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Official Records

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New York

Co-Chairperson: Ms. Tarja Halonen (President of the Republic of Finland)
Co-Chairperson: Mr. Sam Nujoma (President of the Republic of Namibia)

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

Item 124 of the provisional agenda

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (A/55/345)

The Co-Chairperson (Finland): I should like to inform members that, since the issuance of document A/55/345 and Add. 1, the Gambia has made the necessary payment to reduce its arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter.

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of this information?

It was so decided.

The Co-Chairperson (Finland): This information will be reflected in document A/55/335/Add.2, to be issued.

Addresses on the occasion of the Summit (*continued*)

The Co-Chairperson (Finland): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Eduard Shevardnadze, President of Georgia.

President Shevardnadze (*spoke in Georgian; English text furnished by the delegation*): I shall address the world leaders in the language of my small but ancient nation. This is yet another manifestation of the freedom that we have gained.

I cannot fail to acknowledge the comprehensive nature of the report of the Secretary-General. This is, indeed, a document worthy of a millennium. Today, I want to share with the Assembly some reflections, and some of the burdens in my heart. As members know, I participated in bringing the cold war — the longest war in history — to an end, and I am proud of that. Everyone here remembers a world that was split in two — a world of East and West, a world separated by the wall whose building blocks were those of class and ideological differences, a world in which the spectre of possible nuclear war was a constant threat.

My co-thinkers and I were convinced that once the cold war was over, expressions of anxiety about the end of humankind would end. This was a unique phenomenon: a world war ending without bloodshed. However, I cannot mask a certain disappointment resulting from today's realities.

The unsettled conflicts of today — both between and within States — could flare up into horrific conflagrations tomorrow. Figures on people suffering from hunger, tragic infirmities and illiteracy simply boggle the mind. Against the backdrop of such global shifts, my country has chosen to take a course towards democratic development. But what has come out of it? A handful of separatists relying on external forces split Georgia asunder, exterminating thousands of innocent people in the process. For eight consecutive years, 300,000 of my compatriots have remained ousted from their homes. More than half of the population is on the verge of hunger, although friends from the United

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States and other countries are helping. Again, I thank these friends for that.

The United Nations Security Council has adopted 23 resolutions on the Abkhaz conflict. And the result? Nothing. The Security Council has so far been unable even to call the ethnically based expulsion of people from Abkhazia by its appropriate name.

As the cold war came to a close, we spoke a great deal about a new world and a new order. Ten years have passed. The world order we all dreamed of is still in the distance. I, an optimist by nature, personally have grounds for skepticism. Earlier, we spoke of the bipolar world. Some suggest a multipolar world today. Who, then, will be able to assume responsibility for matters that cannot be shouldered by individual, sovereign States?

Again, I thank President Clinton and other leaders for the initiatives they have taken in this area. It is commonly known that as debts accumulate, the number of those suffering from hunger and sickness the world over is multiplying. This is not a populist appeal: at the dawn of this millennium, we must release poor and developing countries from the fetters of debt.

Many new, independent democratic States are now facing difficulties. In Georgia, for example, we have established democratic values and gained freedom for the nation and the individual. Yet we have not even come near to achieving a state of well-being for our people. Neither have corruption nor the shadow economy been defeated. This will require time.

In developing democratic States, a protracted process leading towards material welfare is calling democratic values into question. We cannot expect disillusioned people to derive their nourishment from ideals alone. As the Georgian saying goes, to a poor man misfortunes never come singly. When we had gained a relatively firm footing, and somewhat recovered our breath, environmental problems resulted in the obliteration of our harvest. Now, too, we are looking to our friends with hope. In my view, we can no longer doubt that the dangers of global warming are now upon us. Do we fully understand all that awaits our planet?

I believe that global environmental security should be the direct responsibility of the United Nations and its Security Council. To some degree, world food security should also be subject to

centralized management. The resources and capabilities of the United Nations must dramatically increase and, of course, the role and responsibility of individual States should likewise grow. All these concerns indicate that addressing the problems we face in this millennium is a task that individual States — even the most powerful ones — cannot manage alone. There is a need for a uniting and bonding force, a body with broad competence and wide duties. There is a need for a fundamental restructuring of the United Nations and the Security Council to meet the challenges of the new millennium.

The Security Council must be expanded. I recall that, at the General Assembly in 1992, I spoke in favour of permanent membership for Germany and Japan. I wonder why the expansion issue has not yet been resolved. More new prospective members have appeared, and today, too, a reasonable solution can be found. I firmly believe that the right of veto must be limited. The Charter of the United Nations also needs to be adapted so as to factor in modern discoveries and the worst threats of the new era. The role and functions of the Security Council must be more clear cut. If I may borrow some words from the Secretary-General, the Security Council must have at its disposal a sufficient number of fire engines to put out the flames and maintain stability and peace in the world.

I concur with the Secretary-General's position on the International Criminal Court. However, we must ensure that it does not take us a whole new decade to make it happen. The interaction of such powerful regional organizations as the European Union and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe with the United Nations and its Security Council must be better coordinated and synchronized.

No individual State or group of States can resolve the problems facing humankind or, most importantly, save the human being, nature's crowning achievement.

And yet we must hope that independent democratic States will become stronger and that together we will ultimately create a new United Nations and a new Security Council which will be the central guarantee of peace and security.

The Co-Chairperson (Finland): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Kessai H. Note, President of the Republic of the Marshall Islands.

President Note: I extend warm greetings of “iokwe” from the people of the Republic of the Marshall Islands. It is a great and distinct privilege to address this historic Millennium Summit of the United Nations.

I wish to commend the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan, for the comprehensive and outstanding report on the role of the United Nations in the twenty-first century. Directing the course of this Organization to meet the international community's expectations for many years to come will certainly demand our entire commitment.

I take this opportunity to recognize the contribution of the founding fathers and framers of the United Nations and its Charter. The vision, values, and principles espoused in the Charter have guided this Organization for well over half a century. The principles of democracy, respect for human rights and the right of self-determination of peoples in conformity with the principles of justice and international law should continue to underpin our collective development. I wish to reaffirm the adherence and commitment of the Marshall Islands to such principles for the collective good of all people.

It is due to these guiding principles that I enthusiastically welcome Tuvalu as the 189th Member State of the United Nations. As a Pacific Island neighbour, I am proud to be among those congratulating the Government and people of Tuvalu. While expansion might provide additional challenges, the admission of new Member States adds to the legitimacy of the Organization.

The guiding principles of the United Nations Charter have continued and will continue to be tested over the years. Exploitation, in many forms and varying degrees, of people, land, the oceans, the atmosphere, and their interactive and interdependent systems continue to pose real and immediate threats to the very existence of small island developing countries like the Marshall Islands. We need to be empowered so that technology and globalization can help us, but not at the expense of the lives and dignity of people and their countries. As it is with other small island countries, the Marshall Islands needs to have its feet rooted on land — on dry land, that is. Global warming and sea-level rise is threatening our very existence, and we call on the minds, the hearts and spirits of the individual and full membership of the Organization to

strengthen all efforts to help us prevail over these threats.

The new order of globalization of economies is a phenomenon that requires closer consideration and coordination of this Organization, so as to create a positive force for dealing with the many challenges facing each individual country and our common humanity.

In the face of past turbulence and upheaval, this body has always attempted to fulfil its mission undaunted and without despair. The very establishment and adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, and its ongoing enforcement, albeit with limited means for follow-up, is a monumental accomplishment in itself. Nurturing the development of peoples, amidst varying degrees of vulnerabilities, so that they become, and continue to be, self-sufficient, self-sustaining, and equal participating partners in the advancement of the world may be a tall order for many of us and for our Organization, but that is why we are here today.

The role that the United Nations has played, and continues to play, to restore order and normalcy in various parts of the world including the Middle East and East Asia is to be commended. Its incessant and active support of humanitarian concerns, its dedicated mission against all forms of discrimination relating to religion, race, gender, health, education, income, ability and poverty indicates the magnitude of the responsibility and the burden that this body carries. Without the full support of all, the sustenance and promotion of these efforts will be difficult.

To fully reflect the original intention of the Charter, the United Nations will need to give a closer look at its own structures and the principles governing the operation of its essential organs. I am encouraged by discussions on issues relating to the operation of the Security Council on the matter of permanent membership, given the continuous emphasis this body places on the unreserved application of democratic principles. The conditions under which the International Court of Justice continues to be restrained from exercising the authority to issue binding decisions must be reviewed. How else can any international system of governance enunciate, promulgate, protect and deliver justice without the necessary force behind its own pronouncements? The perpetual financial background constraining the work of the United

Nations requires some bold steps. To continue to maintain the status quo and to persist in guarding it as sacrosanct in the face of new attitudes, perspectives, experience and knowledge, is to bat against the immutable law of change.

The Republic of the Marshall Islands is encouraged by the growing recognition among leaders and people from all walks of life of the need for a universal framework for international peace. We aim to defeat the impact of world wars, of colonization, and of nuclear-weapon-test fallout. Despite our vulnerabilities, we want to be an active partner and Member of the Organization, its subsidiary bodies and other international agencies, and help to bring about peace and prosperity for all States, regardless of size. We support the promotion of international frameworks such as the Alliance of Small Island States as we promote the sustainability of our people and our world.

While we recognize the challenge of reducing the proportion of people suffering from hunger and the lack of a steady supply of safe water, as well as the challenge of the rapid spread of HIV/AIDS, the scourge of malaria and other major diseases afflicting humanity, we must not forget that an educated population leads to a healthy and prosperous society.

I am indeed grateful for the United Nations forum. Without it, where else could nations voice and address freely their individual and universal concerns? I have enjoyed listening to the rich insights and thoughts expressed by my fellow world leaders, and I certainly look forward to group discussions later, when leaders will deliberate on specific global issues.

The Co-Chairperson (Finland): Before proceeding to the next speaker on my list, I remind the Assembly that we have a very long list of speakers. I appeal to participants to respect as much as possible the five-minute speaking time allotted to each speaker. That will allow us to hear all the speakers on the list today.

The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Antonio Mascarenhas Monteiro, President of the Republic of Cape Verde.

President Monteiro (Cape Verde) (*spoke in Portuguese; French text furnished by the delegation*): First of all, allow me, Madam Co-Chairperson, to express my satisfaction at knowing that the difficult and honourable responsibility of guiding our work is in

your hands. I am sure that your competence and well-known dedication will be placed fully at the service of the success of this historic Millennium Summit. As a representative of a small island developing State, I assure you that my participation in this major event is motivated by a feeling of great hope and by well-founded confidence.

My hopes look to the new millennium and to what it will inevitably bring: freedom, development and well being for mankind as a whole. In other words, it will be a millennium in which the dignity and worth of human beings will finally become the ultimate *raison d'être* and measure of the success of our common struggle for a world of peace, stability, progress and security.

But I am also speaking of the confidence that inspires us in the United Nations, and of the fundamental role the Organization should continue to play as a collective instrument, increasingly more modern and efficient, but always at the service of our peoples and bearing in mind the pressing global challenges, to which we must respond with solidarity and shared responsibility.

Among those challenges, I would like to mention the fight against poverty in particular. It is heartbreaking to see how many human beings throughout the planet, and particularly in Africa, face poverty as the major obstacle to a minimum of dignity in their lives and to the attainment of their most basic rights. It is urgent that we end that reality, which is tragic and is our common responsibility. The task is obviously a great one that must be put into perspective in a synergetic framework that brings about the solidarity of will and sufficient resources to ensure cohesion, efficiency and durability in the various policies and programmes at the national level.

The pace of events has accelerated in the last decade, accentuating in an unforeseeable way the dimension and nature of the tragedies we are experiencing. Their persistence is testing our confidence in ourselves and in our capacity to take on new challenges. But let us also recognize that there is now a renewal of conscience, a rejection of fatalism and a growing willingness among people to shape their own destinies.

What is being challenged is our quality as human beings and our sense of the balance and justice that should prevail throughout this planet, which we must

pass on to future generations liberated from unbearable disparities and asymmetries. In this connection, the international community as a whole, and the most advanced States in particular, must illustrate their capacity for solidarity. I am speaking in particular of increasing official development assistance and making a firm commitment to measures to eliminate the debt burden. That burden undeniably contributes to suffocating the meagre resources of many of our countries and seriously limiting their development policies.

The guiding values of the United Nations confer responsibility upon the Organization to mobilize all those who influence the success of the common fate of mankind. Nevertheless, it is just — and never unwarranted — to single out the specific cases of least developed countries and small island developing States, whose particular features justify special and differential treatment. Again, this is largely the situation on the African continent.

There is no doubt that the task in Africa is enormous, in the light of the facts, such as the harmful effects of diseases such as AIDS and malaria, and of armed conflicts, with their devastating consequences internally and regionally, as well as incipient access to international markets and the acquisition of technological progress and the benefits of a globalized world.

In any case, we are witness to an African recovery that cannot be confirmed historically, however, unless Africa is recognized, without any unjustified delay, as a priority on the international agenda. It is important not to lose sight of the fact that progress and stability on the African continent will make an important contribution to global stability and security, an essential contribution to a balanced, just and humane world that we all hope to build in this new century under the auspices of the United Nations.

The Co-Chairperson (Finland): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Miguel dos Anjos da Cunha Lisboa Trovoada, President of the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe.

President Trovoada (*spoke in Portuguese; French text furnished by the delegation*): It is a great honour and signal privilege for me to take part in this most important Millennium Summit, which has brought together such a significant number of the highest-ranking and most remarkable leaders of our planet.

This Summit is being held at a timely moment, at which the international community is facing serious challenges arising from the imbalances in the levels of development of Member States. While it is true that scientific and technological advances over the centuries have allowed spectacular progress to be made in the material sphere, it is nonetheless equally true that these same advances have led to no substantial improvement in the deeper nature of mankind, which is marked by a selfishness that continues to be the driving force of all its actions in defence of personal, group or state interests. As a result, a somber and regrettable picture has emerged of serious divisions among humanity in the early twenty-first century — divisions between citizens within a country and among nations in their international relations.

These relations are dominated by stark injustice, the consequences of which include the exacerbation of poverty among the poorest of the poor; the recurrent and insoluble issue of external debt; disease; famine; ignorance; unemployment; violations of human rights and of the rights of the child; the aggravation of violence and crime; and war and all its resulting horrors — in short, the human tragedy, which has become the banal norm of everyday life for a great portion of mankind in the face of the indifference or inactivity of another part of the same species.

