotiations that have allowed us to foresee a lasting peace in various parts of the world. We wish to express our satisfaction at the progress made in the peace process, especially in the Middle East, South Africa and Central America. Dialogue and negotiation have overcome confrontation and impasse.

The principles of international law upon which the very existence of our Organization is based represent the collective aspiration to be able to rely on a framework of rationality, order and legality and to make it possible for nations to entertain the best of relations. Mexico remains convinced that, at this stage, dialogue, conciliation and negotiated political solutions are acquiring greater applicability and relevance as the best paths towards understanding. Today, following the end of the cold war, experience teaches us the necessity of finding new answers to the aspirations to peace, justice and well-being. The ways of promoting the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter are far removed from hostility and violence.

My delegation wishes to reiterate that, as with all States, it is the exclusive responsibility of Cuba and its people to define the forms of organization and the objectives and goals of its economic and social development. We appreciate the measures adopted by Cuba to improve and modernize structures and procedures, as well as a closer adherence to the general trends towards globalization and interdependence. We also recognize the constructive effort of its people and Government to broaden contacts and exchanges with all countries and regions.

We wish, too, to reaffirm our conviction that it is precisely dialogue that can end this longstanding dispute in our hemisphere, in a framework of full respect for the

sovereignty and the right to self-determination of the Cuban people. Dialogue has already lead to positive results, which we welcome. Indeed, the same determination and perseverance must continue in order to make that dialogue broader and more fruitful.

But only respect for international law can guarantee lasting peaceful coexistence between countries. Norms, accepted at the multilateral level, provide stability and certainty to relations between States. With a view to the future, we must seize opportunities that may emerge in the process of global transformation. The obsolescence of old practices designed within the framework of bipolar confrontation is increasingly evident.

Mexico has favoured and will always favour dialogue and negotiation as the most effective means to the solution of disputes. For all these reasons, my delegation will vote in favour of the draft resolution contained in document A/49/L.9. Pressure imposed by one country upon another has not been and never will be the best way to ensure a fair international order consistent with law and free of the threat of violence and force. We therefore hope to see a prompt resumption of the dialogue between the parties in order to discuss and negotiate their longstanding differences and arrive at a state of normal relations and coexistence between equal States of the region.

**Mr. Wisnumurti** (Indonesia): I deem it a privilege to deliver this statement on behalf of the non-aligned countries.

It is with deepening concern that we have observed the prolonged differences between the United States and Cuba. It is also particularly regrettable that the adverse relationship between the two countries, which has persisted for over three decades, has been further aggravated by the imposition of numerous measures, including a devastating embargo on trade. Punitive economic actions on such an untenable scale have inflicted immense hardship on the people of Cuba. The resulting weakening of the Cuban economy has profoundly affected living conditions in that country and has severely impeded its development efforts. Continuing economic pressure and isolation may well portend disastrous consequences, not only for Cuba but beyond. We therefore believe that such differences, no matter how deep and how intense they may be, should be resolved through sustained dialogue on the basis of equality and mutual respect.

Many Member States have in the past expressed in no uncertain terms the inapplicability of unilateral economic

and trade measures directed against other States for politically motivated reasons. They have also declared their opposition to the promulgation of laws that have extra-territorial effects which impinge on freedom of trade and navigation, and thereby adversely affect the interests of many countries. Hence, the repeal of those laws would be in conformity with the principles of the sovereignty of nations, non-intervention and non-interference. The non-aligned countries have always maintained that the attainment of a stable peace, common security, and social and economic justice must be firmly rooted in the rule of law and the precepts of the Charter, which should not be diluted or abridged.

In this regard, I should like to cite the communiqué issued by the Non-Aligned ministerial meeting held earlier this month in New York:

“The Ministers and heads of delegation called upon the Government of the United States to terminate the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed on Cuba for over three decades and for the speedy and effective implementation of General Assembly resolutions. They further reaffirmed their view that the differences between the two countries should be resolved peacefully and through comprehensive negotiations. They noted the joint communiqué signed by both countries on migration on 9 September 1994, and expressed the view that it constituted a positive development in this direction”.

It is now time to move on. The resumed talks on the question of migration in Havana should now be extended to resolve outstanding political and economic issues, whose persistence for so long has proved detrimental to the interests of the Cuban people. Specifically, the lifting of the embargo will create a climate more conducive to the normalization of relations between the two countries and contribute in a concrete manner to the stability of the region and to the promotion of cooperation.

It is the hope of the non-aligned countries that renewed consideration of this item and broad support for the draft resolution now before us will lead to the speedy solution of this issue, which will in turn promote the economic progress and social advancement of the Cuban people in an atmosphere of peace and tranquillity.

**Mr. Mumbengegwi** (Zimbabwe): Zimbabwe has stated on numerous occasions, both in the General

Assembly and in other international forums, that the end of the cold war opened up a vista of opportunity for the solution of hitherto seemingly intractable international problems. It is therefore a source of deep regret to my delegation that the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba, which has its origins in the cold-war confrontation, is still in place so long after the end of the cold war. The extra-territorial provisions of that embargo have made it even more pernicious. It is extremely difficult to see how the Republic of Cuba, in the context of this post-cold-war era, could possibly pose a threat to the United States of America.

We would like to reiterate our view that universal economic measures against any State should be imposed only by collective enforcement action through the United Nations. In the absence of any such enforcement action, all countries should be able freely to carry out their economic, commercial and financial transactions.

Apart from these important provisions of international law, Zimbabwe is particularly concerned at the devastating effect that the economic embargo against Cuba is having on the humanitarian situation in that country. Cuba's public-health, education and social-welfare systems, which ranked among the best in the world, have been adversely affected by the embargo, causing unnecessary suffering to the Cuban people. Needless to say, the principal victims are the children, the women, the elderly and the sick.

The harsh measures that are being inflicted upon the Cuban people are totally out of step with the spirit of our times, which dictates that care and compassion should be extended to the weak and the vulnerable and that disputes and differences should be resolved through negotiation, dialogue and reconciliation. The world today is full of examples of former enemies and adversaries becoming the closest of allies and friends.

It is our earnest hope that the current discussions between Cuba and the United States will create the necessary environment and mutual understanding to enable the two sides to undertake comprehensive discussions on the wider issues relating to the lifting of the embargo.

**Mr. Azwai** (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*interpretation from Arabic*): Today, the 26th of October, is a day of mourning in Libya. On that date, Italian colonialists exiled countless Libyans to uninhabited or semi-inhabited Italian islands: one of the most abhorrent crimes Italian colonialism committed against the Libyan people. It is my duty and the duty of my delegation to spend the day in

prayer for the souls of the Libyan martyrs and to engage in no work, which is the least we can do for our departed brethren. But the importance of this item, in the light of our friendly relations with the Cuban people and our understanding of and sympathy with their suffering as a result of the embargo unjustly imposed upon them, just as it is imposed upon us, by the United States of America, made it my duty to participate in this debate. It is unfortunate indeed that we small peoples have come to use this forum as a wailing wall to shed our tears, voice our grievances and adopt resolutions that are never implemented.

