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President: Mr. Han Seung-soo (Republic of Korea)

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Address by The Honourable Pierre Charles, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Commonwealth of Dominica

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Commonwealth of Dominica.

The Honourable Pierre Charles, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign affairs of the Commonwealth of Dominica, was escorted to the rostrum.

The President: I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency The Honourable Pierre Charles, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Commonwealth of Dominica and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Charles (Dominica): I am pleased and honoured to address the Assembly on behalf of the Government and the people of the Commonwealth of Dominica. I wish to extend my congratulations to you, Sir, and your country, the Republic of Korea, on your election to the high office of President of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly, confident that your proven diplomatic skills will serve you well in guiding the affairs of the General Assembly with efficiency and purpose. Your immediate predecessor, Mr. Harri Holkeri, is most deserving of our thanks and appreciation for the very able manner in which he presided over the Millennium Summit and the fifty-

fifth session of the General Assembly. Permit me further to congratulate the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, on his election to a second term and on the award of the Nobel Peace Prize to him and the United Nations.

This general debate is being conducted in unusual circumstances. The horrendous terrorist acts of 11 September 2001 have altered the lives of many in ways traumatic and fundamentally tragic. I must again extend deepest condolences and pledge the full support and solidarity of the Government and the people of the Commonwealth of Dominica to the Government and the people of the United States of America and to all bereaved families, including those who lost their loved ones on flight 587.

The ripple effects of those acts have resonated in locations far removed from New York City, Washington, D.C., and Pennsylvania, aggravating economic and social conditions and seriously disrupting efforts aimed at meeting the many challenges confronting the United Nations and the international community. In short, in one way or another and to a lesser or greater degree, we are all victims of those acts of terrorism that were visited upon the United States of America two months ago.

The Commonwealth of Dominica condemns, without reservation, what is undoubtedly the worst terrorist act of our times. We are in strong accord with the sentiments and mandates contained in Security Council resolutions 1368 (2001) and 1373 (2001) and General Assembly resolution 56/1, all of which call

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upon the international community to take unified and cooperative action to prevent and eradicate acts of terrorism. We understand the need for the exercise of the right of self-defence in pursuit of those objectives, and we support the actions being taken to bring justice to the perpetrators, organizers and sponsors of the terrorist acts of 11 September 2001.

Cognizant of the importance of international cooperation in the fight against terrorism, Dominica has proceeded to establish a task force to put in place the necessary legislative and executive measures for the implementation of Security Council resolution 1373 (2001). But to be effective beyond the immediate crisis, counter-terrorism measures, mechanisms and strategies must be sustained through a comprehensive approach that seeks to create and strengthen, through the United Nations, a legal framework against international terrorism, complemented by strenuous efforts aimed at improving the social and economic conditions which adversely affect the poor and dispossessed.

Beyond the immediate peace and security issues affected by the events of 11 September, there has been a considerable impact on the global economy, which has been thrown into an accelerated decline, with consequences that are particularly disturbing for small developing countries like the Commonwealth of Dominica. In the Caribbean there is strong evidence of damage to vital sectors of our economy, such as tourism, financial services and agriculture. The actual and projected losses of jobs in the region are in the thousands, and for those countries that were already experiencing fiscal pressures the prospect of higher unemployment and decreased revenues is daunting.

Complicating the problem is the great concern that in the fight against terrorism and in the drive to enforce counter-terrorism measures, certain areas in which developing countries in the Caribbean region have a competitive advantage, such as the financial services sector, may be subjected to inordinate pressure and be unfairly targeted and linked to illegal activities such as money-laundering. We are convinced that well-regulated, competitive tax jurisdictions should be treated separately and distinctly from illegal activities such as money-laundering. The Commonwealth of Dominica remains firmly committed to the struggle against international terrorism to the same extent that we strive to ensure that our financial services sector, a major pillar of our economic diversification thrust,

does not provide support to the perpetrators of criminal activity in the financing of terrorism.

The current effort against international terrorism is important, and our focus on that activity is warranted. There are, however, other dimensions of the global agenda which should command the attention of the international community and the United Nations. They cannot be relegated to the back burner of our concerns. They comprise a wide range of economic, social, political and humanitarian problems faced on a daily basis and, for the most part, by the poor and disadvantaged of the world. Indeed, some of them are likely to be exacerbated by the fight against terrorism, and their successful resolution will continue to be the greatest challenge of the United Nations and the international community.

At the Millennium Summit last year there was general agreement on the issues needing urgent attention and the goals to be achieved. One year later those goals appear to be as far from being realized as ever. Commitment appears to be lacking on all fronts. The objective of a 50 per cent reduction in the number of persons living in poverty worldwide by the year 2015 suffers from the perennially tepid effort to deal with the root causes of poverty. Contributions from the industrial countries are woefully inadequate, and the required adjustment of the strategies of the international financial institutions is slow in coming. The outcome is less than desirable in creating and maintaining an enabling environment for the more effective management of projects geared to poverty reduction.

That lack of commitment is evident in other areas. A year after the Millennium Summit and six months after the General Assembly special session on HIV/AIDS, the international community seems to have lost interest in a crisis that the Secretary-General labelled the greatest public health challenge of our times. As front-page news, HIV/AIDS claimed attention for only a short time after the special session, but the disease claimed millions of lives last year and created millions of orphans in sub-Saharan Africa, which continues to have the highest rates of infection. The Caribbean region ranks a close second.

The Global Fund for AIDS and Health proposed by the Secretary-General is clearly not realizing its spending target of \$7 billion to \$10 billion, and will not be able to achieve the stated goal of reversing the

spread of HIV/AIDS by 2015, as declared by world leaders at the Millennium Summit. The majority of people infected with HIV/AIDS live in the developing world and the high incidence of HIV/AIDS infection is considered a function of poverty. The circularity of the problem has tremendous implications for economic development, poverty reduction and efforts to raise living standards in developing countries. The accepted premise is that international development cooperation plays a vital role in the development of the mechanisms necessary for enhancing the trade competitiveness of developing countries, strengthening financial systems, and developing human resources, but that role is clearly undermined by the declining trend in official development assistance (ODA).

Mr. Orellana Rojas (Guatemala), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Once again we see the lack of commitment to the fulfilment of a stated goal. It is generally accepted that were industrialized countries to meet their promised official development assistance of 0.7 per cent of gross national product (GNP), the countries of the developing world would be much nearer to solving many of the problems with which they are plagued. As a substitute for the failed promise, developing countries have been told to place greater reliance on foreign direct investment, most of which bypasses the most needy and the smallest economies. The Commonwealth of Dominica falls into that category of States for which official development assistance is vitally critical to the development of their economies. That is why the Commonwealth of Dominica and other States in the region attach such importance to the convening of the International Conference on Financing for Development, which will be held in Mexico from 18 to 22 March 2002. Given the changing global realities that are impacting adversely on the economies of developing States, the Conference will provide an opportunity for us to assess the impact of declining official development assistance and for creating new mechanisms for financing development.

Over the past several years and in many different forums, particularly in the World Trade Organization (WTO), we have been calling for the formal recognition of the special problems facing small vulnerable economies. We fear that without such recognition it will be impossible for small States to be fully integrated into the multilateral trading system of the globalized world. Our fears have been confirmed

both by the generally poor performance of small States under WTO arrangements and by a very authoritative report by the World Bank and Commonwealth Secretariat on the issue of smallness and vulnerability. The unique characteristics of small vulnerable economies, which have been articulated in numerous studies, give a clear indication of the challenges that these economies face in improving their development prospects and in adjusting to liberalization and globalization. Many of these economies are at a crossroads. The reality is that trade preferences are eroding; official flows are declining, while historical ties with former partners in development are fading. It is therefore imperative that in order to prevent further marginalization of small economies, steps must be taken in the multilateral trading system and elsewhere to address the concerns of those economies and to ensure their growth and development.

The exclusion of the Republic of China on Taiwan from membership of the United Nations makes little sense in today's world of globalization and interdependence, particularly in light of the fact that this sovereign State, with a democratically elected Government, is the world's seventeenth largest economy, the fifteenth largest in international trade, the eighth largest foreign investor, the fourth largest in terms of foreign exchange reserves, and the third largest exporter of information technology (IT) products. The Commonwealth of Dominica intends no interference in the internal affairs of any Member State, nor can such interpretation be validly applied to our action. Our plea is a simple call for justice for the 23 million people of the Republic of China on Taiwan and an appeal for the recognition of their right to be treated in international affairs no differently from citizens of any other country.

The eleventh of September 2001 will undoubtedly be remembered for the horrifying nature of the terrorist acts, the magnitude of the senseless destruction of lives and property and the forced recognition of our common vulnerability. But the heroism, the extraordinary fortitude and selflessness of ordinary men and women, and the demonstrated triumph of the human spirit over the worst manifestation of evil, inspire us to hope that with dedicated commitment we can create for all mankind a world that is measurably better than that which we have today. The time to begin is now.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the

Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Commonwealth of Dominica for the statement he has just made.