The problems all seem to have been duly diagnosed and their causes identified. The material, technical, financial and human resources to address them do exist. From our humble perspective, what is lacking is the firm and determined political will of the entire international community to act in harmony with a view to stemming the deterioration of the situation, which is degrading and humiliating for those whose suffer its consequences and ultimately unworthy of those who are in a position to contribute to its eradication but do little or nothing.

It is clear that a more proactive attitude can evolve only out of the deep conviction that we are all part of the same human condition. Only this conviction and awareness can positively, dynamically and lastingly forge the interactive links of solidarity that will ensure the success of the great and noble aims of freedom, progress, justice and peace for all.

Although States have inalienable responsibilities in this area, we are convinced that the United Nations has an important role to play. It seems to us, however,

that our Organization, which was created over 50 years ago, must undergo some restructuring, particularly to restore a balance that would bring it more in line with the geopolitical changes that have taken place since its birth.

We also believe that its universal vocation should not be undermined by considerations that ensure that countries with several million inhabitants and recognized as independent by States Members of the United Nations, with which they have relations of sovereignty, are relegated to the margins of the Organization, even though they participate jointly and actively through international cooperation in the development efforts of other peoples. I am speaking specifically of the Republic of China on Taiwan. We are in favour of the free participation of peoples and the States that represent them internationally, just as we defend the free and democratic participation of citizens in national life, without discrimination or exclusion.

War is one of the scourges that cause the greatest damage in Africa, preventing the economic and social development of its peoples. Some African countries, indebted and with populations living in extreme poverty, have been at permanent war for decades. In their struggles, these same States use modern and sophisticated weapons which they do not produce themselves. In the name of minimal moral norms of behaviour, which should never be absent from domestic or international policy, it is urgent that action be undertaken to ensure effective control of the production, sale and distribution of all categories of weapons so as to prevent the belligerents from acquiring them at great cost, to the detriment of their reconstruction and development programmes.

We know from experience that, without development, democracy is very fragile. We are therefore participating in the Summit, convinced that its outcome will contribute to hastening economic growth, minimizing poverty and strengthening democracy in developing countries. We would express the hope that solidarity among states and peoples will gain in strength and that the spirit of equity and justice will henceforth prevail in relations among nations. Thus will the most fragile nations be able to cherish the hope that they will no longer be marginalized or sacrificed on the altar of economic and universal globalization.

The Co-Chairperson (Finland): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Ismail Omar Guelleh, President and Head of Government of the Republic of Djibouti.

President Guelleh (*spoke in French*): On this historic occasion, at which the United Nations community is meeting to celebrate the coming of the new millennium, I wish to bring this message of peace and friendship from the people of Djibouti.

Before all else, I would like to pay deep tribute to Secretary-General Kofi Annan for organizing this historic gathering. The report he has put before us gives us a broad range of ideas and proposals.

With the end of the cold war, the rise of globalization and the explosion of the information age, the decade of the 1990s was of great importance to humankind. Fortunately, the dawn of the new millennium gives us the opportunity to review and revise our programmes and reset our priorities. For the purposes of this Summit, the critical problems faced by humankind have been divided into four categories: peace and security; development, including the elimination of poverty; human rights; and the strengthening of the United Nations. As far as we are concerned, the problem that appears to be the most urgent is that of development and the elimination of poverty.

Today, some 3 billion people — in other words, almost half of humanity — suffer from hunger or food shortages. In a world that produces enough food to satisfy the needs of each and every man, woman and child, this is absolutely unacceptable. Hunger is the daughter of poverty; and for those who are abandoned, the despair that it engenders is in many respects the source of the four problems that we are addressing at this Summit.

The economic brushfire that is sweeping our planet today is known as globalization. It encourages the deregulation of markets, free trade and privatization. But in many parts of the world, particularly in Africa, a number of poor developing countries have been trapped in a spiral of impoverishment and social disintegration. Since they are not attractive to private foreign investors, countries with low savings levels, and low levels of domestic investment find themselves at a dead end. The international lending organizations, which have demanded that these countries tighten their belts still

more in the name of rational economic policies, seem to have contributed to the deterioration of the crisis.

Furthermore, for the poor countries to be able to achieve a real recovery and vigorous growth, the terrible debt burden problem must be resolved. Structural adjustment suggests a reduction of internal expenditure so that these countries can increase their exports and repay their debts. However, the internal constraints, the amount of debt, the degradation of the terms of trade and restricted access to markets of the developed countries mean at present, in the digital era, that the prospects are hardly encouraging.

To overcome this situation, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) has proposed a large increase during this decade in aid to sub-Saharan Africa, which should be raised to \$20 billion. This aid should contribute greatly to increasing savings and domestic investment and might bring about a sustainable growth rate of 6 per cent in the region, which, in turn, would attract foreign investment. Only the public financing bodies would be able to give such impetus to developing countries. At the present level of \$10 billion per year, official development assistance is not playing its role as a catalyst of growth and merely perpetuates dependence upon aid.

As the South Centre recently reminded us, looking for change and improvement in these areas is not synonymous with asking for aid or further concessions; it is rather a matter of looking for policies, mechanisms and more equitable systems to strengthen the development process — and thus, the entire world economy. It is quite obvious that the main challenge with which we have to deal today is to ensure that globalization becomes a positive force for all peoples of the planet, rich and poor alike. The responsibility of managing international economic problems, as well as the risks and threats hanging over peace and security, must be shared by all. The collapse of the world economy would be the most serious systemic threat to world order that one could imagine. To avoid this, the world system cannot remain totally indifferent to the fate of the majority of the peoples on this planet.

We are witnessing the establishment of a new system of international values and a general growth of awareness, born of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. On the one hand, we have rights that each individual should be able to exercise, including

freedom of expression and conscience, freedom from poverty and fear and the right to life, liberty and safety of person, to name but a few. But today we know that these rights bring only limited advantages without a favourable social environment and at least minimal means of subsistence.

The main threat hanging over peace and security today is no longer external aggression by States against other States, but internal violence committed against communities and individuals. It is reaching crisis proportions throughout the world, but it is completely out of proportion in Africa, where conflicts, human rights violations, physical destruction and widespread displacements have anaesthetized the international community. The unbelievable savagery of certain conflicts and the unacceptable suffering inflicted have made it necessary for us to find new ways of helping people who are caught in these crises.

In this connection, we must activate and make urgent use of the new International Criminal Court, so that criminals who defy the law are brought to justice. Quite obviously, we have to strengthen considerably the peacekeeping capacities of the United Nations and address its structural weaknesses. Furthermore, we must enlarge the Organization's sphere of competence in peacekeeping to include civil administration, as has been the case in Kosovo and East Timor. In order effectively to deal with certain crises, the United Nations must be able to appeal to its Member States, which can supply well-trained and well-equipped contingents that act speedily to open up the way for peacekeeping forces to enter.

The elimination of conflicts in all their forms and the establishment of peace and security are among the principal tasks awaiting us if we wish to respond to our most urgent need, development and the elimination of poverty. In this respect, the Secretary-General has placed before us an enormous challenge: a 50 per cent reduction in the number of inhabitants of this planet living in extreme poverty between now and the year 2015. This represents almost a billion people.

Everyone agrees that this result ought to take place in the context of the sacrosanct market economy that is sweeping the globe. But the free trade system is mercilessly cruel. The multilateral institutions must maintain order and ensure the application of world regulations to ensure transparency and democratic equity. Otherwise, we are likely to succumb to the

tyranny of the market and international chaos. There must be a worldwide effort, a collective and international effort, at the centre of which will be the United Nations, representing the peoples and States of the world.

We think that it is in this context that we must address the question of strengthening the United Nations. We cannot allow the Organization to become more and more marginalized by all the administrative devices and procedures being introduced by certain States, while they refuse to disburse the funds to which the Organization has a legitimate right. Development will be limited if it is kept in the hands of the specialized agencies, far from the United Nations. Peace will be uncertain if it is largely in the hands of a United Nations dominated by a Security Council that is not representative.

In conclusion, I would like to reaffirm our faith in the future of the United Nations. The fate of our peoples is closely linked with its future. I am convinced that a restructured Organization, made more effective, will contribute to the coming of an era of peace and prosperity for all.

The Co-Chairperson (Finland): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Petar Stoyanov, President of the Republic of Bulgaria.

President Stoyanov: I hasten to express my country's support for the growing role and involvement of the United Nations in promoting and furthering democratic processes worldwide. Here we see a direct link with the maintenance and promotion of world peace and security, which, we believe, will continue to be a priority in the future activities of the United Nations.

The Republic of Bulgaria is actively involved in the international community's efforts to settle existing conflicts and secure lasting peace and economic prosperity throughout the world. That is why we support the need for an effective reform of peacekeeping operations.

I should like to inform the Assembly of the Bulgarian Government's decision to increase its financial contribution for United Nations peacekeeping operations despite the economic difficulties we are facing as a country in transition.

We gained our peacekeeping experience mainly during the Kosovo crisis. The conflict there demarcated

a new phase in the development of the world, in which States are becoming increasingly interdependent and State sovereignty is acquiring new forms and content. Moreover, the crisis demonstrated that today's problems can be solved only through joint efforts prompted by shared universal human values rather than by temporary considerations.

While on the subject of Kosovo, let me share my view that the implementation of a long-term strategy for the economic stabilization of the region and its accelerated integration in European organizations is a key factor for the lasting solution of the crisis there and the restoration of peace and stability to South-eastern Europe. The Stability Pact for South-eastern Europe is a decisive instrument in that respect. It is the first-ever attempt at a post-crisis rehabilitation of a whole region in the context of globalization. Moreover, the economic reconstruction of the Balkans and the bid by many non-European countries to participate in it could be seen as an attempt to involve the region in the processes of globalization.

The past 10 years have given us sufficient evidence of the potential of globalization to address current problems and open up new horizons to humankind. This is particularly relevant for the countries that were part of the former communist system and are now seeking to carve their niche in this changed world.

At the same time, globalization has confronted us with challenges for which we have proved unprepared. It has become clear that we cannot opt or not opt for globalization: it is a fact that we cannot ignore. What we can do is grasp the growing need to manage globalization and act accordingly.

If we are to contain its negative effects, we should not allow it to take its course spontaneously, for it has a tendency to go beyond the economic and technical domain and spill over into the sensitive areas of culture, national traditions and customs. Here, its impact must be studied thoroughly, and ways of controlling it must be sought through new and relevant legislation in the area of intellectual property protection, including traditional knowledge and biodiversity.

Being convinced of the potential of the new information and communication technologies for advancing development, I would like to urge the most developed countries to facilitate access to the

“information superhighway” for the developing countries and the countries in transition. Bridging together the “digital divide” will encourage those countries to develop local content on the Internet.

Strengthening the role of the United Nations will require not only the reform, renovation and further effective institution-building of the world Organization, but also its proper adjustment to the new realities. I believe that the United Nations will continue to be a major factor in socio-economic, scientific and technical development, and in environmental protection and humanitarian cooperation at the national, regional and global levels. The objectives are clear: achieving sustainable development, addressing and tackling demographic problems, reducing poverty and ensuring sources of income for all social strata.

That is why we support the efforts — including those of the Secretary-General — to reform and restructure the Organization’s socio-economic sector with a view to achieving the aforementioned objectives and creating a regional and global environment that would favour more dynamic and sustainable development. The Republic of Bulgaria has been making its contribution to this end, notably by participating in the work of the Economic and Social Council and supporting the activities of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

In closing, I would like to voice our conviction that guaranteeing and respecting individuals’ human rights and basic freedoms is a cornerstone in the development of a democratic civil society. Bulgaria is a party to all major and universal human rights instruments, and we support the initiatives aimed at strengthening and increasing the role of United Nations control mechanisms in the area of human rights.

I hope that the Millennium Summit will set the stage for the United Nations to be able to successfully play its role in the twenty-first century.

The Co-Chairperson (Finland): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. René Préval, President of the Republic of Haiti.

President Préval (*spoke in French*): I thank the Secretary-General for convening this Summit and congratulate him on the depth of the report that he has submitted for our consideration.

In the 55 years of the existence of the United Nations — even though it has sometimes been

denigrated — the history of the international community could not have been written without a constant reference to the Organization. Even today, in the face of a constantly changing global context with its impressive array of new challenges, we still deem it to be a key instrument for shaping the twenty-first century. The proof lies in this special high-level meeting, which aims to alleviate concerns about old and new problems for which we still do not have a solution.

The Republic of Haiti, a founding Member of this Organization, is still, 200 years after winning its political independence, endeavouring to emerge from underdevelopment and is to that end seeking to contribute to common thinking on ways of honing the important instrument for action that is the United Nations system.

Among our pressing concerns, certain ones are of particular importance to us, because how we respond to them will determine the shape of the world to come.

First, there is a need to guarantee dignified living conditions for all human beings. Indeed, we know that millions of people are living in abject poverty and under the constant threat of social upheaval, whereas, in the history of mankind, the capacity to create wealth has never been as great.

Secondly, we must genuinely democratize the new knowledge — and information-based economy. We note that there has been a considerable increase in know-how and striking technological progress, but so far access to it is limited to just a few. This constitutes a new source of inequality and divisions — among and within nations. How then can we put an end to exclusion and prevent the gap from deepening, until such time as it can be closed? What is the point of setting foot on Mars if there is still hunger in several regions of our planet?

My third concern is the drift of power from politics to finance and the economy. Constant flows of capital and international trade tend to diminish nation-States and to give rise to supra-national bodies that are not elected by the people. By electing only politicians and not financial representatives, are we not turning democracy into a utopian ideal?

My fourth concern is the immense, formidable power of the communication media, which seems to be in the hands of just a few. Their uncontrolled use of

those media destroys those who oppose them; yet the media could solve a great many problems were they truly placed at the service of human advancement.

My final concern is the pandemics that are devastating certain nations, especially the poorest, threatening their very survival. The human cost of these tragedies is scandalous, especially since the means exist to alleviate them considerably. But questions of profitability are often raised here: for many, the economic factor completely outweighs human considerations. That being so, how can we address these tragedies and place the higher interests of mankind above mercenary considerations?

The era of autarky is behind us. States can no longer formulate policy without taking account of regional and global frameworks relating, for instance, to drugs, terrorist networks, organized crime and pandemics, all of which form part of a global context. Without establishing “rules of the game”, and without some form of adjudication, globalization will be a jungle.

That is the mission of international organizations, led by the United Nations, which can make it possible to build peace and promote development. We must consolidate the authority and legitimacy of the United Nations by democratizing it in order to enhance its effectiveness and ensure that it can successfully address the new challenges of a globalized world.