Article 32 of the Charter of the Economic Rights and Duties of States, adopted by the General Assembly at its twenty-ninth session, states that no State may use or encourage the use of economic, political or other measures to coerce another State in order to obtain from it the subordination of the exercise of its sovereign rights. Based on this, and on other principles set out in numerous international legal instruments, which underline the sovereign co-equality of States and their equality with respect to freedom of international trade and navigation, the General Assembly adopted resolution 48/16, by which it called on all States to refrain from promulgating and applying laws and measures whose effect may infringe upon the sovereignty of other States, because such measures constitute a violation of the Charter of the United Nations, specifically Article 1 (2), which states that a main purpose of the United Nations is to develop friendly relations among nations, and also because they run counter to the principles of international law and relevant General Assembly resolutions, including resolutions 38/197, 39/210, 40/185, 44/215 and 46/210. Those resolutions call on all countries to refrain from the threat of imposing trade restrictions, blockades, embargoes and other economic sanctions and from the imposition of restrictions on developing countries, since this runs counter to the Charter of the United Nations and other agreed multilateral commitments.

At its forth-seventh session, the General Assembly adopted resolution 47/19, by which the international community conclusively rejected the economic, trade and financial blockade imposed by the United States of America against Cuba and the pressure being exerted on other countries to stop cooperating with Cuba in those areas. This rejection was reconfirmed in resolution 48/16. Yet the available information shows that the response to those two resolutions has been disappointing. As stated by the Foreign Minister of Cuba in his statement to the General Assembly last month, this has not been limited to

silence or to ignoring the Assembly's appeal to countries to refrain from promulgating and applying laws and measures similar to those imposed on Cuba. In fact, one Member State has adopted additional restrictive measures aimed at tightening the blockade against that small country in order to force it to abandon its political and economic orientation. This totally contradicts the principles of international law calling for non-intervention and non-interference in any form in the internal affairs of other countries.

The blockade that the United States of America has imposed on Cuba for more than three decades has created great economic difficulties and imposed restrictions on economic and social development. It is not at all difficult to understand the disastrous consequences of this blockade, especially for countries that have been subjected to similar and, sometimes, more stringent coercive measures, such as my country, which has been subjected, since 1986, by the United States of America, to such measures. The United States Administration has been renewing those measures once a year under the pretext that Libya poses a threat to United States national security. Of course, this is not only untrue, but also risible. How could a small country such as Libya threaten the security of the United States? How could a small country such as Libya, with its limited resources, pose a threat to the United States of America, a country the size of a continent and the strongest in the world? It has never been proven that Libya is the source of any threat, especially to the security of the United States.

Of course, it is the opposite that is true: in 1986, while Libya was asleep, cities were subjected to military aggression from the air and the sea, in which the United States employed more than 100 aircraft that had previously been at the ready to face the former Soviet Union. Moreover, coercive economic measures were adopted through the Security Council under the pretext of a mere suspicion of alleged involvement by two Libyan citizens in a certain incident. The United States of America and its allies know better than anyone else that Libya is entirely unconnected with that incident. If there is any proof or evidence, let an international court sitting in The Hague or a Scottish court, or any other court in any place in the world other than the United Kingdom and the United States of America, decide the issue. The only thing we reject is that courts in the United Kingdom or the United States should try the case, for a trial of the two suspects in either of those countries would be a show trial whose only aim would be to besmear Libya. This, in fact, is the hidden motive behind all the measures and all the actions aimed at Libya.

My delegation is totally convinced that economic blockades and other coercive measures will not resolve disputes between States. Negotiations and other peaceful means remain the only logical way to settle disputes. The United States and Cuba have set successful precedents in this respect, as recently as September 1994, and this positive course should continue to be pursued, particularly since Cuba has always declared its readiness to continue in this direction because it is the proper way to settle its remaining disputes with the United States of America, including the issue of the economic, trade and financial blockade.

My country supports this approach in dealing with Cuba and other countries against which similar measures have been taken. If adopted, such an approach will lead to comprehensive international economic growth, will strengthen the foundations of constructive international cooperation and foster friendly relations that would enhance international peace and security and create a spirit of confidence and trust amongst the world's peoples.

**Mr. Kittikhoun** (Lao People's Democratic Republic) (*interpretation from French*): Once again the General Assembly is called upon to consider the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed against the Republic of Cuba. As we all know, that embargo, which dates back more than 30 years, has had an enormous effect on the living standards of the vast majority of the Cuban people. Above all, it has not contributed one iota to that country's efforts to become part of the world economy. Notwithstanding the repeated appeals of the international community, the embargo, to our great regret, remains in force today.

In keeping with our obligations under the United Nations Charter and international law, we in the Lao People's Democratic Republic have never promulgated or applied such laws or measures, which in our view, derogate from the sovereignty of other States and harm freedom of trade and navigation.

Like all the world's other peoples, the Cuban people are entitled to a life in dignity and prosperity. To attain that noble goal, they must be allowed to establish economic, commercial and other relations with the rest of the world. In this new era, in which a spirit of cooperation between States generally prevails, should we not promote and expand various types of economic cooperation between the peoples of our world, including the Cuban people? It is only natural that such beneficial



cooperation should be expanded and strengthened in the interests of the entire world. We therefore find it difficult to agree with those who continue to advocate the adoption of anachronistic coercive economic measures against other countries.

It is true that the item under consideration is sensitive and difficult. This debate is supposed to be a serious one, one that should lead to a positive result. The innocent Cuban people have already suffered greatly, and today they deserve all our support and sympathy. Of course, we cannot brush aside the arguments advanced by the parties, but if, together and with political will, we can look to the future without becoming overly mired in the past, a positive solution to the problem can surely be found.

In the view of the Lao delegation, this debate is not an occasion for mutual criticism, but, rather, an opportunity to gain a full awareness of the situation and to seek, together, a solution. On that note, we would make a friendly appeal to the two parties concerned, the Republic of Cuba and the United States of America, to commit themselves to sincere dialogue in order rapidly to reach a just and honourable solution that satisfies the legitimate interests of both peoples and of peace in the region and the world.

**Mr. Ngo Quang Xuan** (Viet Nam) (*interpretation from French*): I would like first of all to thank the Secretary-General and his colleagues for the report before us, submitted in accordance with resolution 48/16, adopted by the Assembly a year ago.

The trend towards dialogue and international and regional cooperation is becoming a more and more irresistible force. In our view, international cooperation should be based on the principles of respect for the independence and national sovereignty of other countries, non-interference in their internal affairs, mutually beneficial cooperation on an equal footing, the settlement of all disputes through negotiation and the non-use of force or threat of force.

In today's world, where our awareness of independence is being constantly reinforced, respect for each nation's right to choose freely its own path of development and for its right to preserve its national identity is an essential condition for the maintenance of peace and stability and for the strengthening of international cooperation. Blockade and sanction measures and the imposition of conditions in relations between States are vestiges of the past that go against the common will of peoples, the prevailing world-wide tendency and the

principles of international law. Hence, we fully support all the resolutions adopted by the countries of the Non-Aligned Movement calling upon the United States to end its blockade against Cuba.

We reiterate Viet Nam's position: laws whose effects are extraterritorial, because they harm not only Cuba's legitimate commercial interests but also those of third countries, must be abrogated. The resolutions adopted in this respect by the General Assembly must be promptly and effectively implemented.

On numerous occasions we have reaffirmed that the relations between Cuba and the United States should be resolved by means of negotiation. We welcome the joint communiqué recently signed between those two countries on the question of Cuban emigrants. We hope the two parties will continue their dialogue to resolve the other outstanding problems between them.

In conclusion, I wish to convey the profound sympathy of the Vietnamese people for the people of Cuba, which is now undergoing such hardship. In a spirit of understanding and solidarity with the Cuban people, the Government and the people of Viet Nam have undertaken and will continue to undertake activities manifesting solidarity and support, thus providing both moral and material assistance to the people of Cuba to help them overcome their difficulties and the effects of the blockade policy.