The Honourable Pierre Charles, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Commonwealth of Dominica, was escorted from the rostrum.

Agenda item 9 (continued)

General debate

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to Mr. George Papandreou, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Greece.

Mr. Papandreou (Greece): Allow me to congratulate the President, Mr. Han Seung-soo, on his election and also to express my deep appreciation to his predecessor, Mr. Holkeri, for his excellent work during the past year.

The nations that constitute this Organization are today attempting to draft a comprehensive convention against terrorism, a difficult but absolutely necessary task. We may not yet agree on how to define terrorism, however the world, with a near unanimous voice, condemned the 11 September events. The world showed solidarity with the American people, the United States Government, and President Bush. That highlights a simple truth and a profound consensus, a consensus that this was an act against humanity, a consensus that this was a crime against the values we hold dear as human beings and as societies, and a consensus that justice must be done.

From the ruins of this tragedy there rises a newborn moral strength, a clarion call to change this world, a call to create a moral order, a world community of values where a genuine sense of justice can prevail. It is in our hands today — in fact it is our responsibility to rise to this occasion, take a bold step beyond our traditional rivalries and consolidate a new spirit of cooperation. Let us make this a common fight for humanity. To do so we need not abandon our national interests. We do, however, need to place them in a wider context, a world order based on common practices, shared principles and global values. We must go beyond rhetoric. That also means that our responsibilities must reach beyond our borders. Whether it be a child who is suffering from AIDS in Africa, an Afghan refugee facing starvation, or a

human being discriminated against because of race, sex or religion — these are today our shared responsibilities. Whether it be our threatened environment, the need for sustainable development, the need for equal educational opportunities, access to the Internet, or the inclusion of the poor in the fruits of development — these are today our shared responsibilities. Nuclear weapons proliferation, weapons of mass destruction and the protection of children in conflict situations — these also are today our shared responsibilities. No events could have made it clearer than did those we witnessed with horror on 11 September. We live in one world and no problem is only our neighbour's problem, it is also our problem.

That underlines the need for a universal response to the challenges that the citizens of this global village face. It underlines the need for standards concerning principles and practices that guarantee justice — from the Middle East to Cyprus, to Afghanistan and to Kosovo. The need for these principles underlines the pivotal role of the United Nations. I should like to express our warm support, respect and gratitude for the tireless efforts of Kofi Annan. Heartfelt congratulations to him and to the Organization he represents, the United Nations, on the award of this year's Nobel Peace Prize. It is a well-deserved accolade, an accolade that carries with it a heightened sense of responsibility to provide global governance in this globalized world — a world of global problems and global opportunities. Greece very much agrees with the words of Louis Michel, speaking in his capacity as President of the European Union, in support of the International Criminal Court and the continued reform of the United Nations.

Today in our search for justice on a global scale, our challenge is to seek moral clarity. We must be able to unite around what is right. The words "freedom", "democracy", "human and minority rights", "equality", "peaceful resolution of conflict", "solidarity", "inclusion", "open society", "multiculturalism", "tolerance" and "biodiversity" must all become the core of our common values. Yet there are different interpretations and different practices in our world concerning these concepts. In our search for a common moral code we must not allow a clash of cultures. We must seek a dialogue of cultures, and from this dialogue of nations, cultures and religions, a common moral code and order can and will emerge. The Charter of the United Nations embodies these values. Our

challenge today is collectively to give practical meaning to them. I should like to mention an important step in recognizing and respecting the dignity and diversity of our cultures in the world. Greece has tabled a resolution on the return of cultural property.

Greece has always stood at a crossroads of cultures. Our best moments have been when we used that richness to learn. Today we are doing so again. Greece is a member of the European Union and of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, yet its roots in the East enrich us in equal measure. We are proud to be European and Balkan and Mediterranean. We once were a nation of emigrants and our diaspora has linked us to all corners of the earth. Today we are a country that welcomes immigrants. They make up more than 10 per cent of our population.

Ours is an open, multicultural society in the truest sense of the word. We see and we understand the world through many eyes. We understand that there are different truths and different histories. Yet we approach our traditions not as a wall that isolates us from each other, but as depositories of knowledge and sources of understanding and communication between cultures. We believe that our histories cannot enslave us, they must become our way of learning for the future.

This commitment to dialogue is also a commitment to reach specific, practical results that will enhance our region's ability and the world community's capacity to establish well-respected values and principles in dealing with world problems such as terrorism. But in our fight against terrorism we must uphold these principles, as they differentiate us from those who use violence as their means. We must also heed what the Secretary-General in his address stressed. The problems we all shared prior to 11 September have not disappeared. However, I am encouraged to report that we have made significant strides in our own region of South-Eastern Europe. We did so by committing ourselves to serve these values: human and minority rights, democratic institutions, good-neighbourly relations and the inviolability of borders. We remain committed to the principle that should differences and disagreements emerge, we will seek to resolve them peacefully with respect to international law. We have managed to establish the framework of common values, one that will help us to cooperate to solve our problems. Emerging from a state of despair, the Balkans today represents a ray of hope for all regions in conflict.

Of course there is much to do. Let me list the priorities. We must turn provisional peace into permanent peace. We can do so by resolving outstanding bilateral issues. We must turn new-found democracies into permanent and active democracies. We can do so by building civic capacity and strong transparent institutions that will guarantee the rule of law. We must contain and eradicate organized crime, a poison that runs through new-found democracies and is often linked to terrorist networks. We must turn opportunistic capital investment into entrepreneurial initiatives and permanent business propositions that provide youth with the prospect of a better and more secure future. We must turn segregated communities into multicultural societies, and we can do so by investing in education. Greece has committed resources, and of course its political will, to the above. We cannot stop now. As a world community we must continue and we must strengthen our investment in people and in financial resources until our work is complete.

Two years ago I stood before you here with my Turkish colleague Ismail Cem, expressing the hope for a new beginning in our relations, relations which history seems to have frozen into constant rivalry and conflict. Today I need not express only hope; I can report that we have made significant progress. I have just come from a meeting with my Turkish counterpart where we signed a series of new agreements. Our meetings have become frequent and regular. We work together. We learn together. We help each other out in times of difficulty and crisis. We have discovered the importance of being good neighbours. We have started to develop a common architecture of trust. The products of our efforts are significant. We are constantly adding confidence-building measures to assure peace in the Aegean.

We have made a commitment to jointly become parties to the Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, and we have taken steps to cooperate against natural disasters. We are cooperating in the fight against crime, drug trafficking, illegal migration and terrorism. We are cooperating in tourism. Our trade has doubled. Energy and agriculture have emerged as new fields of further cooperation. Our two societies have taken the initiative to commence and develop common economic, cultural, educational and athletic activities.

These achievements stand as a reminder of the response of our people after the earthquakes, when they sent us a message saying:

“We have more in common than what separates us; we are all equally vulnerable to pain and suffering; equally capable of sympathy and compassion; equally responsible for the life we offer to the generations that are to follow.”

Again this year Greece and Turkey will jointly submit a draft resolution on emergency disaster relief. Our neighbour's path towards the European Union, a path we wholeheartedly support, has set a new framework within which many of our remaining differences can be resolved. Step by step we are building a solid foundation.

Of course our work in the region is far from complete. The architecture of trust we are building in South-Eastern Europe is significantly hindered by the situation in Cyprus, for the question of Cyprus remains unresolved. The island remains divided in a shameful condition. Cyprus is a tragic example of where our shared sense of justice, our code of values, has gone astray. Yet here is a new opportunity. Both the Greek Cypriot and the Turkish Cypriot communities could benefit from the island's membership in the European Union. It is a win-win situation. I sincerely believe that every Greek aspires to a solution on Cyprus that will satisfy both communities, a solution imposed by no one party and accepted by all. I believe that that is what every citizen in neighbouring Turkey aspires to as well.

Our constant reference to United Nations resolutions that clearly call for the creation of a bizonal, bicomunal federation cannot be interpreted as a desire for outside imposition — both communities have suffered terribly from outside intervention. On the contrary, this call expresses our deep belief in justice for Cyprus, a sense of justice for both communities. That is what the United Nations framework can guarantee.

I therefore appeal to the Turkish leadership to use that framework for a just solution. Let us not expand the wall that divides the two communities in Cyprus to divide Turkey from Europe. Let us instead break down this last Berlin Wall in Europe and help to create a common future for the citizens of a free Cyprus. To all of us in the region, a region seeking to eliminate division, the prospect of the island's entrance into the

united European family should be a source of euphoria, not fear.

If we do share a common moral order, a common understanding of what is right and wrong, then the Middle East peace process had come close to articulating the principles we share. For the good of the people in the region and its stability, that process must continue until a Palestinian State lives peacefully next to a secure Israel. That peace process must begin anew, without preconditions, based on secure initial steps through the implementation of the Mitchell report recommendations. Greece, as both a member of the European Union and a neighbour to the Middle East, will commit its efforts in this crucial situation towards the support of peace, rapprochement and reconciliation.