For us, the key is to take a dispassionate look at the avalanche of past initiatives and at their meagre results, and boldly to create a world with an international public-spiritedness, a world in which solidarity will prevail over market control. Globalization is not new: slavery, colonialism and the two world wars of the twentieth century are evidence of that. What is frightening today is that globalization tends to take the form of the privatization of all power.

The Co-Chairperson (Finland): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Robert Kocharian, President of the Republic of Armenia.

President Kocharian (*spoke in Armenian; interpretation furnished by the delegation*): The report of the Secretary-General on the role of the United Nations in the twenty-first century (A/54/2000) is highly commendable. Armenia shares the views and approaches reflected in the report with respect to the

challenges and objectives of our uniquely global Organization.

At the dawn of the new millennium, the scope of our opportunities — and, at the same time, of our problems — has reached a qualitatively new level. Armenia is confident that the United Nations, given its outstanding role, has the best potential to address these new challenges in the most appropriate manner. The vast experience of the United Nations throughout the 55 years of its activities is unique. With this in mind, we should be more dynamic in adapting United Nations instruments and institutions to the new realities.

Maintaining peace and security throughout the world will obviously remain a major priority for the United Nations in the twenty-first century. The contemporary world map continues to be densely spotted with local conflicts and, as a result, with human suffering. The United Nations has been heavily engaged in conflict resolution in various parts of the world. At the same time, Armenia believes that the existing potential of the United Nations for the prevention of new conflicts is not being fully utilized. It has become imperative to promote the establishment of comprehensive early warning mechanisms for potential conflicts. Wars do not erupt unexpectedly; they have their histories and their logic, and can be predicted.

In our contemporary world, the notion of security has transcended its conventional boundaries. Globalization has opened up societies to an unprecedented degree. As never before, the activities of individual Governments have become tightly linked to interdependent and concerted action at the subregional, regional and global levels. Integration has become politically and economically expedient. It is apparent that the new environment of coexistence requires new approaches in the activities of international organizations. Only collective efforts can make it possible for the advantages of globalization effectively to materialize and for its negative consequences to be averted. In other words, the world of the twenty-first century has acquired all the prerequisites for genuine stability based on collective action and responsibility. That is Armenia’s hope.

Armenia is entering the new millennium with the celebration next year of the one thousand seven hundredth anniversary of the adoption of Christianity as a State religion. Our centuries-old history and our

Christian traditions, along with our geographic location, have contributed to our profound understanding of the importance of coexistence and of a dialogue among civilizations.

Armenia belongs to a part of the world that over the past 10 years has been subjected to a major political and social transformation. Having inherited unresolved problems from the past, Armenia and the entire region of the South Caucasus have not remained immune to conflict. The current realities continue to exert considerable pressure on the fledgling fabric of our country's new social and political relations.

Nevertheless, Armenia continues to build an open society based on the principles of democracy and the rule of law. We intend to further expand our cooperation within the United Nations and to participate actively in various regional institutions, in particular the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States. We have approached the final stages of accession to membership of the Council of Europe, which is evidence of our commitment to the policy of multiple engagements as an effective instrument for advancing security through cooperation.

We remain convinced that the region of the South Caucasus is in need of a regional system of security, and we stand ready to work towards its formation.

Armenia remains committed to the peaceful resolution of the Nagorny Karabakh conflict. We will continue to work intensively with the Co-Chairmen of the Minsk Group, and we highlight their contribution to maintaining the ceasefire regime. Equally, we are ready to maintain direct contacts with Azerbaijan in order to search for compromises, although we think that direct negotiation between Azerbaijan and Nagorny Karabakh would be more productive. At the same time, we are convinced that it is already possible at this stage to advance economic cooperation between Armenia and Azerbaijan, which would certainly facilitate and expedite the establishment of a lasting peace. Here, we are convinced that the Nagorny Karabakh conflict can be resolved only on the basis of the legal equality of the parties to the conflict.

The contemporary experience of conflict resolution reflects the changing nature of inter-State and intra-State relations. It clearly shows the need to go beyond the boundaries of conventional perceptions of sovereignty.

The Armenian nation is unfortunately destined to carry the problems of the past century into the new millennium. Turkey's continuing denial of the genocide of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire has only intensified our aspirations for historical justice. Some countries and nations were in the past burdened by similar problems; however, they managed to overcome them by taking reconciliatory actions, with the support of the international community. Penitence is not humiliation; rather, it elevates individuals and nations. I am confident that a constructive dialogue with Turkey will allow us jointly to pave the way towards cooperation and good-neighbourly relations between our two peoples.

In conclusion, I would like to once again congratulate all of us on the occasion of the Millennium Summit, which, given the impressive level of representation, gives proof of our shared commitment to peace and cooperation in our common house.

The Co-Chairperson (Finland): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, President of the Republic of Tunisia.

President Ben Ali (*spoke in Arabic*): The early signs of détente among States — signs that appeared in the late 1980s — aroused high hopes that mankind would fulfil its legitimate aspirations for peace, prosperity and a greater development of international relations so as to achieve a more equitable sharing of burdens and responsibilities. That period, however, was soon followed by tensions and conflicts, with the attendant spread of epidemics and diseases, deterioration of the environment, aggravation of poverty and indebtedness, disruption of financial markets and a resumption of the arms race. In the context of this universal crisis, it was incumbent upon the international community to formulate a set of joint initiatives and to codify its interventions within a framework of partnership based on a series of effective programmes and mechanisms to address existing problems.

Though globalization has provided new economic opportunities, accompanied by amazing scientific and technological advances, this has not prevented the widening of the gap between States as regards the pace of development, or the worsening of disparities between rich and poor. This has indeed aroused fears

and prompted most observers to call for the establishment of a joint area of prosperity, which would ensure balanced and sustainable development for all the nations of the world, without any exclusion or marginalization.

We in Tunisia have followed a balanced strategic approach based on the principle of the universality of human rights as well as on the values of democracy, pluralism and solidarity, and on reconciling the requirements of promoting the economy with those of social progress. We have also chosen to be guided in our development programmes by the decisions of the conferences held by the United Nations over the past decade in several fields.

The tragic living conditions of certain peoples, due to poverty and disease, have prompted us to call for the adoption of solidarity and cooperation among States as an absolute humanitarian and moral necessity. In this regard, we have proposed the conclusion of a partnership and development contract between developing and developed countries, and the recycling of debts for investment in developmental and environmental projects. We have also proposed the creation of a world fund for solidarity and poverty eradication, to serve as an instrument for strengthening the mechanisms of humanitarian intervention, and as a means to fight poverty in the most destitute parts of the world.

While this proposal stems from our firm belief that solidarity among States and peoples is a humanitarian duty and a moral obligation, it is essentially based on our conviction that human rights constitute an indivisible whole, which will only be made complete by safeguarding human dignity and by providing man, wherever he may be, with the wherewithal to lead a decent life. While expressing our appreciation for the positive response given to our initiative by many heads of State and United Nations officials, as well as by numerous international and regional organizations and conferences, we note that we rely on the delegations' sense of humanitarian responsibility and their goodwill to work for an early realization of this proposal.

The African continent continues to this day, for many reasons, to suffer from conflicts, deprivation and the heavy weight of indebtedness. This state of affairs requires the international community to take early action in the form of firm and expeditious humanitarian

initiatives to alleviate the suffering of our continent, to strengthen peace efforts there, and to help the continent overcome existing obstacles to its development process and to minimize the danger of the spread of epidemics, particularly AIDS, among the masses of its population.

I would like on this occasion to touch on the vital issue of human rights that dominates the current debate at the United Nations — namely, that these rights are being used nowadays as a pretext for interference in other countries' affairs. Tunisia, which has ratified all relevant international treaties and covenants, is determined to participate in developing a more democratic conception of international relations within the framework of an integrated diplomacy and on the basis of the Charter of the United Nations and its express provisions, including the duty to respect the principle of sovereignty, non-intervention in the internal affairs of other States and the serious, impartial and equitable treatment of all questions and issues under consideration.

We are being asked today to renew our adherence to the United Nations, which constitutes an ideal framework, incorporating all components of the international community, and is a fundamental base for multilateral action. To that end, we must all cooperate in reforming the structures of the Organization and in developing its working methods, while maintaining the permanent features and the foundations on which the Organization is built.

It is our fervent hope that this historic summit will open for us, as we step into the third millennium, broad perspectives for using the great transformations and rapid technological progress that our world is witnessing for the benefit of all mankind. This is a historic occasion that impels us to reaffirm our responsibilities to all peoples of the world, and particularly to the brotherly Palestinian people, so that they can regain their legitimate rights and build their independent State on their national soil with Al-Quds al-Sharif as its capital. These responsibilities also require us to renew our commitment to the United Nations and our adherence to its charter and the noble purposes and principles enshrined in it.

The Co-Chairperson (Finland): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Fernando de la Rúa, President of the Argentine Republic.

President De la Rúa (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to convey to you, Madam, and to your Co-Chairperson, my pleasure at seeing you presiding over this historic Millennium Summit.

There are many issues related to the role of the United Nations in the new millennium. Because of the time factor, I will refer to only one to which my country attaches great importance: poverty elimination as a way of preventing international conflicts or internal conflicts with international ramifications characteristic of our times.

I wish to highlight the fact that poverty elimination is a fundamental factor in conflict prevention, becoming the approach which, in the present world, assumes the greatest relevance and magnitude for the international community.

It is necessary that there be an awareness of the relationship existing between poverty — particularly extreme poverty, malnutrition and hunger — and violence, and that measures be adopted aimed at refining a system of conflict resolution in keeping with this new scenario.

It is vital that developing and developed countries act together. We will only be able to contribute to the resolution and prevention of new hotbeds of tension on the basis of firm common will. The priority attached to sustainable development in the less developed countries, although not the sole prerequisite, nonetheless represents an essential component of effective action to avoid violence.

This leads us to take up again the framework theme of the Summit: the role of the United Nations in the new millennium. The formulation of new preventive measures aimed at eradicating poverty is undoubtedly a responsibility and a role that our Organization must exercise in accordance with the new role that the international community expects of the United Nations. The relationship between peace and development is an increasingly intense one, a theme I raised in the round table this morning. We must target the real causes of the majority of present conflicts. In that way, cooperation programmes and projects for the needy populations will contribute to generating the atmosphere of peace and development necessary to ensure a culture of prevention, stability and tolerance.

I agree with the Secretary-General that emergency assistance, combatant demobilization, mine

clearance, the organization of elections, social reconciliation and the restoration of basic services for communities affected by war will not be enough if, at the same time, ongoing long-term development programmes are not implemented in the areas of basic education, health and employment. We should not forget that the developed countries have a decisive role and a great responsibility in eradicating poverty. I am not only speaking about official development assistance, but also of activities to integrate the least developed countries into international trade, and to eliminate barriers, quotas, subsidies or other mechanisms that restrict trade or investment. It is therefore necessary, recognizing the existence of a shared future, to assume a firm commitment of common responsibility based on the principles of equity and solidarity.

This Summit should leave us with the conviction that we need to develop preventive measures to attain sustainable development for the most backward areas and that these would not be depleted by short-term solutions after the outbreak of conflicts, but would neutralize crises before they emerge.

I wish to conclude by stating that the dispute between my country and the United Kingdom over the Malvinas, the South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas is on this Organization's programme of work, which, through several resolutions, has requested the Governments of my country and the United Kingdom to resume negotiations to find a just and lasting solution to the sovereignty dispute, thus ending a colonial situation imposed by force in 1833.

I wish to renew my country's commitment to the United Nations in the new universal dimension of peace and justice.

The Co-Chairperson (Finland): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Ahmet Necdet Sezer, President of the Republic of Turkey.

President Sezer (*spoke in Turkish; English text furnished by delegation*): We are privileged to have two prominent statesmen, one from the northern hemisphere and the other from the southern hemisphere, co-chairing this Summit. It is also a tribute to the United Nations to see the President of Namibia presiding over this unique event; a President whose nation's struggle for independence was spearheaded on the international front through the work of the Council

for Namibia, in which Turkey had the honour of serving as Vice- and Acting-President.

It is with a deep sense of responsibility that I have the honour to address this largest gathering yet of world leaders here at the United Nations General Assembly. We are expected to deliver the right messages in order to chart the right course for the third millennium. We should seek to ensure a better life for successive generations. As the United Nations Secretary-General rightly states, the freedom from want, the freedom from fear and the freedom of future generations to sustain their lives constitute the three overarching objectives for achieving further human progress. We are living in a world where hope exists side by side with desperation, opportunities lie against poverty and great difficulties and joy are often overshadowed by gloom. That we, as the global community, today still expend vast resources for benign and malign causes is perhaps the most profound irony of our time.

Globalization means and offers new opportunities to mankind. But we must still be diligent to avoid making the rich richer and the poor poorer. Indeed, the world community, and the wealthy countries in particular, have to respond energetically and sincerely to the call, strongly expressed by the Secretary-General, first to alleviate and ultimately to eradicate what constitutes one of our greatest concerns — poverty across the globe. Africa needs the greatest attention.

With regard to this common quest, the experience of my nation's struggle for progress and prosperity has taught us valuable lessons. Thus, we consider reliance upon and respect for the will of the people the single most important value to be upheld. Only through this fountainhead will other values flow and the rule of law become supreme. We must see to it that civil society plays an increasingly significant role in the process of extending the frontiers of democracy and safeguarding this unsurpassed regime against extremism and fanaticism of all sorts. We must bear in mind that democratization and economic development are two parallel processes. In addition, assigning the highest priority to educating our youth will yield the greatest benefit in both moral and material terms.

Indeed, the events of the last century have taught us that we must ensure a fair distribution, on the national and global scales, of the benefits of free-

market economies and new technologies; that we must respect the environment as a vital common asset we are to bequeath to future generations; and that we must strengthen regional and international peace and security for the benefit of all. In a nutshell, growing interdependence between our nations is a must, not a vice, and we must therefore heed the universal values from which this process takes its roots. These goals can be achieved only if they are made to reflect our common aspirations and are supported by meaningful international cooperation.

Turkey is determined to be more actively engaged in the endeavours of the reinvigorated United Nations as we become stronger in diverse fields, which range from democratic institutions to the economy, from disaster-preparedness to social and cultural development.

We are going through a defining moment in the history of the United Nations. The noble objectives enshrined in its Charter are as valid today as they have ever been. On the other hand, we remember the many sad and tragic moments when this great Organization had to stand as an idle spectator to the scourges of warfare and human disaster, deprivation, abject violations of basic rights, famine and calamity.