**Ms. Zachariah** (Malaysia): I am speaking on behalf of the Permanent Representative of Malaysia, Ambassador Razali Ismail.

Malaysia wishes to support the statement by the representative of Indonesia, who spoke in his capacity as Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement. The statement duly reflects the position taken by the leaders of the Non-Aligned Movement at the Jakarta summit in 1992 and reiterated recently at the Non-Aligned Ministerial meetings in Cairo in June this year and in New York earlier this month.

In our previous statements on this agenda item, Malaysia consistently expressed the belief that this matter can best be settled between the two countries. At the same time, Malaysia acknowledges Cuba's right to appeal to the United Nations, particularly on an issue involving extraterritoriality, which impinges on the fundamental principles of international law and which runs counter to

a number of resolutions adopted over the years by this body.

We believe that making international law prevail must be the fundamental commitment of all nations. As Members of the United Nations, we are all obliged to support the fundamental principles of international law. Upholding the principles of international law and promoting peaceful and friendly relations between nations have been basic tenets in governing relations. Consistent with these tenets, Malaysia will vote in favour of the draft resolution before us.

**Mr. Mwakawago** (United Republic of Tanzania): I wish to express my delegation's sincere appreciation of the report of the Secretary-General contained in document A/49/398 of 20 September 1994, concerning agenda item 24, now being considered by the General Assembly.

Like last year's report, this one contains replies from Member States on the implementation of resolution 48/16 of 3 November 1993. The report is reassuring to the extent that, of the 38 replies reproduced in the report, not a single one records compliance with the contentious United States law that imposes an economic, commercial and financial embargo on Cuba and seeks to extend the application of domestic laws to third countries.

Regrettably, the call to all States to refrain from promulgating and applying laws and measures such as those imposed on Cuba continues to be flouted. Indeed, draft resolution A/49/L.9, now before the Assembly, affirms the concern that, since the adoption of resolutions 47/19 and 48/16, further measures aimed at strengthening and extending the embargo against Cuba have been promulgated and applied, with dire effects on the Cuban people.

Tanzania has consistently supported those resolutions because their overwhelming adoption by the Assembly attests to the international community's clear rejection of the embargo against Cuba and of any pressures exerted on third countries to withhold cooperation from that country.

We also maintain the view that the embargo is a violation of the provisions of Article 1 of the Charter of the United Nations — in particular, the provisions of paragraph 2, which stipulates that the fundamental purpose of the United Nations is the development of friendly relations among nations, based on respect for the principles of equal rights and the self-determination of peoples.

The changing post-cold-war era is replete with promises of improved understanding and cooperation. The

new environment calls on the community of nations to coexist in peace with mutual respect and full observance of international law. In this connection, Tanzania believes that embargoes, such as that imposed on Cuba, and the attendant extension of the application of national laws to third countries are not in keeping with the mood of the times and are at variance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

As many delegations have stressed in the course of this debate, amicable negotiations offer the only sensible way to resolve the differences between the United States and Cuba. Fortunately, Tanzania maintains salutary diplomatic and consular relations with both countries. Therefore, in full trust and friendship towards these neighbourly countries, we hope that they will put to full use their capacity to engage in meaningful dialogue for the mutual benefit of their peoples. Their recent encounter in New York to negotiate on immigration matters was as constructive as it was amply demonstrative of their latent energy to initiate negotiations leading to the lifting of the embargo and to improved relations.

In conclusion, Tanzania wishes to express the hope that the climate is ripe for the lifting, during the course of the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly, of the embargo imposed against Cuba more than 30 years ago. In this context, we support draft resolution A/49/L.9, as it provides further impetus towards good-neighbourliness between the United States and Cuba.

**Mr. Van Dunem "Mbinda"** (Angola): Allow me, Mr. President, to reiterate my delegation's appreciation of the way in which you are conducting the General Assembly's proceedings.

It is indeed a great honour for me to address the Assembly on this important agenda item, "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba". I do so in the hope that a comprehensive solution can be found.

At a time when the international community is encouraging the settlement of disputes between States by negotiation and other peaceful means it is unacceptable and senseless that unilateral measures, such as the economic blockade against Cuba, continue to be applied as a solution to internal problems and to settle bilateral differences. Recent developments in the Middle East, on the Korean peninsula and in Northern Ireland clearly

demonstrate that dialogue is preferable to any other course.

The blockade against Cuba violates — particularly because of its extraterritorial application — the principles of international law and the objectives enshrined in the United Nations Charter. Angola deplores the fact that, in spite of General Assembly resolutions 47/19 and 48/16, which urge that it be lifted, the embargo has, rather, been tightened, thus jeopardizing all United Nations efforts in this regard and giving rise to gravely deteriorating living conditions for the people of that sister country.

The embargo and its tightening, far from contributing to a solution of internal problems, will lead only to violence and to the loss of lives and property, and it will continue to affect mainly the people of that island — particularly children and women.

Angola is very encouraged by the quick and positive manner in which Cuba and the United States are conducting their bilateral talks on migration issues, which led to the conclusion of the Agreement signed in New York last September. We strongly believe that if the same determination is applied to solving the outstanding issues concerning the two countries — in particular, the question of the economic blockade — the tension in the relations between them will soon be alleviated. Therefore, we strongly appeal to both countries to enter into dialogue so that these last remaining consequences of the cold war may be completely eradicated.

As in previous years, my country will vote in favour of the draft resolution.

**The President** (*interpretation from French*): Having heard the last speaker in the debate on this item, we shall proceed to consider draft resolution A/49/L.9.

I shall now call on those representatives who wish to explain their votes before the voting. May I first remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

**Mr. Marrero** (United States of America): The United States notes that the question before us today is a bilateral issue. The United States, like any other nation, has the sovereign right to determine its bilateral relationships, including its trading partners.

The goal of United States policy is, through the careful application of sanctions directed at the Cuban régime, to promote a peaceful transition to democracy.

We have made it clear, on many occasions, that reviewing our embargo depends upon whether the Cuban régime moves towards democracy and observes international norms regarding human rights. Our response will be calibrated to reforms in Cuba.

The human rights situation in Cuba remains grim; it has not improved. Concerted suppression of all dissent and the absence of many fundamental human freedoms still prevail. If anything, the situation has worsened in recent months as the Government has cracked down on dissidents and human rights activists following a major expression of anti-Government feeling in Havana in August. The recent massive seaborne exodus from Cuba, in which thousands risked their lives, showed how little hope Cubans have for a better life and future under the current régime.

Therefore, the United States maintains the embargo in order to keep pressure on the Castro régime to establish freedom and democracy, because Americans oppose the repression of their Cuban friends by a dictatorial régime - the last one in this hemisphere.

The Cuban leadership often cites the embargo as the reason for Cuba's increasing economic troubles. The real problem, however, lies with the failed economic policies of the régime. Its economic control has failed to generate the foreign exchange to purchase imported goods sufficient to meet the import needs of the Cuban people.

What is sorely missing in the inappropriate resolution before the General Assembly is mention of the need

“for a peaceful transition to a democratic and pluralistic system which respects human rights and freedom of opinion”,

as stated in the Rio Group's declaration of September this year.

Cuba has trumpeted similar General Assembly resolutions as triumphs for its dictatorial actions, while concealing from the Cuban people other calls of international organizations for democratic reform and human rights in Cuba. The General Assembly should not appear to condone the abuses of a repressive régime.

We recognize that the people of Cuba must determine the future that they want for their nation. However, for 35 years they have been denied the right to choose their own representatives, to voice their opinions without fear of reprisal, to meet or to organize freely.