We also hope that the hardships of the people of Iraq will cease and that the country will be fully integrated into the world community under a leadership that cooperates with the international community and complies with United Nations resolutions. That is also our stand with regard to Afghanistan. We look forward to the day that its Government represents its people and leads them closer to the world community. Here, Greece has already committed substantial resources towards alleviating the humanitarian problem of the Afghans.

At times when it is easy to succumb to fear we must have the strength to build confidence within and among our societies. We must be able to celebrate humanity in this global village, to go beyond our differences and conflicts. One such occasion is the Olympic Games. They are an ancient tradition that grew out of the need for peace in the ancient world of Hellenism. Today the five rings of the Olympic Games, which represent five continents, are the most recognized symbol on this planet, surpassing any commercial logo. Let us use this global celebration to further strengthen our community of common values. Let us again pledge our commitment to the Olympic Truce which the Secretary-General has so strongly supported and the Millennium Summit has called for. Ismail Cem and I have only recently signed a declaration to this effect. Many ministers of the Balkans, Europe and the Mediterranean have followed. I invite all to become co-signatories.

We see that Truce as a moment in time powerful enough to change the world. During the ceasefire in Bosnia the Olympic Truce helped the Red Cross to

vaccinate hundreds of children. The two Koreas parading under the same flag at the Sydney Games was a powerful moment, witnessed by millions around the world. We see truce as a time to reflect. We see truce as a moment of silence. We see truce as a time to question, to examine what we believe. We see truce as a time to heal our wounds. We can use this pause from violence to celebrate and to rejoice, and we can use it to mourn and to remember. In Salt Lake City we can use it to honour all those unjustly lost. If our global quest for peace is a journey of 1,000 miles, then truce is but the small first step. But imagine how glorious the rest of our journey can be if we celebrate humanity, if we give peace a chance and commit ourselves to that first step.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Jan Kavan, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic.

Mr. Kavan (Czech Republic): Let me congratulate Mr. Han Seung-soo on his election to the presidency of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly and wish him every success in this important post. At the same time, I take this opportunity to offer my most sincere congratulations to the Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, and the entire United Nations on the occasion of the 2001 Nobel Peace Prize award, and to express my gratitude for their determination to defend the ideas of tolerance and mutual respect among nations.

Allow me to extend my own and my country's deepest sympathy to all those who lost loved ones in the horrible terrorist attacks of 11 September. We are deeply moved by the unspeakable tragedy and share the grief of the American people and of all those affected. We perceive the horrifying attack as an attack against the entire civilized international community against the principles of freedom, democracy and peace, the principles upon which the Organization stands. In the aftermath of the attacks of 11 September, the concepts of security, peace and solidarity are acquiring a new and distinct meaning. We recognize the growing interdependency of individual actors on the international scene. The dangers of the new threats and risks that confront our civilization come to the forefront. To conquer them we must not only move energetically against the perpetrators, but also concentrate on the causes that propel them.

At the same time, we are witnessing significant progress leading to the creation of new relationships in the international community. The fact that we were able to create such a wide anti-terrorist coalition so swiftly is very encouraging indeed. It is imperative to strengthen that coalition and enable it not only to fight effectively against terrorism but also to contribute to solving other pressing problems, especially those whose solution will strengthen the struggle against terrorism by reducing tension and promoting justice and stability. The current, unusually wide, international coalition against terrorism presents, I believe, a unique opportunity that we should seize. We should do our utmost to make it effective and operational. We should do our utmost not to let it collapse for reasons that would not stand up to the inevitable future scrutiny of our sons and daughters. We should do our utmost to avoid the trap of allowing the struggle against terrorism, the struggle for peace, justice, stability and coexistence, to be replaced by a clash of civilizations, by the very war that Osama bin Laden is calling for, by a war against Islam. That would be a tragedy.

The international community has at its disposal great potential to address even the most complex problems and crises. It must now reach an agreement on how to approach them and on which tools it will employ to address them. International organizations, and the United Nations specifically, play an irreplaceable role in this process.

The Czech Republic is determined to contribute to the search for effective ways to meet the most pressing challenges of today and to support the international response to terrorism and the actions undertaken so far, especially if the military operation continues to be targeted as accurately as possible against military targets, in this, it is hoped, the final stage of the Taliban's defeat. We view these actions as legitimate and in accordance with the United Nations Charter and United Nations Security Council resolution 1368 (2001). Today more than ever we feel it our duty and obligation to preserve and cherish the uniqueness, as well as the open and universal character, of the United Nations and push more decisively for a strengthening of the role we have entrusted to it.

When we approach these most pressing challenges we must be proactive. For its part, the Czech Republic is determined to carry its share. The Czech Republic has submitted its candidacy for the presidency of the fifty-seventh session of the General

Assembly of the United Nations. We hold this highly demanding and prestigious position in great respect and are determined to actively participate in the realization of the demanding tasks ahead of us, in the most responsible manner. We are prepared to be attentive to your voices and concerns and to serve the entire membership. We obviously wish to help with the implementation of the Millennium Declaration, including the eradication of extreme poverty and the integration of human rights into every aspect of our work, as we were so eloquently reminded by Secretary-General Kofi Annan a few days ago. We need to inch forward the necessary reform of the United Nations system, strengthen the role of the United Nations General Assembly, help to challenge the marginalization of important continents such as Africa, Latin America and parts of Asia. We need also to help the United Nations to play an effective role in the struggle against international terrorism.

It is clear that accomplishing the objective of finding and bringing to justice the perpetrators of the attacks on the United States is most urgent and topical. However, other phases can be embarked upon at the same time. I agree with the President of Pakistan, General Pervez Musharraf, who said at this Assembly that a three-pronged strategy is needed: first, to go after the main culprits, the individual terrorists; secondly, to move decisively against the terrorist organizations; and thirdly — what in my opinion is very important — to address unresolved disputes, which proliferate throughout the world and must be resolved in a helpful and just manner. As I listened carefully to speeches delivered here over the last few days by many leading politicians of the world, I was pleased to confirm my conviction that not only the Czech Republic or the European Union, but also many other countries argue that the fight against terrorism should combine the necessary military operations with, above all, decisive attempts to eradicate the root causes of terrorism. It is therefore necessary to pay far greater attention to conflicts that provide fertile soil for terrorism, because if conflicts remain unresolved for decades, they give rise to feelings of frustration, despair and powerlessness or, as the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran put it, to alienation, extremism and lawlessness. Political solutions of conflicts, many of which are essentially political conflicts, will reduce tensions, promote peace and fairness and, especially, take the wind out of the sails of those who put forward the absurd myth that terrorist actions can bring about

anything other than loss of the lives of innocent people and the exacerbation of problems and conflicts.

In our fight against terrorism we need to look for comprehensive solutions and to that end employ all available tools to identify, isolate and destroy the terrorist networks and to combat terrorism as a whole. Our anti-terrorist striving must equally concentrate on combating international organized crime, people smuggling, and drug and arms trafficking. On the financial front it is necessary to cut terrorists off from their resources. A determined focus on preventing money-laundering is a crucial aspect of this effort. Long-term and extensive development assistance aimed at alleviating the most pressing problems of the developing world should be an integral part of these efforts by the international community.

The Czech Republic sees the upholding of the unity and operational readiness of the international coalition combating terrorism as the most imperative task of the day. We, the international community, should not lose this unique opportunity but should take decisive action. The fight against terrorism is a long-term mission and will have an impact on all aspects of our lives. At the national level, the Czech Republic is preparing a national plan for combating terrorism, which is inspired by the Action Plan of the European Union.

In recent weeks the United Nations has shown its renewed resolve to combat international terrorism. We commend the Security Council for its swift action and we support the adoption of Security Council resolutions 1368 (2001) and 1373 (2001) to combat threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts. The Czech Republic is taking all necessary steps towards the full implementation of the provisions of resolution 1373 (2001), and fully supports the actions of the relevant Counter-Terrorism Committee.

My strong belief in the need for political and diplomatic moves does not in any way suggest that one should negotiate with the terrorists. Just the contrary. Terrorists have to be defeated and brought to justice. There can be no negotiations with the terrorists. The evil of terrorism must be eradicated. The fight against terrorism has a higher priority than ever before, and nobody can stay neutral in this fight. The Czech Republic is proud that it was able to offer both military and humanitarian help to the efforts led by the United

States. The Czech Republic is proud that some of its help was accepted and thus that some of our best soldiers can now actively contribute to these joint endeavours.

As I have said, conflicts can be a breeding ground for terrorism. Terrorism fully exploits unresolved conflicts and profits from their expansion. Therefore our intensified fight against terrorism points unequivocally to the need for the international community to pay far greater attention to conflict resolution in various regions. The United Nations must continue its major role in maintaining peace and security throughout the world by applying an integrated approach of conflict prevention, peacekeeping operations and post-conflict reconstruction.