The Secretary-General was right once again when pointing to the need of developing a "culture of prevention", along with the need to elaborate the central role of the United Nations in preventing conflicts. Indeed, besides providing economic and social assistance, the United Nations must be strengthened in its capacities to prevent and end conflicts. Hence, we are very pleased that the thrust of the millennium report will be reflected in the document that we shall be adopting tomorrow.

In this context, I need to stress the importance of avoiding the perpetuation of stereotype resolutions that do not help resolve disputes and conflicts, and in which the realities of the subject matter are not really taken into account. Likewise, we think there is a definite need for reforming the Security Council in a way that will yield improved representation, transparency, accountability and that will reflect the principle of sovereign equality.

These things are easy to state. Translating them into reality will continue to be our main task. This Summit possesses the potential to make an impact on

the conscience of the international community in order to get action started and to accelerate it.

I wish to conclude by saying that the children of this world — the children of the twenty-first century wherever they may be, in the southern or northern hemisphere, but first and foremost children threatened by insecurity and poverty — they deserve a better future, a good future. This Summit of world leaders bears the responsibility for making this happen.

Finally, I would like to comment on the statement made by the Armenian President, which I heard with great regret. History must be evaluated by historians.

The Co-Chairperson (Finland): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Rexhep Meidani, President of the Republic of Albania.

President Meidani: The past half-century has seen a revolution in the way in which nations are governed. Fifty years ago, the majority of the nations that are now Members of the United Nations did not have self-determination, and many of them were ruled by colonial masters or Marxist regimes. Today, the challenges of economy and security are very different from those confronted during the cold war. But today's values are still being defied by dictators and authoritarian demagogues, and in some cases, fascism is still a threat in parts of Europe.

One such example is the Balkans, where the entire development of the region is being kept hostage by the wars caused directly by the criminal regime in Belgrade. The current crisis in the territory of the former Yugoslav Federation started in Kosovo in 1989, and it will come to an end only after the right solution can be found to this crisis, including a new, free and democratic Kosovo and the reconsideration of various problems in the former Yugoslavia and of its membership in the United Nations.

If we go back to our history, the 1648 Treaty of Westphalia established, in place of the crumbling Holy Roman Empire, nation States. But a pure nation State is difficult to find in the real world. That is why I believe that instead of the old concept of classic independence we must apply a new concept of interdependence. I think this is the path for Europe and the Balkans to make the principle of self-determination compatible with the principle of interdependence within the united States of Europe. Such a path does not mean the

dissolution of national sovereignty, but rather the sovereign choices nation States are making to devolve more power to local and regional authorities or to pool their sovereignty within supranational authorities. This is also the way to make the concept of national sovereignty compatible with the concept of globalization and its sub-phenomenon, regionalization.

However, as we moved through the 1980s and the 1990s, there was considerable progress in the world towards the democratic governance. But the question we must ask ourselves is this: can we yet reach the limit of our avowed goal of good governance while there are still Members of the United Nations that insist on maintaining a state of conflict or even a state of war with other Members? The answer is, frankly, no. Also, today it is quite clear that many countries, Albania included, have made an important move towards good governance. Particularly in the Balkans, they are embarking on a more complex set of reforms, in the framework of the Stability Pact.

It is now clear to us that where there is strong domestic commitment to sound policies, international contributions can be highly productive. This conclusion is by no means new. A striking vision of good and bad government is seen in the famous fourteenth century Siena frescos by Ambrogio Lorenzetti, entitled "The Effects of Good and Bad Government". Over recent decades we have embraced anew those old truths and deepened our understanding of poverty and how it can be overcome, and changed the experience of helping poor regions.

Lecturing the poor countries and criticizing their own weak governance while providing little money to support technological advances, public health, education and other needs, is cheap all right, but it simply does not work. The strategy must be modified. It is the same regarding environmental policy, which is still largely concerned with repairing only what was wrong and is limited to a few recycling systems.

It is now generally accepted that, with the end of the cold war, old ideological divisions are mostly over. But a more intractable division is taking hold, this time based on technology. A small part of the globe, accounting for about 15 per cent of the earth's population, provides nearly all of the world's technology innovations. A second part, perhaps half of the world's population, is able to absorb and adopt these technologies. The remainder, about a third of the

world's population, caught in a poverty gap, is technologically disconnected. Unfortunately and ironically, this trend is accentuated by the increasing importance of information technology, which puts greater power and economic rewards in the hands of the wealthy and well educated. My call is for rich countries to recognize this fact and to respond so that, at least, chances can be created for many of the technologically excluded regions to be able to adopt the new technology and join in the benefits of globalization.

Today, there are growing doubts about the future of world policy, the world economy and world civilization, particularly with regard to the role and strength of different international organizations and, more specifically, the reform of the world's leading financial institutions. We must now encourage all the ongoing changes and adjustments designed to increase their effectiveness and dynamism, through new, effective rules and even — there is no reason why not — new principles. One of the solutions could be to reduce the requirement for consensus, particularly with regard to crisis prevention, as well as post-crisis management. In this regard, efforts should be made to reach an agreement on the principles of expanding both categories of Security Council membership, permanent and non-permanent, and of including both developing and developed countries in the permanent membership.

In the process of rapid globalization, I think that some fundamental pillars should be conceived, such as the strengthening of the ideology of peace, freedom and human rights as the philosophy of this century; the establishment of a moral free-market economy on an international scale; the empowerment of international instruments for security and policy-making; and the development of linguistic pluralism and cultural diversity instead of human homogenization. Finally, there should be a realistic approach to the concepts of sovereignty, the nation, the state, government, civil society, world order, security and democratization.

I am certain that this Millennium Summit is projecting the right path to respond to these problems. I am convinced that that is our challenge. That is our new frontier: cross it we can, and cross it we must.

The Co-Chairperson (Finland): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency The Right Honourable Jean Chrétien, Prime Minister of Canada.

Mr. Chrétien (Canada): I will begin by expressing Canada's outrage at the murder of innocent, unarmed humanitarian personnel in West Timor. Those who attack United Nations staff attack this Organization and undermine the purposes and principles we have all come here to reaffirm. It is incumbent on the Indonesian Government to bring the perpetrators to justice.

As we mark a new millennium, the United Nations is the world's indispensable institution, and Canada is unshakably committed to its common goals and shared vision. I am pleased that the Secretary-General is using this millennium watershed to focus our attention on reforming the United Nations. I wish to assure him that Canada will be a creative partner in this effort.

Canada's embrace of the United Nations reflects our common values and shared experiences. An incredibly diverse nation, we are deeply committed to freedom, tolerance, justice and equality. We know the sense of community that comes from sharing prosperity and opportunity. We have experienced what human ingenuity and creativity can achieve when people are free from want, free from fear and free from war.

In the new century, Canada's vision is of a world in which all people enjoy these same blessings. The United Nations is our best hope to marshal the common sense of purpose needed to realize this vision. But it must meet the challenge of change.

(spoke in French)

The rise of ethnic nationalism, such as in the Balkans or Central Africa, is a stain on our humanity. It also greatly complicates peacekeeping operations, whose mandates must now include provisions for the protection of civilians at risk and be matched with the necessary resources.

Canada was one of the principal architects of peacekeeping. We are also one of the most active participants in peacekeeping operations. We therefore encourage all Member States to be guided by the recommendations of the Secretary-General's Panel on United Nations Peace Operations.

We must redouble our efforts to deny the agents of violence and conflict their sources of supply by halting the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and by controlling the illicit trade in diamonds. We must continue to make the security of

people our first priority. The Ottawa Convention banning landmines and the agreement on the Statute of the International Criminal Court are important milestones in this respect. In a few days' time, Canada will host an International Conference on War-affected Children.

(spoke in English)

I am also pleased to announce that Canada, with the support of interested foundations, is leading the establishment of an independent international commission on intervention and State sovereignty. Our Foreign Minister will shortly outline the rationale and mandate of the commission.

Alleviating world poverty is our common cause. We must share the benefits of globalization. We must give it a human purpose and a human face. The poorest countries require access for their goods to export markets. Faster, deeper and broader debt relief should be pursued vigorously through the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative. We must ensure that development does not degrade the global environment.

We must also bridge the digital divide. We must ensure that the benefits of the information revolution are shared by all. That is why Canada endorses the creation of a United Nations Information Technology Service. As former Canadian Prime Minister Lester Pearson used to say, the United Nations must be a symphony orchestra, not a string quartet. For that to happen, it has to be supported in all respects, politically and financially. All Members must pay their bills.

With the will and the resolve, the United Nations will remain the world's indispensable institution in the twenty-first century. Canada is committed to being an indispensable partner.

The Co-Chairperson (Finland): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Yoshiro Mori, Prime Minister of Japan.

Mr. Mori (Japan) *(spoke in Japanese; English text furnished by the delegation)*: Fifty-five years have passed since the United Nations was established. Throughout this period, and particularly since the end of the cold war, progress has been made in the efforts to achieve peace and prosperity. On the other hand, there continue to be tensions and conflicts, and concerns over the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction are growing as well. While progress in

science and technology and the advancement of globalization are making greater prosperity possible for humankind, the gap between the haves and the have-nots in the international community is widening. Moreover, common challenges in such areas as the environment and health also demand our attention.

These are the conditions that prevail as we enter the new century. Today, in the limited time available, I should like to emphasize two points in particular. The first is the importance of dealing with issues confronting the international community from a human-centred point of view, and the second is the need to strengthen the functions of the United Nations in the new century.

At the dawn of a new century, we are faced with various problems such as conflicts, human rights violations, poverty, infectious diseases, crime and environmental destruction, which threaten the existence and dignity of each and every person. We must deal with these problems from the standpoint of the importance of each individual. This is the concept of human security. With human security as one of the pillars of its diplomacy, Japan will spare no effort to make the twenty-first century a human-centred one.

The United Nations must play, and indeed is expected to play, a more active role in promoting such a human-centred approach. Based upon this recognition, Japan has to date contributed more than 9 billion yen — or well over \$80 million — to the human security fund, which was established at the United Nations in March 1999. In the near future, Japan intends to make a further contribution to this fund of approximately 10 billion yen, or roughly \$100 million. Japan also intends to establish an international committee on human security, with the participation of world renowned opinion leaders, and to further develop and deepen the concept of this human-centred approach.

Next, it is essential that the functions of the United Nations be strengthened and, in particular, that the Security Council be reformed so that it can further maintain the peace and security of the international community, which may well be a prerequisite for ensuring human security in the twenty-first century. It is clear that the Security Council of today does not fully reflect the realities of the international community as it enters the twenty-first century. In order to enhance the legitimacy of the United Nations, it is urgently

necessary to reform the Security Council so that it can effectively fulfil its expected role through its activities for the prevention of conflicts and the maintenance of peace and security.

From this rostrum, I strongly appeal to the representatives of all Member States present: let us create a groundswell of support for the early realization of Security Council reform, through our discussions at this Millennium Summit and the Millennium Assembly to follow. I am convinced that a large majority of Member States already support the expansion of the permanent and non-permanent membership of the Council, as well as the inclusion of both developing and developed countries in the expanded permanent membership. Let us confirm this as a starting point and build up agreements, one by one, on those issues of Security Council reform on which we can agree.

I must also emphasize that in order to strengthen the functioning of the United Nations, it is necessary to urgently secure a sounder financial base. Towards that end, let us cooperate to realize an effective yet efficient use of financial resources and a fairer and more equitable sharing of the financial burden among Member States.

The issues of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation must not be forgotten as we think about the twenty-first century. At the 2000 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, held this spring, a great step forward towards realizing the elimination of nuclear weapons was made, with unanimous agreement among participating States, including nuclear-weapon States, on practical steps towards nuclear disarmament, including an unequivocal undertaking by the nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals. Japan, as the only country to have suffered nuclear devastation, earnestly desires that all countries join hands to free the twenty-first century from the fear and danger of nuclear weapons and to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. In accordance with that desire, Japan will submit at the Millennium Assembly a new draft resolution on the elimination of nuclear weapons.

In order to ensure that the twenty-first century is a more peaceful century in which each person on earth can be free from fear and want and enjoy lasting prosperity, all countries must work together in cooperation. Strengthening the United Nations is

essential in this regard. Based upon this recognition, Japan is resolved to redouble its efforts to more actively fulfil its responsibility and its role in the international community.

The Co-Chairperson (Finland): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency The Right Honourable Girija Prasad Koirala, Prime Minister of Nepal.

Mr. Koirala (Nepal): I bring the Assembly warm greetings from the Government and people of Nepal and the best wishes of His Majesty King Birendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev.

Since its inception, the United Nations has been working to uphold peace, to promote the rule of law and to foster development. Yet freedom from want and freedom from fear are as distant as ever for many countries. The challenge before the world's leaders today is to bring peace, prosperity and justice to everyone in an interdependent and globalized world.

We in Nepal believe that the United Nations can help achieve our goal. It is this belief that keeps our faith alive in the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, whose ideals of freedom, equality, non-violence and tolerance continue to sustain the hopes of humanity. That Nepal is active in peacekeeping as well as in other work of the Organization is a clear testimony to that abiding faith.

Never before had the imperative of peace been more compelling and prospects of peace so bright as they are today because of the unprecedented human capacity to destroy and to create. All too often we have failed to remove the root causes of conflict, poverty and exclusion. Poverty and conflict often reinforce each other. The current wave of globalization, though holding promise, has widened the disparity between rich and poor and has facilitated the movements of terrorists, criminals, drugs, diseases and pollution. Refugee flows have become alarming due mainly to intra-State conflicts.

It is within our collective capacity to change this. States must exercise the requisite political will and act together to eliminate the threats of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction, to control small and light weapons, to prevent conflicts and resolve disputes peacefully, to restore confidence in collective security through robust peacekeeping, to tackle terrorism and crime and, above all, to bring inclusive progress.

Reducing poverty requires sustained growth at home and a favourable external climate. Growth entails investment, which the world community should help poor countries to finance by meeting agreed aid targets, broadening debt relief measures and encouraging foreign investment. Measures must also be put in place to evenly distribute the benefits of globalization, to bridge the digital divide and to open markets in rich countries for the products and labour of poor countries.

Development should be environment- and market-friendly to make it sustainable. The global financial architecture and the global trading regime must be more responsive to the needs of poor countries.

The least developed countries have for far too long remained in the shadow of world attention. The landlocked among them, like Nepal, are the worst off, as they continue to slide down. Their development partners must help them, both with adequate resources to remove their development constraints and with duty-free and quota-free access for their exports. Transit countries should provide better transit facilities to landlocked countries so that they can join the global economic mainstream.