The United States embargo is our way of signalling continuing strong disapproval of the Cuban regime's intransigence - its unwillingness to move towards democracy or to respect the human rights of the Cuban people. A vote against the resolution before us will reinforce that signal. We ask that this body not support another message to the Cuban people that this body endorses their repression. The United States will not send such a message, and therefore will not vote for this resolution.

**Mr. Zhaoxing** (China) (*interpretation from the Chinese*): In its resolutions 47/19 and 48/16, the General Assembly reiterated such principles as equality of national sovereignty, non-intervention and non-interference in the internal affairs of another country, and called on all countries to fulfil their obligations under the United Nations Charter and to abide by international law and the international freedoms of navigation and trade. This has reflected the just aspiration of the international community.

Regrettably, the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba, which has lasted for more than three decades, still exists, causing enormous difficulties for Cuba's economy and great suffering for its people and even leading to a huge exodus of Cuban refugees and instability earlier this year. This cannot but draw grave concern from the international community.

It is the consistent position of the Chinese Government that the right of people in all countries to choose their own social systems and that their paths of development should be respected. We oppose the interference in the internal affairs of other countries through resort to an economic embargo and other methods of power politics.

Since the end of the cold war, there has been an international trend, in both bilateral and multilateral

diplomacy, towards resolving State-to-State disputes and differences through negotiation and dialogue rather than through sanctions and confrontation. We hope that the country concerned will give up its policy and practice of imposing pressure and embargoes on other sovereign States on the basis of its own domestic law, and will act in the spirit of the United Nations Charter and in line with the norms of international law and the relevant General Assembly resolutions by resolving its dispute with Cuba through negotiation and dialogue.

In view of those considerations, the delegation of China will vote in favour of draft resolution A/48/L.9.

**Mr. Henze** (Germany): I am speaking on behalf of the European Union in explanation of vote on draft resolution A/49/L.9. Austria, Finland, Norway and Sweden also support this statement.

The European Union strongly favours a peaceful transition to democracy and a market economy in Cuba. We are concerned about the negative effects of the embargo on the situation of the Cuban population. However, this is not the main reason for the difficult situation in Cuba. Because of its choices in economics and politics, the Cuban Government is largely responsible for the deterioration of the situation in the country.

The European Union condemns the repeated violations of human rights in Cuba, in particular in the political field.

The Cuban Government has embarked on a process of limited economic reform that will we hope pave the way towards a more comprehensive plan to move to a market economy. In the political field, the Cuban Government retains a firm monopoly on political power. Additional efforts to promote dialogue and cooperation at all levels are required to allow for the necessary evolution towards democracy and pluralism, as elsewhere in Latin America.

The opposition of the European Union to any extraterritorial application of national legislation is well known. We have always rejected the United States actions aimed at involving third States in the application of commercial measures that fall exclusively within the foreign or security policy of the United States. Accordingly, we have opposed United States legislative initiatives, including the Cuban Democracy Act, designed to tighten further the unilateral trade embargo against Cuba by the extraterritorial application of United States

jurisdiction. We believe that such measures violate the general principles of international law and the sovereignty of independent States.

The European Union cannot accept the United States unilateral determination and restriction of European Union economic and commercial relations with any foreign nation.

The European Union believes that the United States trade embargo against Cuba is primarily a matter that has to be resolved bilaterally between the Government of the United States and the Government of Cuba. The member States of the European Union, as well as Austria, Finland, Norway and Sweden, will have these concerns in mind when voting on the draft resolution before us.

**Mr. Kudriavtsev** (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): The Russian Federation intends to vote in favour of the draft resolution on ending the economic embargo against Cuba, contained in document A/49/L.9, since we can agree neither with the unilateral actions undertaken in violation of time-honoured norms of international law, nor with the practice of extending the domestic jurisdiction of States beyond the confines of their own territory, which does harm to third countries.

Russia believes that the unilateral measures taken under the commercial and financial blockade of Cuba, not only do not promote more openness in Cuban society, but on the contrary impede democratic transformations and economic reforms in that country, and hamper Cuba's fuller integration into international and Latin American economic structures. The continuation of this approach is consonant neither with the positive signs that have appeared recently pointing to the start of economic reforms in Cuba, nor with the decision by Havana to accede to the Treaty of Tlatelolco, nor with the invitation made to Cuba by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. But of course this does not denote any change in our position of principle with regard to the guaranteeing of human rights.

The Russian delegation believes that a mutually-acceptable solution to the economic blockade of Cuba should be sought primarily through constructive dialogue between the United States and Cuba, with the aim of normalizing relations between them. In this connection, we welcome the negotiating process, which has recently been expanded between the two countries.

As far as Russia is concerned, we continue to support normal commercial relations with Cuba on the basis of

mutual advantage, and in strict compliance with generally accepted principles of sovereign equality of States, non-interference in their internal affairs and freedom of trade.

**The President** (*interpretation from French*): We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote before the vote.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/49/L.9. A recorded vote has been requested.

*A recorded vote was taken.*

*In favour:* Afghanistan, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Cuba, Cyprus, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Ghana, Greece, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Mali, Mauritania, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Myanmar, Namibia, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, Seychelles, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Uganda, Ukraine, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zaire, Zambia, Zimbabwe

*Against:* Israel, United States of America

*Abstaining:* Albania, Argentina, Armenia, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Côte d'Ivoire, Czech Republic, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Fiji, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Guatemala, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Maldives, Malta, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Morocco, Nepal, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Rwanda, San Marino, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Swaziland, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Vanuatu

*Draft resolution A/49/L.9 was adopted by 101 votes to 2, with 48 abstentions (resolution 49/9)\*.*

**The President** (*interpretation from French*): I shall now call on those representatives who wish to explain their votes. I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

**Mr. Fukushima** (Japan): I have asked to speak to put on record the position of Japan in abstaining in the vote on draft resolution A/49/L.9.

As indicated last year and the year before, Japan has some doubts as to whether a discussion at the United Nations General Assembly can actually be conducive to resolving, in a constructive way, the question of the United States embargo against Cuba.

This question is very complex in nature. Japan wonders if the resolution that has just been adopted can in fact properly address such complexity. If not, the question will remain unsettled until a better way is found to achieve an appropriate solution.

**Mr. Motsyk** (Ukraine) (*interpretation from Russian*): The delegation of Ukraine voted in favour of the draft resolution which has just been adopted by the General Assembly. In so doing, the delegation of Ukraine believes that the adoption and application by States Members of the United Nations of legislation of an extraterritorial nature, in particular an economic embargo, can adversely affect the sovereignty and legitimate interests of other States, as well as freedom of trade and navigation.

In our view such measures run counter to the generally recognized principles of international law. We believe that only those sanctions that have been duly imposed by the international community on the basis of decisions taken by the United Nations deserve international support.

Ukraine will not accept the use of economic measures as a means to attain any political goals and believes that relations between States should be established in full compliance with the basic principles of the United Nations Charter and the norms of international law.

Ukraine, having voted in favour of the draft resolution, hopes that there will be a speedy settlement of this protracted conflict in the relationship between two States — a conflict that dates back to a period of confrontation

during the cold war — by means of establishing an open dialogue based on mutual trust and sovereign equality.

**Mr. Hayes** (Ireland): The representative of Germany gave an explanation of vote on behalf of the European Union, of which Ireland is a member, and on behalf of Austria, Finland, Norway and Sweden. My delegation fully endorses that explanation.