Recognition of the roots of conflicts and education towards tolerance must be incorporated into our preventive strategies. We fully support the implementation of the comprehensive overhaul of the peacekeeping operations as proposed by the Brahimi report (A/55/305) and other recent reports focusing on this issue. The recent liberation of Mazar-e-Sharif in northern Afghanistan, and even the most recent fall of Kabul, improve our possibilities of supplying the Afghan people with the humanitarian aid that they so badly need. That must remain at the forefront of our endeavours. We should do our utmost to alleviate the suffering of the innocent Afghan people. I believe there is an extremely important role for the United Nations to play in the consolidation of the post-Taliban Afghan State that is so desperately needed. We should fully support the current efforts of the United Nations, and especially those of Ambassador Brahimi, to form as soon as possible a stable, broad-based Government that will reflect the ethnic diversity of the country. I agree with Foreign Secretary Jack Straw that the one institution in the world that can deliver that better future is the United Nations.

The greatest tensions today undoubtedly prevail in the Middle East. It is regrettable that much of the progress achieved in the past few years seems to have been squandered. But the uphill struggle that faces us there is no reason for doing nothing and letting things get worse and would only mean that more people will suffer and die. The Czech Republic is a traditional and active supporter of the peace process in the Middle East. We cannot reconcile ourselves with the current setbacks. The political violence must be halted. Diplomatic initiatives aimed at bringing the parties

back to the negotiating table must be fully supported. The Czech Republic fully supports the right of the Palestinians to their own viable and independent State. Nevertheless, its final shape should be the result of bilateral Palestinian-Israeli negotiations with the full backing of the international community.

The international community has been encouraged by the change in political leadership in the Balkans, which offers a new opportunity to secure genuine peace and economic reconstruction. The upcoming local parliamentary elections in Kosovo will be an important moment in the stabilization process. I should like to use this opportunity to pay tribute to the Secretary-General and his Special Representative in Kosovo, Hans Haekkerup, for their work in the region. Our admiration also goes to the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and the Kosovo Force (KFOR).

In Africa, despite some progress, not only poverty and AIDS but also armed conflict remain major challenges to the United Nations and the entire international community. Although the destiny of the continent lies in the hands of the Africans, the international community should strengthen its efforts to assist Africa in its struggle to achieve durable peace and especially to acquire higher levels of development.

The struggle to reduce poverty has to stand at the forefront of our joint endeavours. Debt relief and market access are crucial elements of the economic development of developing countries. The United Nations must continue with its activities to promote sustainable development and continue its programmes aimed at providing basic health care and education, fighting the HIV/AIDS pandemic, and averting the devastation of the environment. A gender perspective should be included in all these efforts. The gap between the rich and poor countries continues to grow and is further exacerbated by the imbalance in the distribution of globalization benefits. The digital divide is just an additional symptom of the growing disparity between the developed and developing countries. The United Nations, in cooperation with national governments, the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Trade Organization (WTO), the private sector, the non-governmental sphere and civil society, must be prepared to address the challenges of globalization. In short, we should respond to the globalization of capital by the globalization of solidarity and social justice.

We need to create a functioning international legal environment in order to prosecute crimes against humanity. The Czech Republic fully supports the entry into force of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, an institution that I believe will be a great asset for the maintenance of international law. The protection of human rights will continue to shape the fate of human society. Human rights are universal and indivisible, and it is in the interests of United Nations Member States to support their Organization in its strenuous effort to secure the protection of human rights in today's globally interconnected world. We must not remain indifferent to manifestations of racism, xenophobia, religious or political persecution, discrimination against minorities, violence against women or the violation of the rights of the child, regardless of where they take place. In this regard allow me to mention the World Conference in Durban, South Africa. However difficult the negotiations have shown themselves to be, they point to the fact that extreme intolerance and terrorism are closely interlinked.

The implementation of United Nations reform is imperative in order to make the work of our Organization more effective. As I said at the beginning of my statement, as a candidate for the presidency of the fifty-seventh session of the United Nations General Assembly, I fully support the reaffirmation of the central role of the General Assembly, the revitalization of its work, and improvement of its procedural methods. Equally, the reform of the Security Council, including its enlargement in the categories of both permanent and non-permanent members and limitation of the veto, would enhance the authority of that body. A re-evaluation of the application of the sanctions mechanism must also play an important part in the Council's work. The United Nations, more than any other international forum, is where people of all cultures and religions meet. We come here from various parts of our planet to solve the problems of today's world. Despite our different backgrounds we gather here to approach the problems that face us bound by the universal human values that unite us. The highest of them all is the value of human life. We have been tragically reminded that we need to promote the culture of peace and to build an environment in which the principles of these universally shared values will take root. Now more than ever we must strive to overcome our differences and be guided by our common interests. Let us unite our efforts and ensure

that our work during this session of the General Assembly contributes to a better, safer and more just world.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now invite His Excellency Mr. Hugo Tolentino Dipp, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Dominican Republic, to address the Assembly.

Before listening to His Excellency, allow me to express, I think quite legitimately, the feelings of one and all gathered here. On behalf of all those gathered here at this General Assembly session, on our own personal behalf and on behalf of our Governments, I offer our most sincere condolences at the loss of many of your fellow citizens as well as the nationals of other countries as a way of expressing our solidarity, our appreciation and our deep sympathy for our fellow human beings. With these words, allow me to express our deepest grief and, once again, our deepest solidarity with the people and Government of the Dominican Republic.

Mr. Dipp (Dominican Republic) (*spoke in Spanish*): I address this General Assembly grief-stricken at the death of 260 people in the tragic aviation accident yesterday in this city of New York. Most of the individuals stricken were, like myself, of Dominican nationality. Our profound appreciation goes to the heads of State and Government, to Ministers and to representatives who have expressed their condolences to the people and Government of the Dominican Republic at this tragedy. I am much obliged to you, Sir.

On behalf of the Government of the Dominican Republic I offer our congratulations to the President on his election to the stewardship of this session of the General Assembly, convinced as we are that he will indeed succeed in guiding this session in the very best interests, and for the good, of the international community. Likewise, we offer our most heartfelt congratulations to the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, on his having been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. That honour, together with that bestowed upon the United Nations, proves and ratifies the confidence and recognition felt for the work being done by the international community represented in this Organization on behalf of all mankind.

Despite the fact that in September this year — on the heels of the events of 11 September in New York and in Washington, D.C. — the United Nations devoted

a number of plenary meetings to the issue of terrorism, it is still today impossible for us to separate this from the other items that we must deal with on the agenda of this session. The significance of these tragic developments is of such magnitude that it is imperative for us, as a matter of conscience, to stop and think in greater depth about their complexity and their repercussions on the history that it is our lot to have to live through, and about the most relevant ways for us to prevent and combat this scourge. That is so because it is plain to see that in the time that has elapsed between September and these days of November, we have managed to go further and into greater depth, gaining new insights about the terrorist phenomenon. We absolutely agree with those who have already spoken that terrorism cannot be justified in any way, and that the excuses some would seek to advance to validate these deeds based on the existence of certain economic, social, cultural or political situations, are unacceptable. However paradoxical it may seem to some, the conviction has also been stressed that, while terrorism is unjustifiable and inexcusable, it is in those very situations where terrorism finds its breeding grounds, where frustrations and lack of prospects can fan hatred and irrationality, where being shut out and having no hope, being shunted to the sidelines and suffering from poverty can incubate and give birth and impetus to twisted feelings of indiscriminate and irrational vengeance.

Faced with the sad reality of the events of 11 September just past, we are absolutely convinced that the direction set for us by the Millennium Summit was the right one, that is, the path of peace and of fellowship among people. At that historic gathering the rationale was analysed and the framework set for action by the international community to promote human rights, security, disarmament, economic development, equality of nations, and the fight against hunger, poverty, disease, exclusion, social, racial and gender prejudice, and the abandonment of children, the disabled and the elderly. There can be no doubt that these are the priority objectives for the prevention of violence and crime, that is to say, for the struggle against wars, against genocide and against terrorism.

The full weight, pain and inhumanity of the provocations of 11 September must not divert us from the goals that we set for ourselves in the Millennium Summit Declaration, nor draw us into any disproportionate violence. When last month we

addressed this Assembly we stated that the most prized virtue, indeed the democratic essence of this Organization, that is of the United Nations, is its commitment and determination to uphold respect for human rights. It follows that although we know that terrorism is the antithesis of that virtue, we must not therefore act to confront it while failing to live up to the obligation to protect those very rights. While acting in a legitimate reaction of self-defence, we should not be overcome by a spirit of retaliation but should rather seek to apply international law and justice. That is why the Dominican Republic cannot ignore the political measures that surely will also contribute to preventing and combating terrorism. Thus, we must resolutely support Security Council resolution 1373 (2001), adopted on 28 September, and feel ourselves also bound by earlier resolutions and covenants the United Nations has worked out over time in its fight against terrorism.