The United Nations needs comprehensive reform in order to rise up to the challenges of the twenty-first century. We must restore an optimal balance between the General Assembly and the Security Council, and strengthen the Economic and Social Council. The Organization must bring about greater coordination among its funds, programmes and activities, as well as with the Bretton Wood institutions and the World Trade Organization. If the Organization is to be effective, Member States must provide it with adequate resources. The Secretary-General's millennium report offers many useful insights to address global problems and reform the Organization.

We share a common humanity and face a shared destiny. States committed to democracy, human rights and good governance that are willing to take bold steps and work with each other, as well as with civil society, can make a difference. People shall judge us by our leadership in promoting peace, prosperity and justice for every man, woman and child around the world. Nepal will do its part.

The Co-Chairperson (Finland): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency The Right Honourable Pakalitha Bethuel Mosisili, Prime Minister

and Minister for Defence and Public Service of the Kingdom of Lesotho.

Mr. Mosisili (Lesotho): We are at an important juncture in human history, a time of reflection on the role of the United Nations in the twenty-first century — the United Nations in which most of humankind places much faith and hope for a bright future. Can we say with confidence that such faith and hope are justifiably placed? Whatever answer we give to that question, I believe it is within our capability to make it so. There is no doubt that when the United Nations was created, in 1945, the expectations of all peoples of the world were high for an institution that promised an era of peace and security and the betterment of the living conditions of all peoples.

Given the pall of despair that had descended upon the world following a prolonged and brutal war, the human spirit could not but be uplifted by the lofty words and intentions of the Charter of the United Nations:

“to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war”,

“to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small, and”

“to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom”.

Unfortunately, it was not until 50 years later, in 1994, that institutionalized colour discrimination was defeated in South Africa. In a similar vein, the poor countries of the South, including my own, are yet to see genuine economic emancipation, despite the creation of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the International Monetary Fund, which are meant to give practical meaning to the lofty aspirations of the United Nations Charter.

The attainment of democracy in sub-Saharan Africa must be accompanied by corresponding economic gains and the reduction of poverty. However, the majority of us who have embraced democracy are yet to reap the fruits of that change. We have waited too long, and change must come now. We are unable to meet the challenges of globalization and to take advantage of the opportunities it offers for development and the relief of poverty. We are similarly unable to take full advantage of the opportunities

presented by advances in information and communications technology, which hold great prospects for our rapid development. The defining challenge of the twenty-first century is how to close the present gap in development between the developed and the developing nations.

The renaissance that the Economic and Social Council has been experiencing in the last three years is very gratifying and must be sustained. Its role in translating our aspirations into reality should be strengthened. It will therefore be necessary in the twenty-first century to rethink the powers of that body so that it is put on a footing commensurate with its importance.

On the eve of the twenty-first century, we must continue to dream of a future filled with hope for humanity. A policy framework that is regaining currency is that of a new global human order whose essential elements are, first, the creation of a new partnership between developing and developed countries, based on full cooperation for their mutual benefit; secondly, the promotion of democratic culture and good governance; thirdly, the adoption of a development strategy that is centred on people as objects of development, and one that is sensitive to issues of equity, gender equality, the rights of indigenous people and the protection of the environment; fourthly, increased productivity and production with equity through the application of science and technology; fifthly, the elimination of the debt burden for developing countries; sixthly, the reduction of extreme poverty; and, lastly, the creation of a global development facility funded by such new and innovative sources of financing as cuts in military spending, levies on pollution and a tax on speculative capital.

Finally, we would like to join all delegations in calling for a United Nations that is strengthened and equipped with resources to wage war against HIV/AIDS.

The Co-Chairperson (Finland): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency The Right Honourable Percival James Patterson, Prime Minister and Minister of Defense of Jamaica.

Mr. Patterson (Jamaica): The closing decades of the twentieth century have brought mankind to new horizons, extending beyond the nation State to create a wider circle of human identity and building a new

sense of global consciousness. In earlier times, philosophers, poets and other visionaries recognized the existence of one human family. It is a concept which our people have grown increasingly to accept.

Photographs from space, showing a single Earth suspended in space, have served dramatically to confirm the sense of one borderless world, giving a powerful stimulus to the spread of this perception of human unity and global oneness. Acknowledgement of this reality must be the starting point of this Assembly as we mark the start of a new millennium.

The establishment of the United Nations was one of the principal achievements of the century and the Charter is unquestionably a landmark document, giving a clear signal in the movement to a wider, global identity. During the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, several important contributions were made to strengthen the capacity of the world community to address the major global issues which confront us. Discussions on reform were launched, but enthusiasm was lacking and inertia triumphed. Reform was subverted into a crusade for downsizing and retrenchment.

And so we embark on the new millennium with a glaring structural deficit: the absence of an organ — comparable in standing and authority, but more representative in its composition — to address major global questions in the economic domain, the social field and the environment of our planet. There remains a yawning gap in the institutions of global governance that we must quickly fill.

As we enter the new millennium, universal global peace and security remain under constant threat because of large-scale and persistent poverty; increasing instability in the world economy; the looming global contest between resources and consumption; and the prospect of poor countries' being obliged to pay for the indulgence of the rich. Poverty remains the single greatest challenge facing mankind. Even as globalization presents new vistas of opportunities, half of the world's peoples suffer the deprivation, despair and powerlessness of extreme poverty.

We must seize this unique moment to forge global partnerships for decisive action against poverty and social exclusion. We live in a fool's paradise to think that the status quo can be indefinitely maintained. The challenges, indeed, are multiplying. The poor have

neither the time nor the interest to discuss the theories of economic globalization. Even as they experience its harsh realities, the globalized media, with a vastly extended reach, now enable the poor to see how the rich actually live. They can observe that, if the roads of the cities of the industrialized world are not paved with gold, they are a gateway to much greater opportunity than their present life offers.

The digital revolution is a demonstrable source of tremendous benefit to mankind. Yet information technology is dangerously poised to become the new barrier — a powerful force of exclusion in the new millennium. Let us exploit the digital revolution for human development in the creation of a global knowledge-based economy. I call for effective and meaningful collaboration among all stakeholders in the international community so that information technology can impact positively on the lives of all our people. There must be no gender disparity in this new revolution. It must embrace our children and youth, the disabled, our rural communities and ethnic minorities.

The challenge that faces this Millennium Assembly is the age-old one that has faced humanity at all turning points in history. Do we ignore the signals of self-destruction or do we heed them and change course? Indisputably, we must respond to them with the spirit of global solidarity that is essential to their fulfilment. To do any less is to fail in our duty to our own and future generations.

And there is no better, more practical, more effective way to start than to endow the United Nations with the capacity and competence to bring that spirit of global solidarity to the fulfilment of the long-stated aims and objectives of the Charter. We must strengthen the United Nations by making it a truly democratic instrument of human progress. Only serious and courageous action, and genuine commitment to changing the status quo, will be worthy of our coming together here in this commemorative Summit. In the new millennium, we must become good stewards for this and succeeding generations. Let us begin now.

The Co-Chairperson (Finland): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency The Honourable Roosevelt Douglas, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign, Legal, Labour and Carib Affairs of the Commonwealth of Dominica.

Mr. Douglas (Dominica): What makes the start of this new century both fascinating and frightening is

the fact that we can only enjoy the benefit of it, cognizant of the fact that none of us here will see the end of it. In short, we will not be present to take credit for the achievements, nor to shoulder the blame for the failures of our policies.

It has been said that the century which we are entering can and must be the century of the common man and common woman. This is very true, as it is the common man who will judge the efficacy of this institution and will pronounce whether or not we were truly successful in fulfilling the promises of the United Nations Charter.

But the bigger question is: should we succeed in leaving the common man a higher standard of living, access to affordable health care, peace and security and good economic prospects, will he be able to enjoy them on the planet that we will leave to him? I ask this question because the truth is, the common man will judge us most of all on the state of the planet that we will bequeath to him and the generations after him.

The indiscriminate destruction of our forests, rampant overfishing of our oceans and the pollution of the air and soil take less time to occur than it will take to repair the damage that has been created. Our concern cannot be overstated since we, the small States, the most vulnerable members of this Assembly, are the ones that will bear the burden of the very real threats of climate change and environmental degradation.

This issue of environmental vulnerability further compounds the economic vulnerability with which we are faced as we enter this new century. Indeed, it is economic security that we need to ensure that we provide for the common man of generations to come. For without economic security, the stability, openness and good governance to which we all aspire will not be attainable.

The viability of this Organization will be called into question if a few members are strong while the majority are weak, feeble, marginalized and powerless. I say this because the majority of the countries in the Caribbean are small, structurally weak, with vulnerable economies that lack the financial and human resources and the institutional capacity necessary to compete in this global economy and to benefit from the trade opportunities which may exist.

My country, Dominica, presently boasts the living reality of the world's two oldest human beings,

Elizabeth Pampo Israel, 125 years old, in Glanvillia, Dominica, and Rose Charles, 119 years old. Both are alive and well in Dominica.

While we are doing our part to become incorporated in this new era of globalization, we have so far been unable to identify any tangible benefits from international agreements such as those that govern the World Trade Organization (WTO). Instead, we have witnessed the erosion of market access and export earnings from bananas. We strongly urge organizations like the WTO to recognize the unique circumstances of small, structurally weak and vulnerable States and to make special provisions for these States in the formulation of their policies and regulations.

The difficulties that my country currently faces with respect to the banana industry, and to agriculture in general, has left us no alternative but to intensify our efforts to diversify the economy, while we stand firm with our banana farmers and move, where possible, into organic farming. The challenges of diversification come at a time when we are losing our valuable human resources to the more advanced wage markets of the North, when the unstoppable process of trade liberalization is forcing us back into traditional markets and, in some countries, when extreme poverty demoralizes the majority of the labour force.

It is very obvious that we cannot afford to let the information technology revolution pass us by. This would not only result in the marginalization of countries like my own but would also put into question the viability and stability of the countries themselves. The information technology revolution has widened the gap between the "haves" and the "have nots", with the "haves" enjoying the good life and the "have nots" floundering in poverty. Despite the opportunities that may exist, we should not forget that well over half of the world's population does not even have access to basic telephone services.

It is the poor, particularly women and children, who are most affected by economic crises, epidemics and natural disasters. We have every reason to be troubled by this, as poverty impedes the contribution that vast numbers of our populations can make towards national development.

The Millennium Report calls for one billion people to be lifted out of poverty by the year 2015. This is laudable. However, many developing countries

are unable to fund programmes that eradicate poverty, due to the high burden of external debt which serves as an impediment to sustainable economic development.

We believe that the United Nations can play a vital role in shaping and influencing a new regime of multilateral economic governance among the international lending agencies, urging them to institute policies for debt relief, so as to ensure that the fundamental, underlying causes of indebtedness are eliminated, thereby ensuring that the cycle of poverty itself is broken. Dominica is sparing no effort to upgrade our offshore legislation to reduce and eliminate any possibilities of money laundering. At the same time, we demand our sovereign rights and are committed to continuing the development of our offshore sector, like other countries in the Caribbean.

Less than two centuries ago, slavery was defeated. Apartheid and fascism were defeated in the last century. It is now our obligation to direct our full energy to entomb racism in this century in all its manifestations. One of the greatest men of the last century, Martin Luther King, said that the arc of the moral universe is long and wide, but it always bends towards justice. Real peace will never come without justice. Dominica is easily one of the most beautiful islands in the world. It is committed to pursue the course of peace; to play its part in seeking a cure for the dreaded AIDS epidemic; to strengthen Caribbean and Latin American cooperation; and to contribute to the strengthening of the unity of all African States and South-South cooperation. Locked in geographically between the French Departments of Guadeloupe and Martinique, with which we share strong historical ties, we have been obliged to seek a new relationship with France and the European Union to ensure our economic viability.

Dominica will always be committed within the family of the United Nations to support the course of peacekeeping and conflict resolution in the world and of sustainable development among the poor nations and the attainment of popular democracy to ensure popular participation and decentralization at all levels of society, and it will respect the right of the Republic of China to adequate representation.

Finally, we salute the bold task being undertaken by our brother, Kofi Annan, and the United Nations in instituting this very timely debate among Member States.

The Co-Chairperson (Finland): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Cheikh El Avia Ould Mohamed Khouna, Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania.

Mr. Ould Mohamed Khouna (Mauritania) (*spoke in Arabic*): I am particularly pleased and honoured to address you, on behalf of the President of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, Mr. Maaouya Ould Sid'Ahmed Taya, on the occasion of the Millennium Summit organized under the topic of the role of the United Nations in the twenty-first century. I would like at this point to extend my warm congratulations to the Co-Chairpersons of this historic Summit, Dr. Sam Nujoma, President of the Republic of Namibia and Miss Tarja Halonen, President of the Republic of Finland. We are convinced that their experience and wisdom will guarantee the success of our work.

I would also like to express to Secretary-General Kofi Annan our appreciation for the efforts he has constantly been making since he assumed his duties to strengthen the role of the United Nations and to enable it to fulfil its responsibilities.

Ever since its founding, the United Nations has been making important achievements in the political, economic and social areas, thus responding to the aspirations of peoples and States to freedom, independence and peace. The United Nations and its specialized agencies have, furthermore, played an essential role in promoting sustainable development in all economic, social and environmental spheres.

Be that as it may, the phenomenon of globalization, marking the end of this century, and the magnitude of the challenges facing our world, more than ever require more international cooperation and solidarity to reach equitable and harmonious development.

As Mr. Maaouya Ould Sid'Ahmed Taya, the President of our Republic, said:

“Today’s world, which has become a global village and where distances have been shortened thanks to scientific and technological progress and to the communications and information revolution, must work to correct the imbalance due to the widening gap that separates the rich countries from the poor ones”.

Today our world is facing major challenges that are hindering the development process and increasing

marginalization and poverty among a large part of humanity. Much of the world’s population continues to suffer from the effects of poverty, disease, epidemics and ignorance, as well as those of wars, conflicts and environmental threats such as pollution and desertification. Our collective responsibility in this respect is to ensure that together we meet these challenges in a spirit of cooperation and mutual assistance among all countries and all peoples.

Since indebtedness is one of the major problems facing the developing countries, the international community must find an urgent and radical solution to it so that the available resources can be used for development efforts. Our country welcomes the recent international initiatives taken to this end.

The upheavals experienced by the world and the challenges confronting humankind require a renewal of the methods and structures of our Organization. In this respect, reform and restructuring of its bodies are necessary so that they can be adapted to new realities. To this end we appreciate the initiative taken by the Secretary-General to reform and restructure the Organization.