Ireland abstained in the vote on the resolution. That does not mean that Ireland supports a continuation of the measures with which the resolution deals. On the contrary, the Irish Government agrees with the call to all States to refrain from promulgating and applying laws and measures of the kind referred to in the resolution. We further believe, in the light of the great changes that have taken place in recent years in international affairs, that States that apply such laws and measures should consider urgently their repeal.

The question that arises in relation to the United States and Cuba is how best to encourage development in this direction and whether the adoption of the resolution at this time is the best way to achieve that aim.

In this respect the Irish Government has been greatly heartened by the recent talks between the Governments of the two countries. We want to encourage that process and allow it time to develop. The resolution which has just been adopted, envisages a review of the issue at next year's session of the General Assembly. We sincerely hope that before then the embargo will be lifted and that the conditions can be created to enable the relations between the United States and Cuba to be normalized.

Ireland's concerns in relation to human rights in Cuba and to the extraterritorial application of national legislation were set out in the explanation of vote delivered by the representative of Germany, to which I have already referred.

**Mr. Karsgaard** (Canada): After careful consideration, Canada supported the resolution we have just adopted.

I would underline that Canada's primary concern with the embargo is its extraterritorial reach, the way in which the laws and regulations governing the embargo seek to constrain the freedom of trade of third countries such as Canada. Canada has always taken a vigorous stand against such measures and in 1992 issued a

blocking order to ensure that Canadian companies were not subjected to foreign laws on trade with Cuba.

I also wish to stress that our vote on this resolution does not imply that the embargo should be blamed for all the difficulties Cuba currently faces. In our view, reform in Cuba is necessary. Last June, the Canadian Government made a number of adjustments in its policy towards Cuba which were intended to assist Cubans in need at the grass-roots level, and to enhance our ability to support economic and political reform in Cuba. I would mention in particular our continuing concerns over the state of human rights and democratic development in Cuba. We will continue, both bilaterally and in the forums offered by the United Nations, to press for improvement in these areas.

At the same time, we believe that in this post-cold-war world, the international community should engage with Cuba, not isolate it, in order to achieve our goals.

**Mr. McKinnon** (New Zealand): New Zealand has voted in favour of the resolution contained in document A/49/L.9. We did however cast this vote with some reservations.

We voted in favour because there is an important underlying principle at stake with direct implications for economic and trading interests. We consider that all countries must be able to go about their ordinary economic, commercial, financial and trading business free from the extraterritorial reach of legislation imposed unilaterally by third countries.

We would have preferred, however, a resolution on this subject to have been solely concerned with this principle. It is with regret therefore that we note that the resolution continues to contain certain extraneous material unrelated to concerns about the extraterritorial reach of legislation and that it also draws selectively on principles contained in the Charter. We also regret that this year's text is once again aimed at institutionalizing this matter in the United Nations.

Equally, we wish to emphasize that our vote is not to be interpreted in any way as support for the policies or practices of Cuba. Our action in casting a positive vote for this resolution is due to our concern over the principle at stake.

**Mrs. Klein-Loemban Tobing** (Suriname): The delegation of Suriname voted this year in favour of the

resolution on the necessity of ending the embargo against Cuba.

The decision to vote in favour was prompted by the positive trend prevailing in the world today, which is supported by the United Nations and subscribed to by the Government of Suriname, to solve problems through dialogue, cooperation and understanding.

Suriname has always supported the promotion of friendly and progressive relations among peoples and the non-use of coercive measures in relations among States.

At the same time, however, my delegation continues to be concerned about the fact that not every country in the Latin American and Caribbean region has a democratically elected Government in conformity with the trend which has developed in recent years in this region.

The Surinamese delegation strongly supports efforts by the international community with a view to the restoration of democracy and the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the entire Latin American and Caribbean region.

**Nr. Nieto** (Argentina) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Argentina has once again abstained in the vote on the resolution just adopted because we believe that this text presents a problem of a bilateral nature between two States with which we have deep relations of friendship.

Argentina trusts that the Cuban people can look forward to a future of freedom through a peaceful transition to a democratic and pluralistic regime. Likewise, we are sure that in the course of the talks between the two countries that were resumed earlier this week they will be able to take up those issues that they believe deserve urgent treatment.

**Mr. Tejera-Paris** (Venezuela) (*interpretation from Spanish*): In recent years, the international system has made substantial strides towards peace and a healthier climate of trade through dialogue and direct negotiation. We all agree on the need to encourage those initiatives and to promote a climate of confidence and friendship among States in every sphere providing for full compliance with the United Nations Charter, the rules of international law and the international legal instruments. It was precisely in support of those aims that we have voted in favour of the resolution.

We believe that the result of the voting is exclusively a confirmation of those principles, not as a parliamentary failure or success.

The problems besetting mankind need to be resolved through a strengthening of international cooperation and agreement and not through any military, political or economic coercion or any other form of pressure that undermines the independence and sovereignty of peoples.

We therefore believe that the imposition of unilateral economic measures represents an obstacle to free participation in economic relations between nations and that it is incompatible with our aspirations to establish a socially and economically just international order.

The vestiges that still remain of interventionist policies are not limited to impositions by one executive on another executive. The two other classic branches of government also at times embark upon such initiatives and we should therefore recall that legislations can have an effect outside of borders only when treaties have been signed.

We believe that the adoption of measures of this nature by one State against another for political reasons does not contribute to resolving the differences between them. As we have witnessed in many situations, they rather stimulate confrontation and result in suffering among the population without generating changes in the regimes against which they are imposed. They generate a natural nationalistic reaction, a reaction which tends to hamper a healthy return to democracy and to greater respect for human rights.

On the other hand, the new, emerging atmosphere of understanding and cooperation presents an extraordinary opportunity to leave behind the sequels of ideological confrontation. We therefore share the idea of promoting a positive atmosphere in which to resolve all problems deriving from confrontations that persist in our continent.

In Rio de Janeiro, our President, Mr. Rafael Caldera, recently stated the following:

“We hope that the United States of America and the Republic of Cuba will make peace with each other, along the lines established by international law and in keeping with the concord that is now being practised by civilized countries. A cessation of the blockade imposed upon the Cubans would be one direct and immediate consequence of such a decision, and based upon it a new phase of discussion could begin to

resolve the other pending issues that may exist between the two countries.”

**Mr. Gervais** (Côte d'Ivoire) (*interpretation from French*): Côte d'Ivoire has abstained once again in the vote on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba. My delegation's abstention in no way reflects a wish to see extended the tragedy of the Cuban people, which has for so many years been subjected to the economic and social difficulties generated by the blockade, but is predicated upon its belief in avoiding any impediment to the ongoing process that Côte d'Ivoire has always advocated - namely, the bilateral talks finally embarked upon by the United States and Cuba.

Côte d'Ivoire welcomes the establishment of this dialogue and hopes that it will continue and be speedily completed, in order to put an end to the unfair blockade of which the Cuban people is the unfortunate victim and which runs counter to the principles of our Charter.

**Mr. Mwaungulu** (Malawi): In past votes on similar draft resolutions, the Malawian delegation abstained. That did not mean that Malawi supported the economic embargo against Cuba or, indeed, that it opposed the draft resolutions.

However, the Malawian delegation has now voted in favour of the adoption of draft resolution A/49/L.9, on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba. In doing so, the Malawian delegation is of the firm conviction that this matter is long overdue and should be resolved, thereby ending the unnecessary suffering it is imposing on the innocent Cuban people. The best, proven format for resolving the outstanding problems that exist between Cuba and its bigger and most powerful neighbour, the United States, is the process of bilateral discussions. This process is, in fact, already in motion, albeit on one issue only, and it should be expanded and intensified.