In 1945 the United Nations Charter highlighted as its core concern the need to preserve peace. That was only to be expected after a war that had brought death to millions of human beings and had wreaked havoc in the life of many nations. The time that has elapsed has brought us to the conviction that there is no better way to preserve peace than to do all that we possibly can to prevent war. The United Nations is ever more necessary to attain that end, because within it we find the underpinnings for promoting a healthy and creative understanding among nations. Our fidelity to the foundations of the Organization must be backed up by a shared political will leading to actions that prove irrefutably that we believe in and live up to what we say and promise.

The unanimous adoption of the Millennium Declaration, inasmuch as it represented a profound commitment by the vast majority of the world's leaders, amounted to a kind of rebirth and renewal of the United Nations in coming to grips with the problems and challenges confronting us in the twenty-first century. In that Declaration it was decided to do all that we could to establish a just and lasting peace in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, and the determination was reaffirmed to support all efforts aimed at ensuring the sovereign equality of States, respect for their territorial integrity and political independence and the right to self-determination of peoples that remain under colonial domination and foreign occupation.

That pledge makes it incumbent upon us to bring our full moral force to bear and to avail ourselves of all possibilities afforded us by the machinery of the Organization to resolve the conflicts that keep a number of States around the globe in a state of war. We have no doubt whatever that the conflict between Israel and the Palestinian state must come to an end via compliance with the multiple resolutions towards that end that have emanated from the General Assembly, thus honouring what we agreed upon in that Millennium Declaration.

Moreover, we set for ourselves the purpose of spurring forward reform of the United Nations Charter and respecting the equality of the rights of nations. Ratifying the Millennium Declaration means that there can be no delay in turning the Security Council into a body that would respond to the historic realities of the present world and in establishing a logical set of democratic balances based on those realities. It seems to us fair for the non-permanent members to participate in the Security Council via a rotational system that would give to all the same opportunity. By the same token, the Dominican Republic believes that it is also a matter of equity and historical realism for us to accept the Republic of China on Taiwan as a Member of the United Nations. Geopolitical reasons must not override situations of fact that have been recognized in bringing other States into the United Nations.

In the Millennium Declaration the problem of globalization was addressed with the following words:

“We recognize that developing countries and countries with economies in transition face special difficulties in responding to this central challenge. Thus, only through broad and sustained efforts to create a shared future, based upon our common humanity in all its diversity, can globalization be made fully inclusive and equitable.” (*resolution 55/2, para. 5*)

As we speak, a Ministerial Meeting of the countries members of the World Trade Organization (WTO) is being held in Doha, Qatar. Most countries with small economies are rightfully calling for the fulfilment of all the agreements of the Uruguay Round. We hope that they will not be saddled with unbearable new burdens, that their calls will be heard and that generous solidarity and cooperation will be shown, as well as understanding of the imbalances, differences and

asymmetries in the pace of development when comparing rich countries to poor, small ones.

Among the objectives of the World Trade Organization are respect for human rights, strengthening democracy and preserving the environment. All that will not be possible if the process of globalization is not carried out with a sincere and resolute determination to show understanding and to provide cooperation and technical assistance to help the majority of the nations on this planet to achieve development. How are we to understand the deadlines set by the World Trade Organization for attaining certain economic objectives, in some cases as soon as 2003 and in others 2005, when the Millennium Declaration, aware of the inequalities and difficulties facing most nations, seeks to redress no sooner than 2015 — and only to a certain degree — the poverty of millions upon millions of human beings whose income is less than \$1 a day? We hope that at the conferences scheduled by the United Nations, such as the International Conference on Financing for Development and the World Summit on Sustainable Development, light can be shed on these problems in an effective way, yielding equitable measures designed to reduce the inequalities separating peoples one from the other.

Allow me finally to refer to an aspect most intimately tied to respect for and recognition of human rights, something that also coincides with the Millennium Declaration inasmuch as it refers to the demands of women and gender equality. Indeed, the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), based in the Dominican Republic, is one of the few United Nations institutions located in a developing country, and the only international institute devoted to research on and training for the advancement of women. The Secretary-General, in his report to the General Assembly presented in the Third Committee on 17 October 2001, said that, notwithstanding the difficulties and uncertainties that INSTRAW has encountered in the last two years it has managed to obtain the minimum resources for fulfilling the mandate assigned to it by the Assembly and the Economic and Social Council.

He went on to say that inasmuch as the Institute has begun to produce tangible results via the information system and contact networks in creating an awareness of gender issues, perhaps the Assembly would wish to adopt a decision on how Institute would

be able to operate productively and cost-effectively beyond the year 2001.

Let us not let INSTRAW — that noble institution, a pioneer in the advancement of women, particularly of women in developing countries — perish for lack of resources. Let us make a consistent and generous gesture, demonstrating solidarity, so that the General Assembly will ensure the continued existence of this institution beyond this year of 2001, by allocating in the United Nations budget the funds necessary for it to continue to work towards its fruitful humanitarian ends.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): Before calling on the next speaker, I should like to ask subsequent speakers to bear in mind the number of speakers still to make their statements. I remind Members of the fact that 15 minutes has been allotted to each statement to allow us to complete the programme and speakers' list within the time allotted.

I now take deep pleasure in calling on His Excellency Mr. Baboucarr-Blaise Ismaila Jagne, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Gambia.

Mr. Jagne (Gambia): On behalf of my delegation, I should like to present our heartfelt condolences to the grieving families following the tragic plane accident yesterday.

Let me at the outset congratulate Mr. Han Seung-soo on his unanimous election to preside over the fifty-sixth session of the United Nations General Assembly. With his wealth of experience and wisdom we have no doubt that our deliberations will always be crowned with success. He may rest assured that in carrying out the important mandate entrusted to him, he will not find the cooperation of the Gambian delegation wanting. On behalf of my delegation I should also like to pay a special tribute to his predecessor for a job well done.

As for our indefatigable Secretary-General, I add my voice to those of previous speakers in congratulating him, and the United Nations, on winning the Nobel Peace Prize. In addition to that, my delegation commends him for his effective and inspiring leadership, in turning the United Nations around in such a way that much of the hope that was lost has since been restored. Mr. Secretary-General, you deserve our respect and admiration.

The circumstances in which we are meeting this time are far different from previous sessions for reasons well known to all of us. The terrorist attacks on New York, Washington, D.C., and Pennsylvania on 11 September took the whole world by surprise because of their cataclysmic proportions. Nothing can ever justify such barbaric acts. Unfortunately, like so many countries present here today, we too were bereaved following the attack on the World Trade Center. I should like at this juncture to express profound gratitude to President George W. Bush for his kind remarks. The Government and people of the Gambia, as well as the families concerned, are deeply moved by the President's thoughtfulness. All of this shows that terrorism has no boundaries and, worse still, it has no respect for the sanctity of life. It is incumbent upon all of us therefore not to offer sanctuary to any terrorists or their sponsors.

In the Gambia, His Excellency the President Alhaji Dr. Yahya A. J. J. Jammeh, declared three days of national mourning and requested all mosques and churches to pray for the deceased in solidarity with the friendly people of the United States and their Government. While we continue to pray and mourn, individually and collectively, we in the Gambia subscribe unreservedly to Security Council resolutions 1368 (2001) and 1373 (2001), of 12 and 28 September 2001, respectively. Similarly, we welcome the adoption of the Dakar Declaration on terrorism by the Conference of African Heads of State and Government, held in Dakar, Senegal, on 17 October 2001.

Having said that, I would, however, hasten to point out that it is one thing to adopt resolutions and declarations but it is quite another to implement them fully. It goes without saying that the fight against international terrorism is neither easy nor the business of a select group of countries alone. Certainly not. This international scourge can only be dealt with effectively through concerted international effort. However, it will serve no useful purpose to request Member States to report on measures taken in the fight against terrorism when the requisite means to do so are not available. This will be a long and difficult engagement, but at the same time it is not an impossible task. In the process, no country should be excluded. Consequently, as a first step, the Security Council should inquire of Member States what they need, at the national level, to equip them in the fight against terrorism, especially in terms of training and logistics. In our view, that is the priority

of priorities, because no category of countries can be considered safe unless and until all categories of countries are seen to be safe.

Let me mention *en passant* one very important point. The Gambia, where I come from, is predominantly Muslim, but we do not at all subscribe to the misleading concept that the struggle against terrorism is one between Islam and Christianity. For that reason we in the Gambia are committed to signing and ratifying all the relevant United Nations conventions against terrorism.