We also place great hope in the results of the work of the Working Group mandated by the General Assembly to consider expanded representation in the Security Council. We reiterate our support for this idea and for the idea of increasing the number of its permanent members by admitting developing countries and other industrialized countries, in accordance with the rules of democracy, transparency and justice, with a view to ensuring equitable geographical representation in the Council, so that it reflects the universal character of our Organization, in accordance with Article 24 of the Charter of the United Nations. We are convinced that these reforms will allow the United Nations to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century.

Before I conclude, I wish to reaffirm the commitment of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania to working to achieve the noble ideals of the United Nations, with a view to the promotion and consolidation of international peace and security and the strengthening of cooperation and solidarity among nations in order to bring about a better world free of war, famine and underdevelopment.

The Co-Chairperson (Finland): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Sir James

Fitz-Allen Mitchell, Prime Minister of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

Sir James Fitz-Allen Mitchell (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines): The history of our civilization has been an evolving relationship between the organic and the inorganic. It has evolved with intimate relationships between all living creatures and the planet Earth, which we inherited.

This intimate relationship among living beings created the concepts and the values of family, home and nation. Over thousands of years, national boundaries became demarcated. Rivalries regarding these boundaries and the exploitation of resources led to wars, and then to the search for peace, which gave rise to the founding of the United Nations.

Our religious heritage has taught us how to reach across the boundaries of nations through the very inspirational guideline, "Love your neighbour as yourself." Today we are sensitive to the imperatives of the global village, and our neighbours, through the technological revolution, are everywhere. And yet the competition among the peoples of the world has become fiercer, with the rich countries surging ahead and widening the gap between them and poor countries. Having access to the markets in the developed countries is the key to long-term economic development for the poor countries.

Small island States such as our own, with an enviable record of good governance and human rights, have seen the mighty in the banana trade using the international rules — crafted by them — impede our economic growth. Similarly, the verdicts that have been imposed by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries on our financial services, without our having the right to be heard, demonstrate total disrespect. So-called harmful taxation, so-called harmful tax competition is about whose treasury collects the taxes. Where is the fairness in free trade in all of this?

Offshore financial services is one of our chosen avenues of economic diversification. Since it appears as though there is no place or space for us in the production of goods, we thought that we should provide a financial service to those who do produce goods. Our decision to service the wealth generated elsewhere is part of our attempt at economic survival.

We recognize that our financial system must provide opportunities for the enjoyment of the fruits of one's labour. However, we want it to be understood that we are committed to being responsible members of the international community, including playing our part in the war against the drug trade and money-laundering.

Each successive generation of youth must be provided with a ray of hope, and in the twenty-first century our world's leaders must provide meaningful change to enhance the quality of life for all the world's people. Development, no matter what we build, is about people and the quality of their lives. Only when this objective is realized will globalization be accepted as a practical policy of creating equity of opportunities for human development.

The challenges of the twenty-first century lie in the battles against poverty and the HIV virus. The development of human capital is the main priority for small nation-States such as St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

The United Nations must find a way to focus continually on the equitable distribution of the world's wealth. The unilateral imposition of the will of the strong and the wealthy on the small, vulnerable and poor will not produce the stability, security and peace that are fundamental to attaining the quality of life to which we all aspire.

This should be the guiding spirit behind our reform. With this spirit, we should preserve humanity well into the twenty-first century.

The Co-Chairperson (Finland): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Mart Laar, Prime Minister of Estonia.

Mr. Laar (Estonia): Despite the fact that the United Nations has indeed achieved a lot over the past 55 years, the Organization has not always lived up to the expectations the world had when it was first founded. This uneven record is also described in the Secretary-General's report. Let me give an example of the differences between the high expectations and the reality. In 1972, freedom fighters in the then occupied Estonia wrote an appeal to the United Nations. They considered the United Nations to be an unquestioned moral authority. In the real world, they ended up in the prison camps of the USSR without any notice from this high body. The USSR happened to be a big Power. The

United Nations of the new millennium must make changes.

To achieve that important goal, the decision-making and financial procedures of the United Nations have to be adapted, and the Organization must be streamlined. We need a United Nations that will be an effective, accountable and representative organization that represents us all, large and small countries, equally. But this has another side as well: Member States themselves must be willing to pitch in. It is not enough to demand that the United Nations do something; we have to provide it with the necessary tools to do its work. That means that we must lead by example. Let me focus on three points that we in Estonia consider important. First, open government and open markets are a precondition for economic recovery and growth. Secondly, the information technology sector is a vital conduit to successful development. And thirdly, no country can allow itself to take advantage of a discount on security.

On the first point, the Secretary-General's report to the Assembly (A/54/2000) focused on the eradication of poverty and on making the world a more equal place. This is important. It can be achieved by alleviating debt and by providing more development assistance. I think both of those aspects are vital. However, what is crucial is that States Members of the United Nations should commit themselves to good governance and open markets. Without a commitment to these two elements, no amount of aid and no amount of debt relief will achieve that aim, an aim we all have to strive for.

I am convinced that small countries, such as Estonia, can provide an important example of how to manage economic restructuring. We have been able to show that opening up our markets to outside competition, cutting and indeed eliminating tariffs, privatizing our economy and making the Government accountable to the people bring tangible benefits. The United Nations Development Programme has provided perhaps the best illustration of the effectiveness of our approach. In two years, Estonia has moved 30 places up in the Human Development Index and we belong today to the group of countries that evince high human development.

Secondly, in his report, the Secretary-General highlighted the need to ensure that the benefits of new technology, especially information technology, become

available to all. The high-level panel of experts on information and communication technology has called for Internet access for all of the world's population by the end of 2004. That is an ambitious goal and certainly not an easy task, but it is doable. The Internet may not be a cure for all ills; indeed we have to be very careful not to overestimate the importance of the Internet or to underestimate its shortcomings. However, a prerequisite for the spread of the Internet and of the World Wide Web is total and unfettered access. Yet action to ensure this opportunity is less and less global in scale: local action is called for, mostly in the hands of national Governments. Those that embrace openness are also able to enhance the opportunity of their citizens to reach out to qualitatively new horizons.

We have committed ourselves to promoting information technology through a nationwide programme guaranteeing each and every schoolgirl and schoolboy in Estonia free access to the Internet. Today, the Estonian Government carries out its sessions via computer, and Estonia has risen to be among the 20 most computerized nations in the world. But this not enough. Equal distribution of money and information alone does not guarantee well-being. We have to secure an environment where it can be enjoyed. The next and decisive move for mankind is to invest in ecological technologies that allow us to live in partnership with nature.

We know how difficult it is to start such a programme with limited resources. But we also know what benefits can be gained from it. That is why Estonia is committed to work together with the United Nations to assist other Member States to create new opportunities for themselves and for the world as a whole.

Thirdly, just as we in Estonia have come to understand that we must transmit some of the know-how we have gained to other United Nations Members, we have also reached the position that we cannot live on discounted security. That is why the Estonian Government decided this year to give up the 80 per cent discount that we have used so far and to pay our contribution to peacekeeping in full. It is important that if we expect the United Nations to perform ever more, and more complicated, tasks, we must also be willing to foot the bill. Naturally Estonia's contribution in itself is not much in dollar terms. However, if every Member of the United Nations paid its assessed dues in full we would make a considerable step forward.

But paying our dues is not enough, of course. The peacekeeping system of the United Nations has to be made more effective and better adapted to the challenges of today, as mentioned in the recent report on peacekeeping (A/55/305). As we have all seen, the term “peacekeeping” itself is no longer appropriate at a time when what is needed more than keeping the peace is establishing a peaceful environment. Whether this task be delegated to other organizations such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, or whether it be the United Nations itself that carries out these tasks, we have to be able to face the new challenges of the new millennium in the peacekeeping field as well. Estonia favours giving the United Nations a stronger mandate to establish and preserve the peace.

I hope we all will consider it our main duty to help the renewed United Nations to make a difference in the new millennium.

The Co-Chairperson (Finland): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Adolf Ogi, President of the Swiss Confederation.

President Ogi (*spoke in French*): Time did not stop with the end of the cold war. History continues. As we embark on a new millennium, we are writing a new page in our history. This is an opportunity to go forward and to make progress. We must seize that opportunity.

The twentieth century was one of great scientific, technological, economic and cultural discoveries. But the twentieth century was also one of conflict and human tragedy of the most violent, the most murderous and the most horrendous kind. Yes, we are embarking on a new century and a new millennium. But what we bequeath to future generations will depend on our common will. If we lack that will, what will our legacy be?

Switzerland shares the objectives of Secretary-General Kofi Annan’s millennium report. We thank him for his vision and commitment. Switzerland is with him. Switzerland has the same values as the United Nations — peace, stability, democracy and the observance of human rights. This is why Switzerland intends to enhance its relations with the United Nations.

Switzerland hosts in Geneva a major headquarters of the United Nations system. It is a member of most of the organizations of the system, and contributes

generously to the United Nations budget, but today it has only observer status in the General Assembly — though peace, security and well-being are the business of all. The Swiss people will decide about joining the United Nations in 2002.

Despite all our hopes, wars and violence are still with us. But within a century the face of war has changed. Wars take place less frequently between States, but increasingly within States. The participants, their objectives and these conflicts are of a new type. The conflicts are most often of a local nature and inter-ethnic, or simply the work of terrorists.

Nonetheless, these conflicts can destabilize entire countries. Their consequences are felt across borders. They have a lasting impact on the people and their attitudes. It has become more difficult to ensure respect for international humanitarian law, because the actors in conflicts are no longer just States.

We cannot remain passive in the face of this suffering and these tragedies. Unfortunately, traditional international law is no longer sufficient. We must explore new approaches and develop new tools — and perhaps also new structures within the United Nations.

During and after the conflicts, after the terror and intolerance have come to an end, we must seek out and punish the guilty. This is why I salute the efforts to set up the International Criminal Court as soon as possible and to ensure its integrity.

But we must also heal the wounds left by history. In this regard, the Republic of South Africa has given an excellent example with its Truth and Reconciliation Commission, chaired by Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate. I hope this example will be followed elsewhere in the world.

Human security also requires fighting against poverty and inequalities. This is one of our priorities, because the fruits of globalization must benefit the whole of humankind. The United Nations is called upon to play a key role so that this objective can be achieved. It is the only international organization with a truly global perspective on today’s problems: economic and social development, environmental and health issues, new technologies, and the promotion of democracy and human rights. Switzerland wants to take up this challenge with the Member States. In this spirit, we support the idea of holding in Geneva a

summit on the new information and communications technologies.

However, the resolutions passed at such occasions are one thing; they also need to be implemented. The history of the United Nations shows this. Should we not also envisage new structures that could take binding decisions and be charged with seeing that they are carried out? I am thinking of a structure akin to the Security Council, but for issues of civil society. The States must explore new approaches to meeting the challenges of today and tomorrow, together — that is, collectively. This is an opportunity that we must seize.

It is in this spirit that Switzerland, before this Assembly, announces: “We and Geneva are ready to seek solutions with your countries, with the United Nations and with you.”

The Co-Chairperson (Finland): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Somsavat Lengsavad, Deputy Prime Minister of the Lao People’s Democratic Republic.

Mr. Lengsavad (Lao People’s Democratic Republic) (*spoke in Laotian; English text provided by the delegation*): At the dawn of the new millennium our world is facing both challenges and favourable opportunities. In the past half century, the world has recorded unprecedented economic achievements, thanks to the rapid advance of science and technology. As a result, many countries have now attained a high level of development. However, unfortunately the gap between the developed and developing countries is further widening. While the living standard in some countries has improved, almost half of the world’s population still lives in extreme poverty. In this respect, we hope that the developed and more fortunate countries will seriously implement the United Nations Millennium Declaration to help the least-developed countries, the landlocked developing countries and small island developing States rid themselves of poverty. The Lao Government has given priority to poverty eradication by integrating it into the national policy and programme.

The issue of heavy indebtedness has become one of the obstacles to economic development in developing countries. Therefore, a solution to the debt problem in various forms, particularly for the least-developed countries, is necessary if they are to acquire basic resources for building national economic

foundations for achieving self-sufficiency in the long run.

Another issue of concern to the majority of countries in the world, particularly weak nations, is the concept of “humanitarian intervention”. This concept could quite easily become a cover for gratuitous interference in the internal affairs of sovereign States. Therefore, we are of the view that at the turn of the new millennium it is imperative that all general principles of international law and of the United Nations Charter — in particular, the principles of the sovereign equality of all Member States, respect for the national sovereignty of independent States and non-interference in the internal affairs of other States — be strictly observed.

Mr. Tuomioja (Finland) took the Chair.

Building a prosperous, more secure and equitable twenty-first century is a task that requires the will and determined efforts of the entire world community. In this process, the United Nations has a crucial role to play. Therefore, it is imperative to reform the United Nations, in particular its Security Council, so that it might gain legitimacy, be more transparent and be in a much better position to carry out its responsibilities. On Security Council reform we maintain our firm position in favour of the expansion of both the permanent and non-permanent membership of the Council, adding seats for both developing and industrialized countries. No less important, let us also resolve to ensure that the United Nations is given the necessary resources so that it can live up to its enormous tasks in development assistance.

The Lao People’s Democratic Republic will, together with all peoples all over the world, take appropriate action to prove its commitment. In this spirit, I wish the Summit a successful conclusion.

The Acting Co-Chairperson (Finland): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Monie Captan, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Liberia.

Mr. Captan (Liberia): On the occasion of this Millennium Summit, I am honoured to participate in this historic session on behalf of His Excellency Mr. Charles G. Taylor, President of the Republic of Liberia.

Permit me to congratulate our Co-Chairpersons for their selection to chair this Millennium Summit.

I wish to also salute and extend deepest thanks and appreciation to the Secretary-General on this historic occasion for his efforts in the search for international peace and understanding.

This Millennium Summit cannot and should not follow the traditional pleasantries of congratulations and self-indulgence so characteristic of high profile meetings of this sort. Rather, this Summit should be a forum for the members of the international community to express their concerns as sovereign equals in the finest tradition of the universal values of equity, social justice, freedom and equality.

If we should, in that process, offend others in our common community because we proclaim our rights as well as the responsibility we assume, then we do so without regret. We Liberians, like the rest of you, joined the United Nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and the self-determination of peoples. By equal rights, we pronounced the equality of cultural identity in a diverse world. We did not view equality in a context of numerical ratios, but by the intrinsic equality of the worth of human beings and the right to self-determination consistent with the cultural identity and the value of a free people; a people free of the imposition of a perceived superior moral value system, one based upon the narrow view of moral superiority and ethnocentrism.