The Malawian delegation strongly believes that all impediments to a productive dialogue between Cuba and the United States should be removed. Only then can an atmosphere conducive to its success be established. The removal of the existing economic, commercial and financial embargo by the United States against Cuba would be a positive step in this direction.

**The President** (*interpretation from French*): We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote.



May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 24?

*It was so decided.*

## **Programme of work**

**The President** (*interpretation from French*): Before taking up the next item, I should like to announce that the General Committee will meet on Friday, 28 October, at 9.30 a.m. in Conference Room 3, in order to consider a request for the inclusion of an additional sub-item submitted by Rwanda and contained in document A/49/233 and a request for the inclusion of an additional item submitted by a number of countries and contained in document A/49/234.

I should also like to draw the attention of representatives to document A/49/452, containing a letter addressed to me by the Chairman of the Fifth Committee concerning the proposed revisions to the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997, and to document A/49/6 containing programme 6 of the medium-term plan concerning the elimination of apartheid.

Members will recall that at the 16th plenary meeting, held on 4 October 1994, I requested delegations to submit, in writing, their views on the programme, for transmittal to the Chairman of the Fifth Committee.

I should like to inform members that we have received no replies to date. I shall therefore send a letter to the Chairman of the Fifth Committee informing him accordingly.

## **Agenda item 22 (*continued*)**

### **Assistance in mine clearance**

#### **Report of the Secretary-General (A/49/357 and Add.1)**

#### **Draft resolution (A/49/L.8)**

#### **Amendment (A/49/L.11)**

**Prince Sisowath Sirirath** (Cambodia): Mr. President, on 30 September 1994, my Government, expressed its warm congratulations to you on your assumption of the presidency of the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session. Allow me, as your friend and colleague who

has had the honour and privilege of working closely with you for many years, to pay homage to you personally from this rostrum and to wish you every success in the professional manner in which you are guiding the Assembly.

A little more than a year has passed since Cambodia held free and fair elections under the supervision of the United Nations. The outcome brought about a democratically elected Parliament and Government. Although Cambodia is now looked upon by the world as a country that enjoys peace and harmony, its countryside is still heavily infested with land-mines, and the need to clear them is becoming ever more urgent.

The Kingdom of Cambodia attaches great importance to the problem of land-mines. That is why my delegation is very pleased to be a sponsor of draft resolution A/49/L.8, "Assistance in mine clearance", which was introduced before the Assembly by my colleague the Permanent Representative of Germany, on behalf of the European Union.

Cambodia, a country ravaged by war for more than 20 years, appreciates the initiative taken on this land-mine problem by the European Union. My delegation notes with great satisfaction the report of the Secretary-General in document A/49/357, entitled "Assistance in mine clearance".

So much has been written about Cambodia during the past two decades - about its war, occupation, poverty and refugees - though very little has been based on first-hand observation of the horror of land-mines, and so much happened prior to that which has been forgotten or remains confused and obscure, that the average citizen in my country has every reason to be puzzled and frightened.

Mines in Cambodia have been laid over a period of more than two decades by all parties and countries involved in the country's conflict. It is difficult for any Cambodian to think about his or her country without an almost constant sense of revived sadness and guilt, not only for the war which ravaged their land and the vast loss of life and tremendous destruction it caused, but also for the decline and degradation of the arable lands themselves — due to a high increase in injuries caused by land-mines among agricultural workers. These deadly devices limit Cambodia's ability to meet its own food requirements and to expand its productive base, and they are a constant and serious threat. They continue to create

more than 300 amputees per month, soldiers and non-combatants alike - more than any other weapon.

Deeply concerned about the dangerous situation facing Cambodia today, His Majesty King Norodom Sihanouk has on several occasions made his position on this issue very clear by severely condemning the use of land-mines. His Majesty has called upon the countries of the world to halt the production of land-mines and to destroy all those that are still being stockpiled. Our King highly appreciated the actions of those concerned countries that have declared moratoriums on the export, transfer or sale of anti-personnel land-mines and related devices. His Majesty has also called upon the Cambodian National Assembly to pass legislation banning these deadly devices in Cambodia forever.

Hence, my Government welcomed President Clinton's address to this body on 26 September, in which he proposed the first step towards the eventual elimination of the world's 85-or-so million anti-personnel land-mines. Cambodia, a country that possesses 8 to 10 million mines on its soil, supports the United States President's call to join him in concluding an agreement to reduce the number and availability of those mines. This is indeed welcome news because, as we know, land-mines, unlike chemical and biological weapons, have never been banned. They not only are durable and effective, but are readily available from the countries that make them and the vast global network of private arms dealers. All sorts of mines are also easy and relatively cheap to produce locally or elsewhere. The land-mine has become a weapon of choice for many armies and resistance freedom-fighters around the world.

Mines along Cambodia's roughly 700-kilometre border with Thailand are so widespread that non-governmental organizations now rank them the country's third most serious public-health hazard, after malaria and tuberculosis. Long before the creation of the Cambodian Mine-Action Centre — which is actually the Cambodian successor programme to the programme created under the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) — Cambodian villagers had no way of knowing where mines were laid except when they were told by soldiers or those living around previous battle zones that there was a heavy concentration of mines around military bases, water sources and abandoned villages. Previously, no mapping or recording of mines or mine incidents had been done. Local people and agricultural workers were aware of mines, but they nevertheless continued to be killed and maimed by them.

During the United Nations transitional period in Cambodia, the Security Council mandated UNTAC to carry out programmes of mine awareness, mine marking and mine clearing and training in mine clearance. Following UNTAC's successful presence in Cambodia, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) was designated in November 1993 to undertake a support and capacity-building role for the Cambodian Mine-Action Centre, with the backing of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs. UNDP immediately began its technical assistance and capacity-building programme in Cambodia. It supported the maintenance of the Cambodian Mine-Action Centre's four principal areas of de-mining responsibilities over a two-year period while at the same time moving towards full Cambodian operation.

In Cambodia, it is estimated that mines are scattered in an area of 3,200 square kilometres of mostly agricultural and resettlement areas. A general mine survey was recently conducted by the Cambodian Mine-Action Centre under the UNTAC mandate, covering 80 per cent of the country. It produced the following results: 1,851 minefields have been registered in the database; over 352,000 metres of minefield perimeters have been marked; over 8 million square kilometres of area have been cleared; and over 20,000 anti-personnel mines, 132 anti-tank mines and 132,000 unexploded ordnance devices have been destroyed. About 30 per cent of the population at risk has received mine-awareness training through the Cambodian Mine-Action Centre and other United Nations bodies and non-governmental organizations.

My Government is pleased with the result of the work done by UNDP and various other international organizations, as well as foreign Governments, in close cooperation with the Cambodian Mine Action Centre, on the problems of land-mines. The mine-clearance training unit has trained some 2,332 Cambodians as de-miners and 99 as supervisors. Today, there are some 1,900 trained de-miners active in Cambodia, with 1,400 directly working for the Cambodian Mine-Action Centre.

The Royal Government of Cambodia wishes to express its profound thanks and appreciation for the tireless efforts and dangerous work done every day by the staff of La Compagnie française d'assistance spécialisée, Norwegian People's Aid, the International Labour Organisation, the Halo Trust, the European Union, Fondation Pro Victimis, United Kingdom ODA, and the United States State Department.