Allow me now to dwell a little on some domestic issues. As was widely reported all over the world, the presidential elections that were held in the Gambia on 18 October 2001 received the unanimous endorsement of the entire international community as free, fair and transparent. All international observers present in the country expressed the same views. The 1996 elections were also free, fair and transparent, but we were given a mere pass. In the 2001 elections we passed with flying colours. As of right, therefore, we expect our principal partners in development, who were still sceptical in 1996, now to show the way forward by embracing the Government and people of the Gambia in a new spirit of solidarity geared towards a fresh and reinvigorated partnership. We have kept our part of the bargain as a nation. We have delivered what was expected of us — in fact, we did more and better than expected. What happened immediately after the election results were announced is ample demonstration of political maturity. Let me give a graphic illustration of what I am talking about by borrowing a paragraph or two from His Excellency President Jammeh's victory statement.

"Fellow Gambians, [...] I would want to enjoin you all after the celebrations to put the campaign and all the euphoria and the differences and misunderstandings of politics behind us and come together as one people to work with my Government, supporters and non-supporters alike, to further develop this country."

President Jammeh then went on to thank the principal leaders of the opposition for their courage and maturity displayed in extending their congratulations to him in a telephone conversation. The President then said:

"The gesture was indeed most welcome and I would want to restate my expectation that with the elections now behind us, we would put our

differences of political ideology aside and work together as members of the same family to pursue the development agenda we in this country have set for ourselves, in the best interest of our beloved people."

That indeed was the icing on the cake. It can now be proclaimed without any fear of contradiction that the Gambia, despite all the odds, is consolidating its position among the leading democracies in Africa, and indeed in the whole world.

Mr. Ould Deddach (Mauritania), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Elsewhere on the African continent, while we cannot claim that the same pattern of free and fair elections and the rule of law prevail, we can note with satisfaction that the signs are encouraging, although a lot more remains to be done. In neighbouring Sierra Leone we commend the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) for what has been achieved so far. As elections are fast approaching it becomes even more urgent to accelerate the process of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration.

The importance of a regional approach to conflict resolution cannot be overemphasized. We will have to sound our own trumpet by commending the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) for the preponderant role that it has played in the quest for a lasting solution to the problems in the Mano River area. With regard to another neighbouring country, Guinea-Bissau, the Gambia, in its capacity as coordinator of the Group of Friends of Guinea-Bissau, would like to launch an appeal to the donor community to cooperate closely with the Group with a view to convening the long overdue round-table donors' conference. As stated in the Fall report following a mission to West Africa some time ago, certain countries in transition, such as Guinea-Bissau, need special and urgent attention. I am referring to the important report by Assistant Secretary-General Ibrahima Fall. We are not done with that report yet, for it raises such serious issues as the regional approach to conflict resolution.

We are also following very closely the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It is gratifying to note that the Security Council adopted resolution 1376 (2001) by which it gave the green light for the launching of phase III of the deployment of the United Nations Organization Mission in the

Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC). My delegation also encourages the parties concerned to pursue the inter-Congolese dialogue with renewed vigour and to cooperate with the Facilitator. We are saddened, however, by the illegal exploitation of natural resources and other forms of wealth in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. There is obviously a direct link between such practices and the prolongation of the conflict. Still, in the Great Lakes region, we pay a special tribute to former President Mandela for his laudable efforts to bring peace to Burundi. Concerning the situation in Angola, my delegation continues to believe that UNITA's ability to wage war must be further reduced through tighter sanctions. In this context we note with satisfaction the extension of the mandate of the Monitoring Mechanism.

Turning to other parts of the continent, my delegation welcomes the decision of the Security Council to terminate the sanctions that were imposed on the Sudan. We are also calling on the Council to make a bold move and lift the sanctions imposed on Libya. The international community demanded that the Libyan authorities hand over the Lockerbie suspects for trial in exchange for the lifting of sanctions. The international community must now honour its obligations and stop moving the goal-posts.

Outside Africa we also continue to express concern about a number of conflict situations. Seemingly, the most intractable of the lot is the situation in the Middle East, and, notably, the Palestinian problem. There can be no lasting peace in the Middle East without resolving the Palestinian question. We in the Gambia have always held the view that, while recognizing the right of Israel to exist within secure borders, we also believe that the relevant United Nations resolutions on the Arab-Israeli conflict should be implemented, culminating in the creation of an independent Palestinian state.

In the situation between Kuwait and Iraq, we in the Gambia have always maintained that the international community should, as a matter of urgency, find ways of alleviating the suffering of the Iraqi people. But at the same time, the Iraqi leadership must be accountable for the Kuwaiti prisoners of war and missing persons. The families of the prisoners of war and missing persons have also been suffering for too long and, therefore, we call upon the Iraqi Government to respect and comply with the relevant

Security Council resolutions in order to achieve peace and stability in the Gulf region.

It is an irony that long after the end of the cold war, the situation in the Korean peninsula remains basically the same. We in the Gambia were, however, very much encouraged by the visit to North Korea of President Kim Dae Jung of South Korea in June last year. It is only through dialogue and the exchange of such high-level visits that the peaceful unification of the Korean peninsula will be achieved.

Similarly, it is our fervent hope that one day the Republic of China on Taiwan and the People's Republic of China will unite but, as the saying goes, let us put first things first. As clearly stated by my delegation during the meeting of the General Committee, the Government of the Gambia would like to reiterate that the exceptional situation of the Republic of China on Taiwan needs to be reconsidered by this body. Only a few days ago, the Republic of China on Taiwan was admitted to the World Trade Organization (WTO). That is no mean achievement and, therefore, my delegation would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Government and the 23 million people of the Republic of China on Taiwan. We in the Gambia have no doubt that they will make constructive contributions to the work of the WTO. It will be recalled that the Republic of China on Taiwan is now the world's seventeenth largest economy in terms of gross national product (GNP) and the fifteenth most important trading nation. Considering that the Republic of China on Taiwan possesses the world's third largest foreign reserves, in addition to its strategic position as the sixteenth largest foreign direct investor, it does not make much sense to continue to exclude it from the United Nations. Politics aside, the Republic of China on Taiwan has a lot to offer the international community. For instance, in the crucial area of information and communication technologies (ICT), the real revolution of our times, the Republic of China on Taiwan is in the vanguard. We all know that the issue of ICT is among the top priorities of the United Nations and we therefore look forward to the special event on Tuesday, 20 November, when the Secretary-General will launch the United Nations Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) Task Force. How will we be able to benefit from the expertise of the Republic of China on Taiwan when it is excluded from the work of the United Nations?

The Republic of China on Taiwan is active in other important areas as well, especially development cooperation, by providing experts and through international financial institutions, and, likewise, in the humanitarian field by providing disaster relief to countries in need. The case of the Republic of China on Taiwan is unique. It is exceptional and should be treated as such, quite apart from observing the principle of universality.

Another country which has much to offer the international community is Cuba, ranging from medicine to sports. After more than three decades, the sanctions imposed on Cuba should now be lifted. These sanctions can no longer be justified; in fact, they are counterproductive.

Prior to the tragic events of 11 September, we had already identified a number of areas for increased international cooperation within the framework of the Millennium Declaration. Foremost among these is the eradication of poverty. It is made a priority of priorities in the Millennium Declaration, if not *the* priority. In the World Development Report 2000-2001 entitled "Attacking poverty", the President of the World Bank in his foreword stated that "Poverty amid plenty is the world's greatest challenge." We are also of the view that poverty constitutes a serious threat to international peace and security, knowing that 1.2 billion people live on less than \$1 a day. That is why our leaders undertook to cut by half the proportion of people living in extreme poverty by the year 2015. Of the 1.2 billion who live on less than \$1 a day, 300 million are in Africa. Under these circumstances the New African Initiative is indeed a timely response. We only hope that unlike previous blueprints for Africa's socio-economic development, the New Initiative will not be left to gather dust. It would appear for the first time, that we, the Africans, are in the driver's seat. That is a clear demonstration of ownership and commitment. Our principal partners in development should also complement our efforts by providing the necessary resources as a matter of urgency. The Economic Commission for Africa should work closely with the various regional economic groupings to ensure proper and effective coordination. We are confident that the momentum generated by the adoption of the New African Initiative will be intensified with the convening of the International Conference on Financing for Development at the summit level in Monterrey, Mexico, next year. That Conference will

provide a unique opportunity for the international community to translate into reality the global solidarity spelled out in the Millennium Declaration, especially in such vital areas as official development assistance (ODA), foreign direct investment (FDI) and debt reduction, or outright cancellation in some cases, and market access — to mention only a few.

Similarly, the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Rio+10), to be held in South Africa next year, will also provide a golden opportunity for stocktaking, notably for a comprehensive review of the implementation of Agenda 21.

All efforts geared towards the eradication of poverty would be incomplete without addressing the issue of food security. My delegation therefore looks forward to the convening of the World Food Summit in June next year. A related issue is health. We in West Africa, particularly we in the Gambia, would like to eradicate malaria as a matter of urgency and, as a first step, our leaders have adopted the Rollback Malaria Programme. We will need the support and solidarity of the entire international community in this endeavour, especially within the context of the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization.