In essence, we advocate the coexistence of cultural diversity based upon the principle of the right of self-determination. This cultural identity is embodied in the legal context of the modern nation-State; an entity that is disparate in geographical size, population, wealth, power and resources, but equal in the right of a people to determine their fate.

Today, there is the disparity of bigness; bigness as it relates to wealth, technology and military power; a bigness so overwhelming that its wealth, technological advancement and military strength could, with ease, reduce poverty, eradicate disease, educate youths, provide basic social services, combat AIDS and malaria, care for refugees and provide security. Yet, this bigness has been used to sustain disparities between the North and the South. Some have argued that the poor must learn to pull themselves up by their own bootstraps, while others have urged the North to assist the South because the creation of viable markets will serve the self-interest of the North. Yet, any realist

would easily tell you that no nation guided by the principle of competition would shun disparities.

However, the South is so small compared to the bigness of the North. The disparities are exponential. Removing the disparities, even if willed, would indeed require a miracle. What options exist? The first step could be to end the debt burden, the bondage of the poor to the wealthy; a debt burden acquired out of loans given in the pursuit of influence in the cold war, and not in the interest of the borrower; a debt burden that has denied little children food, education, health care and jobs for their parents. The debt burden is a bondage that will continue to stifle the welfare of the South into the new millennium. We must, however, commend those few States that have cancelled the debts of the least developed States.

We must also intercede for the transfer of technology. The bold steps of humanity in the sphere of research were intended to liberate all of humanity from its backwardness. It was never intended to benefit only a few or to separate humanity. Why are Nobel laureates honoured? Is it not because of their dedicated services to humanity? A technology that liberates only the North and not the South is indeed a mixed blessing; it is a gun that has been used to both liberate and kill. Are we condemned to be raw material suppliers in the new millennium? Suppliers of goods, the prices of which are determined by the buyers and not the sellers? Shall we continue to remain in a position where we cannot afford essential technology in the fields of medicine and agriculture? We call not for the erasure of the disparities created by the buyers of the North, but to have access at the baseline, to engage in more equitable terms of trade.

Bigness is further expressed in the information exchange between the North and South. The Western press, with its domination of satellite transmission of information and access to the Internet, can through sheer exposure destroy small States incapable of mustering the resources to respond to a global public relations campaign. The depiction of other cultures of small States is prejudiced by stereotypical portrayals of a hopeless southern hemisphere; a hemisphere prejudiced by the lack of understanding and information, racism and ethnocentrism. The bigness of the Western media and its impact on small States, on different cultures, is so profound that it threatens their very existence and welfare. And yet, because of their powerful influence, Governments succumb to them,

rather than regulate them; sometimes even using them as instruments of their foreign policy.

Who do we raise these concerns with today? Who shall guarantee the conditions upon which we collectively agreed to associate as a community of universal norms? What is the fate of our community in this post-cold-war unipolar system? Should we be guarded by the words of the United States scholar George F. Kennan, when he wrote in 1948 that:

“We have 50 per cent of the world’s wealth, but only 6.3 per cent of its population ... In this situation we cannot fail to be the object of envy and resentment. Our real task in the coming period is to devise a pattern of relationships that will allow us to maintain this position of disparity ... We should cease to talk about the raising of the living standards and democratization. The day is not far off when we are going to have to deal in straight power concepts.”

Likewise, in 1996 at the United States Democratic National Convention, James Rubin said,

“The United Nations can only do what the United States will let it do.”

Perhaps the former Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, did take a cue when he asked the question:

“How can we ask nations to accept democratic practice within their borders if they see no hope for democracy among nations?”

Or shall we be optimistic at the new wave of humanism characterized by a global coalition for the protection of human rights? Optimism must be based upon sincerity. Immanuel Kant would insist that the moral imperative must be categorical and not hypothetical. Our actions cannot be predicated by mere expediency in the calculation of accrued benefit; rather, our actions must be done because we perceive and know them to be right.

At this juncture, this new millennium, we must defend and preserve the universal truths to which we have committed our common association. Truths are simple and self-evident. If we must succeed in preserving the integrity of the United Nations, then we must reject the inequitable representation of the world’s people as reflected by the present structure of

the Security Council; reject the undemocratic processes of decision-making in the Security Council; and reject the continuous violation of the United Nations Charter by the powerful. If we fail to make these rejections a reality in this millennium, then let us agree that all the talk of moral imperatives and human rights is but mere political expediency.

Nevertheless, we the free people of the world will always insist, as the American jurist Learned Hand did, that:

“Right knows no boundaries, and justice no frontiers; the brotherhood of man is not a domestic institution.”

The Acting Co-Chairperson (Finland): The Assembly will now head an address by His Excellency Mr. Charles Gomis, Minister for External Relations of Côte d’Ivoire.

Mr. Gomis (Côte d’Ivoire) (spoke in French): At the outset, I wish to commend the excellent idea of having this important Millennium Summit co-chaired by the representatives of two countries, friends of Côte d’Ivoire, Namibia and Finland, which play a decisive role in the fight for the implementation and the respect of the fundamental principles of the United Nations.

I wish to assure them of the full support of the delegation of Côte d’Ivoire.

I also wish to take this opportunity to congratulate the United Nations Secretary-General for his brilliant report, which will enable us to conduct a fruitful reflection aimed at rendering our Organization better able to respond to peoples’ expectations.

In appointing me to represent him at this Millennium Summit, the President of the Republic of Côte d’Ivoire, General Robert Guéi, asked me to say from this rostrum how sorry he was to be unable to be present, being detained by preparations for October’s elections.

Under these solemn circumstances, I wish to express on behalf of its Government and people Côte d’Ivoire’s attachment to the universal principles of the United Nations Charter and its desire to contribute to strengthening them.

We are witnessing an extraordinary acceleration in the world’s development. Peoples are demanding greater well-being, happiness and, above all, freedom. In that spirit, the developing countries in general, and

those of Africa in particular, wish to see this Summit make resolute commitments to the eradication of poverty, the right to development and the flourishing of the human person.

That is why we welcome the importance given to the situation in Africa in the Secretary-General's report. We sincerely hope that the appeal on behalf of the African continent will be favourably received by the international community. My country is one of those which are convinced that most of the problems of the developing countries are due to poverty and destitution. In areas as important as agriculture, education, health and training, these countries face obstacles which impede their development. To these are added the difficulties of exploiting and managing their immense natural resources, because they lack the necessary techniques and technology, and, above all, because they have little weight in decision-making in finance and international trade.

How, then, can we explain the fact that countries with potential of all types are languishing in misery and ignorance while others lacking such resources are living in abundance? We believe that a just and equitable management of world affairs, supported by dynamic and active solidarity, would contribute to reducing the gap between the rich and the poor countries.

At this beginning of the third millennium, the United Nations must cease being purely an administrative institution and become a centre of morality and justice where all the nations of the world feel at home, developing a common conscience by being a family of nations. The United Nations of the twenty-first century has the historic duty of encouraging this qualitative step of active solidarity, not only as an effective centre for mediation, but also by promoting values, attitudes and specific initiatives of solidarity capable of improving inter-State relations.

Our shared Organization must therefore promote and encourage the political will for the ideas in the Secretary-General's report to be quickly implemented on the ground. But, for the United Nations to be truly effective, it must have the means to meet the many challenges which it faces.

This is the model of the United Nations that we must reassert and bring about, adapting it as necessary to take account of the changes which have occurred since its establishment in particular the access of so

many new peoples to the experience of freedom, and their legitimate aspiration to be present, and to carry more weight on the international scene.

By committing ourselves in that way, we will be able to overcome the problems which assail us, whether they concern respect for the purposes and principles of the Charter, reform of the Security Council, globalization, peacekeeping operations, good governance, debt, the environment, the advancement of women, human rights or the AIDS pandemic, to mention but a few.

The time has come for a new experience; we are invited to guarantee the future of the women and men of the twenty-first century.

Before concluding, I wish to take this opportunity to recall that following the change which occurred on 24 December 1999 Côte d'Ivoire now has a new Constitution, broadly inspired by the fundamental values and principles of the Charter. This new Constitution, we are convinced, will permit considerable progress in democracy in our country. The general elections to be held soon will mark the return to a civilian regime and democratic normality.

We sincerely thank friendly countries and the United Nations, as well as its institutions and specialized agencies, for their significant assistance in the electoral process in Côte d'Ivoire.

The Co-Chairperson (Finland): The Assembly will next hear an address by His Excellency the Honourable Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the United Republic of Tanzania.

Mr. Kikwete (United Republic of Tanzania): I apologize on behalf of my President for his absence from this historic event. He would have liked to be here, but he could not be present because of unavoidable national commitments.

Tanzania considers this Summit to be the new foundation for a renewed international commitment to the ideals, promise and vision of a twenty-first century United Nations. In its 55 years' existence, the United Nations has lived its mission and vision. Our Organization was created essentially for the maintenance of world peace and security. It is remarkable that since the end of the Second World War the world has not experienced another world war, and hopefully it never will again. The United Nations has

been able to intervene and resolve a number of wars and conflicts which have threatened global and regional, as well as individual nations', peace and security. I wonder what the situation of the world would have been without the United Nations.

While the United Nations has scored noticeable success in the area of peace and security, much more work needs to be done in the field of the prevention and resolution of conflicts and wars. The existence of huge arsenals of nuclear weapons poses a major potential threat to world peace and security. This has to be eliminated for the sake of humanity. The United Nations also needs to deal with the problem of the illicit traffic and proliferation of small arms. Tanzania is of the view that for greater success and effectiveness in dealing with conflicts, the United Nations needs to work in close collaboration with regional mechanisms and initiatives.

The promotion of human rights, as well as social and economic development among nations and peoples of the world, was another important objective of the United Nations. Today, apart from a few enclaves of Non-Self-Governing Territories, the world is virtually free from classical colonialism, and this is one of the achievements of the United Nations. The United Nations also has to continue the promotion of, and advocacy for, the observance of fundamental human rights, as it has done over the years. We believe that respect for human rights forms a firm basis for peace, security and development in societies and nations.

There is a need for the United Nations to be more involved in matters relating to social and economic development. Tackling the problems of poverty, especially in Africa and the least developed countries, needs to be given top priority. Perhaps nowhere is the problem more compelling than in Africa, where 33 of the 48 poorest countries in the world are located. It is no accident that the overriding development objective of Africa remains the eradication of poverty, ignorance and disease.

The United Nations urgently needs to do much more in combating HIV/AIDS in Africa. Otherwise, untold misery is bound to result.

The United Nations has always been a good advocate for the poor and the weak in their quest for meaningful development. We recall the numerous initiatives made by the United Nations in attempting to create a new international economic order and make

the international community respond positively to the plight of the poor. Our Organization has to do that more forcefully now than ever before because of the obvious challenges ahead of us. There were expectations that globalization and liberalization would lead to increased growth and development, but they have yet to produce tangible results for developing countries. It is recognized that there are opportunities in globalization and liberalization, but the majority of the developing countries are still marginalized because of their weakness, as well as the lack of an international environment conducive to development.

The specific challenges facing developing countries in this regard deserve special attention. The United Nations must help promote measures that would encourage increased technical assistance and a greater flow of resources and investment from developed to developing countries.

There is also an urgent need for the United Nations to help with comprehensive debt relief measures, particularly for the least developed countries. We welcome the awareness of the international community of the need to address this issue.

Furthermore, we expect the United Nations to continue to call upon the developed countries to provide unhindered market access for goods from developing countries, as well as to make technology available to developing countries on a concessional and grant basis.

The United Nations is as relevant today as it was 55 years ago. The world still needs the United Nations, but for the United Nations to perform its mission and realize its vision, it has to be strengthened in its structure and resources. There is a need, therefore, to address the serious financial problems affecting the United Nations budget and the financing of the United Nations development programmes. In this regard, I take this opportunity to call upon Member States to pay their contributions to the United Nations in a timely fashion, without any conditionalities.

In conclusion, it is our view that the reform of the Security Council is long overdue. The Council's continued legitimacy demands that it be urgently democratized through the equitable representation of developing countries in both the permanent and non-permanent categories of membership. We also share the view that the expansion of the Council should include

both developed and developing countries. I believe that that would make the United Nations truly our Organization. At present, it leaves much to be desired; there is much that needs to be done if we are to have an Organization that we can truly say belongs to all of us.

I wanted to share those few thoughts as part of this important millennium meeting of the United Nations at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

The Co-Chairperson (Finland): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Antoine Kolawolé Idji, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Benin.

Mr. Idji (Benin) (*spoke in French*): I should like at the outset to pay tribute to the memory of the international staff members who recently perished in West Timor in the service of the mission entrusted to them by the international community.

The fact that our work is being guided by two eminent personalities from Africa and Europe attests, in a symbolic fashion, to the international community's support for the idea that there is a need to pool our efforts to define a shared vision of our common destiny and to commit ourselves to a compact of solidarity. That is why I should like to pay a well-deserved tribute to Mr. Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of our Organization, and to congratulate him on the report that he submitted for our consideration, entitled "We the peoples: the role of the United Nations in the twenty-first century". His judicious and clear-sighted analysis, as well as his well-founded recommendations, once again bear witness to his commitment and aspiration to make the Organization an effective instrument, commensurate with our aspirations, that can meet the challenges confronting our peoples.

More than 50 years after the creation of the United Nations — and thanks to its actions — the world can be proud of having spared itself a repetition of the conflicts on the scale of those that characterized the first half of the twenty-first century. However, paradoxically, it has not been able to protect itself from the advent of an even more terrifying threat: the potential for mass destruction, acquired by certain countries, which is capable of wiping out all of humanity and our shared home, the earth.

The United Nations has also done significant work to emancipate peoples from the colonial yoke, and today the international community can legitimately

welcome that. However, the Organization's initiatives to support the majority of these countries that are new to the international scene are still very flimsy and have experienced vicissitudes, often disappointing the hopes that they had inspired.

Since 1997, the Organization has been undertaking an internal process of reform required by the new global context so as to make it more capable of meeting these new challenges. The initial results of this arduous and painstaking process are encouraging and reaffirm the need to continue.

We shall not repeat what the Secretary-General has already said so well in his report. We shall limit our remarks to the role that the people of Benin hope to see the United Nations play in the twenty-first century. The United Nations has always been viewed by our people as the most appropriate and promising instrument for setting out the major guidelines for building a human community that is prosperous and safe. But beyond that legitimate concern, the men and women of Benin are rightly asking questions about the form that safeguarding peace and security in the world will take, and about development and the specific signs of cooperation and solidarity that will make it possible to raise their standard of living and to achieve what we in Benin call the minimum shared social living standard — that is, access for every human being, wherever he or she may be on our planet, to food, housing, clothing, medical attention, education and useful economic work for society in an environment conducive to income-producing activity. These, to be sure, are objectives to which the United Nations, since its inception, has dedicated considerable resources through numerous initiatives.