Mine clearance is indeed very expensive. It is estimated at present that more than \$18 million will be spent in Cambodia within a two-year period, of which \$9.1 million have already been received for the year 1994 from the following donors: Australia, Canada, Denmark, Japan, the Netherlands, New Zealand, the United States of America and the United Kingdom. The United States has provided an additional \$1.6 million for de-mining equipment, over 90 experts in the field of de-mining, and road and bridge engineers under a separate arrangement with the Cambodian Government. The Government of Sweden has pledged \$2.3 million. Belgium and Norway have provided personnel, along with the countries I have just cited, as part of a technical advisory group.

Though I am informing the Assembly today of this positive result in de-mining, last week the Khmer Rouge group once again laid mines in Siem Reap Province, causing the deaths of two Cambodian de-miners working for La Compagnie française d'assistance spécialisée. The Khmer Rouge radio on Wednesday, 12 October 1994, openly boasted about its fighters' laying 100 new land-mines between 1 and 3 October along Route 10, which runs south from Battambang City. This is a serious threat to the well-being of the people.

But the will of the Cambodian people is strong. They continue to work hard for the development and rehabilitation of their country and allow no Khmer Rouge intimidation to frighten them away. Despite the on-and-off harassment of the destructive Khmer Rouge group, the situation in Cambodia is improving from day to day. I express thanks to the General Assembly for this.

**Mr. F. A. Khan** (Pakistan): We are greatly heartened to see that the issue of uncleared land-mines has seized the attention of the international community and is being discussed with the seriousness it deserves.

This issue was considered for the first time in last year's session of the General Assembly. There has been some forward movement since then in dealing with this issue. We are now more aware of the magnitude of the problems posed by uncleared land-mines and the obstacles in the way of removing these mines. Some steps have already been taken to overcome these obstacles, and there is increasing understanding of the further measures that need to be taken.

The facts on the indiscriminate use of land-mines make for grim reading. Over 110 million land-mines are spread over many parts of the world. More than 800

people, mostly innocent civilians, are killed every month by such mines. Food production in areas infested with land-mines has gone down dramatically. The physical infrastructure of many countries — roads, power lines, irrigation systems — has been gravely affected.

These facts are not mere abstractions for us in Pakistan. We have experienced firsthand the ravages of indiscriminate land-mine use. Thousands of Afghan refugees injured by these mines have been treated in our medical facilities. We are providing rehabilitation treatment to many who have been maimed for life. We also continue to host a huge number of refugees, many of whom are unable to return to Afghanistan because of the dangers posed by uncleared mines. The line of control in Jammu and Kashmir has also been heavily mined, contrary to the 1949 Karachi cease-fire agreement. This has created a great human tragedy.

The steps needed for successful mine clearance become clear with the identification of the impediments in the way of the removal of land-mines. The main impediments are: the woefully limited mine-clearance capacity of most States faced with this problem, lack of coordination among various agencies involved in mine-clearance efforts, rudimentary mine-detection and mine-clearance technology and, above all, the abysmal level of funding for mine clearance.

*Mr. Yassin (Sudan), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

We are happy to note that some of the required steps for effective mine clearance are already being taken. United Nations agencies are focusing on enhancing the capacity of States to undertake mine-clearance activities. Where the States are not in a position to take on this task, even with outside assistance, the non-governmental organizations have correctly been encouraged to participate. There are also increasing moves to coordinate and integrate efforts where multiple actors — non-governmental organizations, State authorities and United Nations agencies — are involved in mine-clearance activities. The designation within the United Nations of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs as the focal point for such activities will further help in integrating United Nations efforts and in increasing coordination with other organizations in the field.

While the organizational aspects of mine-clearance activities are being addressed, there is not enough emphasis on upgrading mine-clearance and detection technology. It is not correct to say that the technical

problems in the way of speedy and effective detection and destruction of mines are insurmountable. In fact, the Secretary-General's report on "Assistance in mine clearance" reveals that the technology to create a multi-sensor mine detector already exists; only the engineering and software programming would be required. Nevertheless, the level and volume of research remains "too low and lacking in practicality" (A/49/357, *para. 10*). This is one area where further efforts could yield significant results.

The crucial area on which the ultimate success of mine-clearance activities depends is the provision of adequate funding. A useful start is being made by the establishment of a voluntary trust fund for assistance in mine clearance. Two aspects of the fund need attention.

First, where should the major contributions come from? This, in turn, raises the larger question of who bears the responsibility for the removal of land-mines. We are of the view that those who lay the land-mines must primarily bear the responsibility for their clearance. Parties that have wreaked havoc by indiscriminately spreading mines must not be allowed to walk away from the scene of the carnage. They should be made to pay for what they have wrought.

The other aspect of the fund that needs to be considered is the manner in which it will be administered and utilized. This issue will arise when the terms of reference of the fund are drawn up. We would suggest that, in addition to financing information and training programmes relating to mine clearance, the fund should be used to advance mine-clearance and mine-detection technology. This could be done by providing seed money for initiating research activities and by arranging workshops that bring together the results of research already being undertaken by different groups working in this field.

The question of the clearance of land-mines that have already been laid needs to be distinguished from the issue of controlling the use of new land-mines. At one level these are undoubtedly related issues. If the use of land-mines is not controlled, the task of mine clearance becomes almost impossible. But the control of the use of land-mines raises issues that lie in the realm of arms control and disarmament. These issues will quite correctly be dealt with in the First Committee.

Our delegation will actively participate in the First Committee deliberations on these issues. We shall be doing so with the objective of contributing to the evolution of a comprehensive set of measures that will both control the use of land-mines and help in their speedy clearance.

**Mr. Ghebremariam** (Eritrea): Three years ago Eritrea emerged victorious from a devastating 30-year war of liberation. The war has ended, but the effects of war continue to haunt us. Among the major problems emerging as a direct byproduct of war is that of land-mines. The continued presence of more than 700,000 mines throughout Eritrea — but particularly near farms, water wells, irrigation systems, transport systems, bridges and other facilities — has become a major threat to the reconstruction, rehabilitation and development of the country. It has also been a major impediment to the resettlement of the large numbers of Eritrean refugees and displaced persons.

It is not easy to give the exact number of mines that were planted during 30 years of war. It is estimated — and the estimate itself may be misleading — that no less than 1 million anti-personnel mines may have been planted. That is too many in a small country like Eritrea. To date, Government experts have cleared about 300,000, but much remains to be done. This is evident from the almost daily land-mine accidents that are reported. Statistics show that there are about 750 deaths annually.

This has made the return to normal life extremely difficult, since it has been made impossible to live in whole regions in certain provinces. In areas where settlement has been attempted, livestock are being lost, and children, women and farmers are being crippled or killed. This, I must repeat, is making the resettlement of refugees and displaced persons difficult. It also has a grave psychological impact on the population.

Land-mines are spread all over the country, although there is a high concentration in only six of our nine provinces and around strategic towns and sites.

As mentioned earlier, the Government of Eritrea, during the three years since liberation, has been doing whatever it can with the means at its disposal, but it recognizes its severe limitations. Its major needs are technical and financial, particularly in the areas of training, surveying, mine-clearing equipment, medical equipment, experienced medical personnel and adequate supplies of artificial limbs.

I wish finally to refer to the Secretary-General's report to the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session on the work of the Organization, in which he wrote that

"Of all the tasks involved in setting a nation on a new road to peace and prosperity, perhaps none

has the immediate urgency of mine clearance. ... [No] attempt to restore a sense of community and security can succeed without effective land-mine removal". (A/48/I, para.459)

It is for this reason that my Government appeals for assistance in clearing these instruments of war, which continue to wreak havoc long after the war has ended.