With special reference to the least developed countries, it will be recalled that the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, held recently, adopted yet another Programme of Action for the decade 2001-2010 aimed essentially at the eradication of poverty. We hope that the rest of the donor community will support that Programme fully by making available the resources necessary for its implementation. In any poverty eradication programme, the most vulnerable groups, that is, women and children, should be given special attention. That is why the Government of the Gambia remains committed to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, including the further actions and initiatives that emanated from the Beijing+5 Conference held last June. The same applies to the Nairobi forward-looking strategies for the advancement of women and all other initiatives that promote the advancement of women and the girl child. In fact, His Excellency President Yahya Jammeh has now decided that all girls in the Gambia from grades 1 to 12, in virtually all parts of the country, will no longer pay school fees.

Finally, experience has shown that our collective security can only be guaranteed if and when all

members of the comity of nations are equally guaranteed freedom from want and freedom from fear. That can be achieved only through genuine international solidarity. The tendency to look the other way when another needs a helping hand should be a thing of the past. Each time in our history when we are faced with major difficulties, we suddenly realize how much we need one another. We close our ranks and take up the challenges together. We are again at a crossroads. That is why we are all here to renew faith in multilateralism. There is no alternative to the United Nations. We are now strengthened in our conviction that our Organization is nowhere near being a "sunset" Organization. It is a "sunrise" Organization. But it should shine even brighter once the Security Council is reformed to reflect the realities of the twenty-first century. Unless that is done, the Security Council runs the serious risk of becoming irrelevant because it is anchored in the past. We do not want that to happen. It is too vital an organ to be sidelined, but it must adapt and adjust. It is time to move on. Let us be forward-looking. Whatever the outcome may be, Africa must be adequately represented.

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. János Martonyi, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Hungary.

Mr. Martonyi (Hungary) (*spoke in French*): First, may I congratulate Mr. Han Seung-soo on his election to preside over the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly. I assure him that he has the Hungarian delegation's full support in the effective fulfilment of his tasks and high responsibility. At the same time, I wish to thank Mr. Harri Holkeri for the much appreciated work that he carried out in his capacity as President of the preceding session of the General Assembly.

Sixty-three days have elapsed since 11 September. More than 80 nations are in mourning today, mourning the absurd deaths of their compatriots, men and women from all over the world and representing different and various traditions, cultures, beliefs and ethnic origins. Approximately 6,000 people perished as a result of heinous terrorist attacks in New York, Washington, D.C., and Pennsylvania, and we remember the victims in our prayers and extend our deep sympathy and compassion to their families and friends.

These attacks were committed against the entire civilized world and against fundamental human values. The Security Council and the General Assembly very quickly took firm and clear measures in order to defend the universal interests of the international community. To this end, an effective global coalition was created in which Hungary, side by side with many other countries, is proudly participating. Those who perpetrated and supported these terrorist attacks are trying to depict their acts, as well as the reaction of legitimate self-defence to those acts, as a war of religion. Clearly it is nothing of the sort. There can be no justification for these acts, nor for any other terrorist activities anywhere else. In fact, international terrorism pursues political objectives and is trying to undermine our multi-ethnic and multi-concessional world, to exacerbate regional conflict, to pit various cultures one against another and to impose on us by force its own order of hatred and fanaticism. The nature of the challenge with which we are confronted is eminently strategic: first, because it calls into question the *raison d'être* and endangers the very existence of our civilization; secondly, because the terrorist network, which is organizing against us, has managed to develop global capacities; and, lastly, because in the war that is declared against us, terrorism abides by no legal order and follows no rules.

We can welcome the fact that, on the basis of a convergence of interests, cooperation among States has acquired, in the two months following the terrible event, a dimension that is very promising and entirely new. But major combat against international terrorism will certainly not be short. Of course the military action launched against the Taliban regime and the terrorist Al Qaeda organization represent an important element, but not the only one, within the framework of international action. Within this struggle, the tasks that we have to carry out are complex and multifaceted. We have to do our utmost in the political, diplomatic, educational, legal, and also financial, humanitarian, economic and social areas to make sure that we, in the final analysis, emerge victorious from this struggle. We must recognize that in this struggle we have to redouble our efforts to promote the rule of law, to reject extremism, intolerance, discrimination and nationalistic tendencies and to intensify the global work that has to be accomplished in order to eradicate poverty and ensure sustainable development. The fight against terrorism is part and parcel of the general

framework of this global endeavour within which we are trying to build a better world.

The terrorist attacks against the United States will probably be remembered as a turning point in our history, and also an opening to a new era. What is certain is that from now on humanity will not be able to continue in the same way as before. Governments have to shoulder major responsibility vis-à-vis this challenge, which now touches directly upon our everyday existence. The international community managed to find the most appropriate response by bringing together a coalition unprecedented in inter-State relations, the historic importance of which will certainly go far beyond our own era. Hungary stands ready, within the limit of its capacity, to take an active part in that coalition.

In the present situation, the United Nations is called upon to play a role of primary importance, to strengthen the effectiveness of international action. Through the development of 12 anti-terrorist conventions, the United Nations has already contributed very significantly towards the development of a common framework of international law in the fight against terrorism. Through the adoption of other conventions, which are now being prepared, the legal framework will become even more comprehensive and general. However, in order to do that, we must make new efforts and, given the importance of what is at stake, and the fact that we have common goals, the groups of countries concerned should display a greater degree of flexibility. The United Nations should be able fully to play its role of enhancing the practical implementation of international anti-terrorist cooperation.

In the wake of the terrorist attacks, a series of specific measures were implemented by my country's Government. At the international level we have strengthened our cooperation, both political and legal, in the anti-terrorist area with our allies at NATO and our partners within the European Union (EU). We decided also to implement Security Council resolution 1373 (2001), and we will forward to the Committee that was established under the terms of that resolution a detailed report on the national measures undertaken by Hungary to fight terrorism. I should like to recall at this stage that Hungary is a party to most of the international, multilateral conventions against terrorism.

As regards the two most recently passed United Nations conventions in this area, let me state that my country has just deposited today with the Secretary-General the instrument of ratification for the International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings. I should like to announce that Hungary will sign the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism in the upcoming weeks. We are determined to become a party to that Convention as quickly as possible, so as to complement the Hungarian participation in international conventions that are universal in nature and deal with the fight against terrorism. Furthermore, my Government recently submitted to Parliament a draft law to strengthen national regulations in the areas of money-laundering and fighting terrorism.

Hungary attaches very special importance to the success of the international humanitarian action in Afghanistan. Through the two Hungarian humanitarian organizations, which traditionally have played a role in the region, my Government has started to forward humanitarian assistance to the refugees and the Afghan population. Such assistance consists of foodstuffs and blankets for about 15,000 people.

My Government is very deeply concerned at the danger represented by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. Our commitment in favour of multilateral control over such weapons remains unchanged and we participate in international efforts aimed at limiting and eliminating weapons of mass destruction. The tragic events of 11 September and the recent anthrax-related incidents make us realize the possible dramatic consequences of the absence of a reaction by the community of nations to the challenge presented by weapons of mass destruction, including biological weapons. We think that the strengthening of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction will enable the international community to act even more effectively against the intent to use biological agents for military objectives. The ad hoc group asked to work out measures for implementation managed to make notable progress in the almost seven years of its history, and is very near agreement. We regret that it could not finalize its work before the date of the Fifth Review Conference of the Convention. It is important that the Conference should leave aside the divergence of views

with regard to the approach to the modalities of the long-term strengthening of the Convention, and that instead it should underscore the commitment undertaken by Member States to promote the integrity of the system of the prohibition of biological weapons.

In its capacity as Chair of the Fifth Review Conference, Hungary would like to do its utmost in order to justify the hopes expressed by Member States and public opinion that specific results will emerge from the Conference. We would like actively to contribute to making sure that efforts aimed at strengthening the system of prohibition of biological weapons will also continue without interruption after the Conference.

The Statute of the International Criminal Court is a political and legal document of capital importance. It translates into fact the historic aspiration we have had that those who commit the crimes of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity will not be allowed in future to act with impunity. Therefore, we warmly welcome the ratification of the Rome Statute by a rapidly growing number of countries, to date numbering more than 40. Within this context I wish to announce here that the Hungarian Parliament, by a resolution that was adopted almost unanimously, ratified the Statute on 6 November. The deposition of the instrument of ratification will take place in the course of this month of November.

Hungary is working actively so as to ensure that the Court, this very important institution of our era, can start working in the near future. We should also make efforts to ensure that it will be universally accepted as soon as possible because only in that way will it be able to be successful in its work and effective in the area of maintaining peace and international security and effectively protecting international humanitarian law and human rights.

Our world has changed and we all have to change with it. Unfortunately, when I say that I am not saying that earlier challenges have disappeared but rather that, in addition to the difficulties we already have, we are facing a new crisis that compels us to think strategically and at the same time be very resolute in our action. The work that we have to carry out is therefore wider and broader and the only choice we have is to act on the basis of our human values in the interests of our civilization and future security. The United Nations is part and parcel of that endeavour.