It must be recognized, however, that as of now all of the plans and programmes drawn up over more than 50 years have not been able to reduce poverty, much less to stimulate genuine development in those countries that we continue, with such old-fashioned modesty, to call "developing countries".

Even more than in the past, the credibility of the Organization henceforth will be measured in terms of its capacity to place human beings and the protection of human dignity at the centre of its activities.

There is a need to act rapidly to remedy the negative impacts of the globalization of the economy and of communications, and a need to fill the huge and unjust gap that has developed between those who have

access to the potential that technological progress is making available and those who are deprived of or excluded from it.

The economy and means of communication are now globalized, but what is now needed is to globalize development by mobilizing the international community to shoulder shared but differentiated responsibility and by effectively creating improved socio-economic conditions likely to promote the full flourishing of the human being.

We have a historic responsibility to update and extend the vision of the founding fathers of our universal Organization.

Once again, we must be capable of imagination and vision and must give thought to posterity.

In this context, we believe that in the twenty-first century the United Nations should base its action on collective responsibility; the right to equally shared development and progress; and the universally accepted duty of solidarity. The enjoyment of these three fundamental values by the citizens of the world requires the strengthening of genuine partnership between the three protagonists of international life, namely, Governments, civil society and the private sector.

It is at this price that the imperative needs of democracy, the primacy of law and good governance will be advanced and consolidated at the national, regional and international level.

I conclude by referring to the symbol of the pierced jar, taken from the history of Benin in the nineteenth century.

King Guezo, who reigned in Abomey from 1818 to 1858, faced with the difficulties inherent in his position, bequeathed us these prophetic words, which today have inspired many mottos: "If all the sons of the Kingdom were to come and with all their hands together stop up the holes of the pierced jar, the country would be saved."

The people of Benin have resorted to the symbolism of the pierced jar each time it has found itself at a crossroads, faced with the challenges and the problems of its destiny.

The conference of vital forces of the nation, held in Cotonou from 19 to 28 February 1990, where representatives of all regions of the country and all

sectors of national life were together at a time when great dangers were threatening our very existence, is a recent and historic illustration of that.

The contribution of Benin to defining the new vision of the United Nations for the twenty-first century could be formulated around this symbol, which calls for solidarity, tolerance, sharing, commitment, social progress and development, all of them values that sum up my thoughts here and that are all to be found in those famous words bequeathed to posterity by King Guezo.

It is on these various pillars that renewed United Nations action must be based. On behalf of my delegation, I ask all the inhabitants of the planet earth to support that jar, which today symbolizes our world, so that it will never break into pieces in our hands, which must protect it for the generations to come.

Long live the renewed United Nations so that, throughout this millennium, the planet earth, which we have been given to share, will know peace and prosperity.

The Co-Chairperson (Finland): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Jeremiah Manele, Chairman of the delegation of Solomon Islands.

Mr. Manele (Solomon Islands): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Prime Minister of Solomon Islands, The Honourable Manasseh Sogavare.

The maintenance of international peace and security must remain a major role for the United Nations in the twenty-first century. The world entered the new millennium with increasing conflicts, in particular internal conflicts and wars. My country has fallen victim to this trend. The crisis of the past 20 months has tested the solidarity, security and stability of our young country. It has exposed the real challenges of ethnic differences that exist and can persist in a culturally rich and diverse society such as ours. To resolve the crisis, my Government has launched a National Peace Plan and a Programme of Action aimed at achieving a peaceful solution to the unrest through meaningful dialogue and discussion and at developing the country on the basis of a number of principles, including the rule of law; equitable sharing and active participation by our people in the sustainable development of our national resources; respect for human rights; promotion of and respect for

our different cultural traditions; and a gender-balanced approach to education and employment.

A ceasefire agreement was signed by the conflicting parties on 3 August 2000. The agreement provides a conducive environment for peace talks to proceed. Preliminary peace negotiations have been undertaken, and the actual peace talks are currently under way. My Government is therefore firmly committed to ensuring peace and security for all our citizens, foreign friends and visitors. We are equally determined to rebuild our economy and welcome those who wish to assist in this endeavour. In this regard, may I call on our development partners to adopt a more positive attitude towards my Government's genuine attempts to restore law and order, thus ensuring peace, security, and stability. During this difficult period, Solomon Islands, where appropriate, needs your assistance.

While access to information technology could be the most rapid means to utilize the benefits of globalization and to reduce the development gap between developed and developing countries, for least developed countries the process must begin with infrastructure development. Of particular importance is the development of a reliable and efficient energy sector. Without electricity, access to information and communication technology will remain a distant possibility for our rural communities. The need for intellectual capacity to harness the opportunities of the information age is a key prerequisite for closing the digital divide. Education, including the eradication of illiteracy, therefore remains a priority for Solomon Islands.

Solomon Islands joins those who spoke earlier in stressing the importance of sustaining the future of our planet. Agenda 21 and the related international programmes of action and conventions remain valid blueprints for sustainable development and environmental management in the twenty-first century. We fully endorse the Secretary-General's recommendations on how to address the issues of climate change and environmental degradation, including marine pollution. We must not take for granted the concerns and needs of the most vulnerable Members of our Organization, the small island developing States.

Only a reformed, inclusive and universal United Nations can effectively shoulder the major

responsibilities placed on it. Flexibility and greater understanding should be demonstrated towards those who wish to participate in the work and activities of our Organization. The Republic of China on Taiwan is a case in point. As well, those Member States that are capable and prepared to play a greater role in the Security Council, including Germany and Japan, should be accorded permanent membership. Concrete efforts should now be made on reaching agreement on the outstanding issues of Security Council reform.

Finally, we have just parted from a century of sorrow that saw two World Wars, one of which affected our islands, and countless other conflicts causing sorrow and suffering — a century defined by a culture of violence and intolerance. As we begin the twenty-first century, let us work towards making it a century of harmony, a century defined by a culture of peace and tolerance, dialogue and discussion, and prosperity for all of humanity.

The Co-Chairperson (Finland): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Claude Morel, Chairman of the delegation of Seychelles.

Mr. Morel (Seychelles): My delegation congratulates the Co-Chairpersons for their dynamic stewardship of this auspicious and historic Summit meeting of the United Nations. Our felicitations also go to the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for the commendable report before us, and for initiating reform measures to revitalize the United Nations system as we embrace the challenges of the twenty-first century.

Revitalizing the United Nations would require providing it with the effective instruments needed to pursue its noble objectives. This entails ensuring that it is endowed with the required resources to carry out its mandates, in particular those of promoting economic and social progress. This also entails reinforcing the present mechanisms in place for the maintenance of international peace, security and disarmament, including the United Nations role in peace-making and peacekeeping activities. It also entails strengthening its vocation as an indispensable instrument for a more peaceful, prosperous and just world.

The reform process would be inadequate if the transformation of the Security Council into a democratic and representative organ reflecting both its universal character and present-day realities were not achieved. After seven years of debate, it is of

imperative necessity to bridge positions and make progress.

Equally important for my delegation is that the reform process should encompass the enhancement of the General Assembly as the supreme policy-making organ of the United Nations. It is only through the reinforcement of its role and mandate that the international community can successfully tackle some of the most pressing issues facing humanity, not least of which is the process of globalization.

Globalization has provided many countries, especially the strong economies of the North, with unprecedented opportunities and benefits. However, it has also accentuated the North-South divide, and has exposed the smaller and most vulnerable economies to marginalization. My delegation believes that the key to redressing the unequal impact of globalization is to strengthen multilateral action and reinforce the United Nations system in its commitment to international cooperation for development.

In this regard, my delegation holds the view that there should be even closer collaboration and coordination between the United Nations system, the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization in addressing the crucial question of development. Next year's United Nations conference on financing for development will be a test case for international solidarity. It is my delegation's hope that the conference will result in a new, genuine and meaningful global partnership for development.

That partnership should be extended to the area of international trade, since in the long term we developing countries can only finance our development needs by gaining greater market access and better prices for our exports. Of critical importance to us is the need for the extension of trade preferences for a longer period of time, in order to facilitate our integration into the international trading system and ensure that we can also be the beneficiaries of globalization, not its victims.

The post-cold-war period has not delivered the promised peace dividend. The hopes and expectations of the developing world, as raised by the United Nations global conferences of the past decade, have not been met. Instead, we have witnessed a weakening of the commitment of the countries of the North to support development. More than ever before, we are today living in an interdependent world. The developed

nations therefore have a responsibility to engage with us so as to deal with the major global, economic, social and environmental challenges of our time on the basis of understanding and genuine partnership among equals.

That responsibility should include, inter alia, accepting the vulnerabilities and special needs of small island developing States and fully implementing the Barbados Programme of Action and the decisions of the twenty-second special session of the General Assembly; accepting that the per capita gross domestic product of small island developing States should not be the major criterion in assessing their development needs; accepting that climate change is a direct consequence of unsustainable development policies of the North; accepting that the debt and debt-servicing burden of countries of the South is a principal cause of economic stagnation and underdevelopment; accepting that there is a need to elaborate a comprehensive strategy to promote increased access to science and technology by developing nations; and accepting that it is unjust for a small percentage of humanity to consume an overwhelming share of the world's resources.

The evolution in international relations has brought about new realities in the global order. The Millennium Summit is therefore a timely occasion for the entire membership of the United Nations to reflect upon the articulation of our vision and aspirations of the United Nations in the twenty-first century, and to elaborate fresh approaches to deal with the challenges of our time. The United Nations is not a perfect institution. But it is the only institution that represents the collective conscience of humanity. It remains our greatest hope for justice, peace, security and development. It remains our only hope for a more compassionate world.

The Co-Chairperson (Finland): The Assembly will now hear an Address by His Royal Highness Prince Moulay Rachid, Chairman of the delegation of Morocco.

Prince Moulay Rachid (Morocco) (*spoke in Arabic*): I have the great honour to convey to the members of the Assembly the greetings and high esteem of His Majesty Mohammed VI, King of Morocco. He has asked me to communicate on his behalf the royal message, which he should have liked

to deliver personally before this Millennium Summit, given the special interest he attaches to it.

Following is the text of the royal message:

“At the outset, on this rare and extraordinary occasion, I wish to thank all of those who have contributed to organizing this Millennium Summit. I should like in particular to congratulate the Secretary-General, who has convened this Summit so that, together, we may take stock of the world situation in the context of an ambitious and bold vision for the future of humanity.

“During the century that is now ending, the world has known the best and the worst. It has benefited from unprecedented breakthroughs in the fields of science, technology and global communications, but it has also endured a heavy toll of lethal wars, totalitarian regimes and major upheavals. Today, with the confluence of ideas emerging throughout the world on the supremacy of law and the democratic ideal, we have the opportunity to spare future generations the scourges of horror and inequality experienced in the last century and thus to put an end to the unbroken chain of misery, ignorance and exclusion. We, the heads of State and Government, have a duty at this historic event to make a solemn commitment as we enter the new millennium to open up a new frontier for humanity, with real justice and compassion in solidarity.

“This new frontier for humanity is based primarily on a concept of global human security, which means that no child anywhere will die of hunger; pandemics will not spread; ethnic tension will not erupt into violence; women will not be victimized by discrimination or violations of their dignity; the right of free expression will not be stifled; immigrants will not suffer exclusion; people will not be deprived of education; water boundaries will not lead to conflict; and sanctions will not unduly and unjustly penalize innocent populations.

“This new frontier is also based on strategic and institutional coherence, because local governance can fully succeed only in the context of true international democracy animated by a successful United Nations system and with

human and financial resources that are adequate to the global mandates entrusted to the various agencies. In this respect, it will be necessary in due course to reform the United Nations Charter, updating some of its obsolete provisions while preserving the universal principles that prevailed in the founding of a unique Organization which is called on to play a lead role in the macromanagement of world problems.

“It is also necessary to take advantage of the political impulse of this Summit to promote the restructuring of the Security Council in order to allow that most important organ better to reflect the new world political architecture, taking account of the need for impartiality, effectiveness, representativeness and irrefutable legitimacy. We must recall that, since the most recent reform in 1963, the number of United Nations Member States has grown by two thirds. It is therefore time to expand the representation of the developing world on the Council, attaching priority to the criteria of effective commitment to the maintenance of international peace and security.

“The so-called ‘digital divide’ can be reduced only through a technological democracy that recognizes the right to universal access to information technology as a global public right.

“Finally, we strongly believe that an international order of justice and equity must redress the distortions in the world economy, reduce the harmful effects of speculative financial flows and act more decisively against the social and regional imbalances throughout the world. In this context, I should like to recall the appeal made on the occasion of the establishment of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 1994 by my father, King Hassan II, in calling for the implementation of multilateral global governance, taking into particular account the enhanced coordination of the activities of the Bretton Woods institutions and the WTO.

“The available indicators and statistics and the anachronistic trends that characterize the structure of the world economy prove that it is also imperative to find new sources of financing for sustainable development if we do not wish to condemn broader segments of humanity to misery

without end or to generate global upheavals that could wipe out recent achievements in international law and the relative attenuation of ideological and geopolitical confrontations.

“The special high-level session to be held next year on a world partnership for development will offer an exceptional opportunity to design innovative formulas and to commit additional resources to the developing world, which has been caught in a vise between the constraints of the donors and the indifference of investors. Such an initiative, in addition to being a founding act of multilateral diplomacy for the new generation, would spark active solidarity among men and mark the birth of what I might call ‘planetary patriotism’. In that respect, the African continent, which has been marginalized in all sectors of international life, needs a multifaceted strategy involving a substantial reduction of its external debt; the elimination of protectionist barriers that penalize its products, which are already

undervalued and poorly remunerated; the establishment of adjustment programmes that are compatible with the abatement of its conflicts and an accelerated development of its human resources; technological transfers adapted to its specific needs; and adequately structured financial assistance.

“In that capacity, the Kingdom of Morocco proposes that the United Nations establish a standing high-level mechanism to implement the decisions of the international community for Africa.”

We thank you for your kind attention and express our best wishes for the success of this Millennium Summit, to which our Secretary-General, as well as the international civil servants as a whole, together with the Non-Governmental Organizations Forum, have devoted the best of their talents and energies.

The meeting rose at 7.15 p.m.