**Mr. Bunnag** (Thailand): On behalf of the Thai delegation, I would like to congratulate the Secretary-General and his staff for the very informative report on assistance in mine clearance. This report is a grim reminder of the nature of land-mines and their effects on the victims and their societies. The report contains good advice to be taken into serious consideration whenever any country or anyone else wishes to buy, sell, produce or plant land-mines.

When a draft resolution on assistance in mine clearance was first introduced by the European Union at the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly, last year, Thailand not only supported but also joined in sponsoring it, and we would not hesitate to do so again. For Thailand fully realizes that land-mines and other similar destructive devices constitute a terrible threat to the safety, health and lives of the military as well as civilian populations, including personnel participating in humanitarian, peace-keeping, peace-building, rehabilitation and reconstruction operations. We appreciate the magnitude of the problem and have tried our utmost to assist others in the matter.

The problem caused by land-mines and their after-effects cannot be overstated. Engineered to be deadly for decades, uncleared land-mines, unlike other types of weapons, remain lethal long after a conflict has ceased. Designed to kill, to injure, to impede movement, and to sow uncertainty and chaos during time of combat, land-mines continue to fulfil their destructive purposes until they are found and destroyed. They do not differentiate between military and civilian, tanks and tractors, combatants and children.

It is devastating to learn from the report that the number of mines being laid each year outweighs the number of such mines that can be cleared during the same period. About 2 million new land-mines are being laid each year, while only 100,000 were cleared last year, at a cost of \$70 million to the international community. This means that every three-dollar land-mine that is planted will cost between \$300 and \$1,000 to clear. There are approximately

110 million land-mines currently planted in 64 countries in various parts of the world. It will be an extremely costly operation to destroy them all — not only in terms of money and effort, but possibly in terms of lives as well, not to mention the suffering they continue to wreak. At present there are about a quarter of a million amputee mine victims needing care. Many more lives have been lost. The overall number of victims is expected to increase by around 10,000 a year. Nor are the victims the only ones to have to bear the suffering. The families of the victims suffer just as much. This has far-reaching negative effects on the societies of which these victims are members.

When many of us were celebrating the conclusion of the Paris Peace Accords on Cambodia and when the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia was being formed, three years ago almost to the day, Thailand served the international community by immediately dispatching two battalions of Royal Thai Army Engineers into Cambodia, under bilateral agreement and also under United Nations auspices, to undertake mine clearance and road rehabilitation. Their service has helped to open up access and to clear the land to enable some 300,000 Khmer refugees to go back home.

At present we are considering the request of the Cambodian Mine Action Centre to provide further assistance in training. The Centre also requested 30 trained mine-clearing dogs as well as six trainers. The cost of this latest assistance will probably be borne by the Royal Thai Government under our allocation for the economic and technical assistance programme for Cambodia, which totals 30 to 40 million baht this year. In this connection, we are gratified to note that a United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for mine clearance is being established. This will help expedite mine clearance worldwide, and those with smaller resources can also benefit.

With regard to the draft resolution before us, my delegation shares its deep concern at the tremendous humanitarian problems caused by the presence of mines and other unexploded devices that have serious and lasting social and economic consequences for the people of mine-infested countries. These humanitarian problems constitute obstacles to the safe return of refugees and displaced persons, to humanitarian-aid operations and to reconstruction and economic development, as well as to the restoration of normalcy.

With regard to the draft resolution to be considered by the Assembly, my delegation is convinced that it deserves our full support. In addition, we also believe the provisions contained therein should be translated into tangible results. We would like to urge all States, therefore, to strengthen restrictions on the use of anti-personnel land-mines with a view to their total elimination; to render assistance to the victims, their families, and their societies; to share all information of mine locations for mine clearance as well as other educational information regarding land-mines; to help in personnel training in mine-clearing and, lastly, to contribute generously to the Voluntary Trust Fund.

Thailand attaches great importance to the role of the United Nations in mine-clearance activities. For this reason, Thailand welcomes the appointment by the Secretary-General of a de-mining expert with an overall coordinating role between the Departments of Humanitarian Affairs and Peace-keeping Operations. This will complement the establishment of the Voluntary Trust Fund by gathering and disseminating information, setting up training programmes relating to mine clearance and facilitating the launching of mine-clearance operations.

We would therefore like to urge all Member States, regional organizations, governmental and non-governmental organizations and foundations to consider rendering full cooperation to the Secretary-General and the United Nations Departments concerned in mine-clearance activities as mandated by the General Assembly. These activities are an important step for the international community in assisting nations to rid themselves of this barbaric scourge that continues to plague our planet.

**Mr. Elaraby** (Egypt): My delegation welcomes the consideration by the General Assembly of the issue of assistance in mine clearance for the second consecutive year and hopes that our affirmation of the importance of this issue will be the catalyst for concerted action by the international community to eliminate this scourge.

As the report of the Secretary-General attests, the nature and scope of the problem are grim indeed. He reminds us that there are over 110 million mines left in the aftermath of the conflicts in 64 countries and that they continue to claim 800 victims every month. Many of these mines predate 1945. Some of them are in the western sector of my own country. As if this were not enough, the combined efforts of the international community were capable last year of removing only a fraction of this vast number of indiscriminately laid mines.

Moreover, it is often those in the most-disadvantaged sectors of the population who run the greatest risk of being wounded, killed, maimed or permanently disfigured by mines. The intense suffering inflicted upon the very high numbers of innocent victims of mines, primarily among the civilian population, is an affront to the conscience of mankind.

The broad parameters of this problem, which must be confronted by the United Nations, its agencies, its Member States and non-governmental organizations, necessitates an encompassing and comprehensive approach to achieve the requisite coordination and address the operational, financial and legal aspects of this issue.

Egypt welcomes the designation of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs as the focal point within the United Nations responsible for coordinating de-mining activities and the creation of a mine action unit within the same Department. The inclusion of mine clearance in the mandates of some peace-keeping operations is a welcome step which should be taken further to emphasize de-mining efforts in the terms of reference of all relevant peace-keeping operations.

The United Nations, its agencies and Member States can also contribute in setting up institutional mechanisms for the exchange of information and expertise as well as the training of personnel in mine-clearance techniques and conducting joint mine-clearance efforts with regional and national authorities.

The establishment of a Voluntary Trust Fund to finance information and training programmes relating to mine clearance is an important step forward, but it will not be sufficient in itself to meet the cost of removing the over 100 million mines laid throughout the world. We urge all Governments to contribute to the Fund while stressing the responsibility of those who have laid the land-mines for their clearance.

Egypt is a signatory of the 1981 inhumane weapons Convention. We welcome the work of the Group of Experts preparing for the review of that Convention and hope that those efforts will ultimately contribute to strengthening existing humanitarian laws against the indiscriminate use of land-mines.

Finally, it is important to note that de-mining is not a panacea for the global problem of uncleared mines. Universal regulation of the use, transfer and ultimately the production of land-mines offers the humane and practical solution. It is also necessary to take steps to strengthen the legal sanctions against the indiscriminate use of land-mines and the application of the principle of responsibility to the States and parties responsible for the indiscriminate laying of mines.

**The President:** We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item. I should like to inform members that action on the draft resolution, as amended, will be taken at a later date to be announced in the *Journal*.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.

## **Annex**

### **Changes in record and/or roll-call votes**

#### **Resolution 49/9**

Subsequent to the voting, the delegation of Lesotho advised the Secretariat that it had intended to vote in favour.