The Millennium Declaration speaks of it with great eloquence and the events of 11 September only strengthen the message contained therein by underscoring the crucial nature of the times we live in, a crossroads between two centuries and two millennia.

We are asked to provide answers to the global questions that haunt us and that have been continuously plaguing this world. The success or failure of our efforts to provide such answers will, without any doubt, affect the quality of life of the whole of the twenty-first century. It is in this spirit that my delegation wishes to provide its contribution to the success of the deliberations, held under the very special circumstances of the present session of the General Assembly.

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Ernst Walch, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Liechtenstein.

Mr. Walch (Liechtenstein): Let me first join previous speakers in expressing our heartfelt sympathies to the host country and to the bereaved families for the loss of their loved ones in yesterday's disaster.

Ever since 11 September, the fight against terrorism in all its forms has rightfully been at the top of the agenda of the United Nations and of other international organizations. On behalf of the Government of Liechtenstein, I wish to pledge our full support for international cooperation to combat terrorism. A quick understanding has emerged that multilateralism and international cooperation are the only ways to successfully tackle the challenges we are facing. Once again, the world has looked to the United Nations for leadership in our common fight, and once again the United Nations has delivered. We wish to pay tribute to Secretary-General Kofi Annan. He has navigated this Organization in a most clever, capable and visionary manner through turbulent times and assiduously enhanced its standing in the international arena. Right before the beginning of his second term as Secretary-General the United Nations is a stronger and more credible organization than ever. I wish to congratulate the Secretary-General, and indeed the entire Organization he heads, on being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. No one could be better placed to be a voice of international legitimacy and to provide leadership during the times ahead — and this is a moment when leadership is most needed.

Both the General Assembly and the Security Council have reacted with resolve and determination to the attacks of 11 September. The Council took a bold step in adopting its ground-breaking resolution 1373 (2001). We are indeed facing a new type of crisis and the Security Council has designed a new type of response. The delegation of Liechtenstein looks forward to working closely with the Counter-Terrorism Committee to fully implement the provisions of that resolution. Given the novelty of the task, we appreciate the difficulties and enormous workload the Committee is facing. We also express our support for the transparent manner and the spirit of cooperation and dialogue which the Committee has displayed thus far in carrying out its work. Benchmarking and best practices are of the utmost importance in this context. High standards of enforcement have to be developed and to be applied uniformly to all actors, be they Governments, banks, intermediaries, fiduciaries or attorneys. We are committed to implementing resolution 1373 (2001) as a whole, but will place particular emphasis on its central aspects relating to the financing of terrorism. We have all the necessary instruments in place to make our contribution to suppress and prevent the financing of terrorism. Consequently, I signed on behalf of Liechtenstein the Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism on 2 October this year. Our common effort can only be successful if it is focused on our true goal of stopping financial flows to terrorists and their organizations. We must not, however, venture into other areas of international financing under the guise of fighting terrorism. In this context I wish to state very clearly that bank secrecy as practised in Liechtenstein never has provided and never will provide protection to terrorists or their financial transactions.

If the fight against terrorism is to be a genuinely common effort, it must include all of us. The General Assembly, as the only all-inclusive organ of the United Nations, must therefore play a significant role in our efforts. We trust that the General Assembly will assert its rightful place as the law-making body of the United Nations by adopting a comprehensive convention against terrorism to fill the gaps in the existing framework of international law dealing with specific aspects of terrorism.

The fight against terrorism is multifaceted and the role of the United Nations must also cover a wide range of topics, including what is often referred to as

the root causes of terrorism. Indeed, isolating the extremists, exposing the perversity of their agenda, and thus preventing more misguided and disenfranchised people from joining a cause of insanity, is the only way our fight will be successful in the long term. Poverty, social exclusion and marginalization, and the lack of basic education are key areas we must address. These are, of course, by no means new topics on the agenda of the United Nations, but we need to do more and we need to do better. Informed and educated policy changes are not concessions to the evil of terrorism. Such thinking would lead to paralysis and inaction. It is of crucial importance that the spirit of international cooperation, rather than being selective and short-lived, should prevail in our work on these essential issues.

The United Nations is further challenged on the complex relationship between terrorism and human rights. The promotion and protection of human rights must not fall victim to the fight against terrorism. Human rights are not a luxury that we can afford during good times and dispense with in times of crisis. Rather, they are the foundation upon which all our activities must be based. Curtailing the existing human rights standards in the name of the fight against terrorism would mean giving up our most fundamental values — the very values that those who commit terrorist attacks are out to destroy. This we must not allow to happen. The World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance was concluded on 8 September. I had the honour to attend that event in my capacity as Chairman of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, which served as the regional preparatory body for the Conference. After a most difficult and complex process, the Conference was brought to a successful end with probably the best achievable outcome — the resolution of issues of both the past and the present, and a global anti-discrimination agenda within which we all can work.

The difficulties of the Durban Conference are reflected in the still ongoing debate on remaining technical, but important, details. The necessary political will should be mustered as soon as possible so that the message from Durban can reach people worldwide. The events of 11 September have given additional significance to this message, since racism and intolerance can be both cause and consequence of terrorism. One of our most difficult new challenges in our fight against racism is to prevent discrimination

against people because of their affiliation with certain ethnic groups.

There are those who interpret the events of 11 September as a fulfilment of a predicted clash of civilizations. They are wrong. Those who committed the attacks do not represent a civilization or religion; they believe only in terror, violence and destruction. They are just criminals. Their acts were not an attack on a civilization; they were an attack on, and a crime against, humanity. But, of course, nothing would serve their intentions better than a clash of civilizations. The United Nations is therefore challenged to prevent such a clash. The International Year of Dialogue among Civilizations serves as a useful reminder of what the United Nations has always stood for.

Terrorism cannot be fought only with military measures and international judicial cooperation. Only by going beyond these obvious measures can we be successful in the long term. We must change the collective conscience and awareness of all societies and teach our children the futility and the dangers of resorting to violence as a means of dealing with conflicts. Terrorists utilize the most extreme forms of violence. Therefore, they must be effectively excluded from society. They must be outlawed. It must be unacceptable for terrorists to establish themselves as political players by resorting to violence and by indiscriminately attacking civilians.

This unified stance against terrorism must, in turn, be accompanied by our willingness to engage in a peaceful dialogue with those who advocate legitimate political causes, difficult as that may seem. Only by ensuring that communities and entities are not oppressed, and that they are given room to voice their concerns, can we eventually eradicate terrorism. In this context it is important that the international community develop mechanisms that allow for such a dialogue to take place, based on an agreed framework and existing standards of international law. We must not accept terrorism as a fact of life, but believe in our collective ability to eradicate it. That goal may seem distant or even unrealistic, but so did the goal of eradicating slavery in the nineteenth century and fascism in the twentieth century. It is now up to all of us to free ourselves from terrorism, the scourge of the twenty-first century.

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Thérance Sinunguruza,

Minister for External Relations and Cooperation of Burundi.

Mr. Sinunguruza (Burundi) (*spoke in French*): It is for me a signal honour to take the floor today before the Assembly at its fifty-sixth session. On behalf of my delegation, I wish at the outset to express my sincere congratulations to Mr. Han Seung-soo of the Republic of Korea on his well-deserved election to the presidency of this body of the United Nations. We believe that his vast experience, his dynamism and his competence guarantee the success of our work at this session. He can count on my delegation to be fully available to him. We will spare no effort to facilitate his work so that his noble mission can be carried out to the fullest.

Allow me next to pay sincere tribute to Mr. Harri Holkeri for the way he acquitted himself in his term of office leading the work at our last session. We all appreciated his many talents as a statesman and seasoned diplomat, which in large measure contributed to bringing the work of that session to a successful conclusion.

I should like, finally, to avail myself of this felicitous opportunity to convey the greetings of the Burundian people to Mr. Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations, and to express to him once again my heartfelt congratulations on his unanimous re-election to the helm of the Organization for a second term of office. At the same time, I address to him my warmest congratulations on the Nobel Peace Prize just awarded to him and to the United Nations itself. This token of renewed confidence is a striking expression of recognition of the United Nations family's tireless efforts in every corner of the world for the cause of peace and development. My Government is particularly obliged to the Secretary-General for his personal commitment to helping the people of Burundi emerge from crisis so that through the ongoing peace process they can resume the path of peace, reconciliation and development.

All of us were shocked and horrified by the murderous attacks perpetrated here in New York, Washington, D.C., and Pennsylvania on 11 September 2001. My Government firmly condemned those odious terrorist acts, characterized by indescribable barbarity. The President of the Republic of Burundi, Mr. Pierre Buyoya, dispatched a message of condolence to

President George W. Bush immediately after the tragic events had been reported.

The events of 11 September 2001 mark a new global challenge for the United Nations in its resolute fight against terrorism and for maintaining international peace and security. The Government of the Republic of Burundi fully subscribes to the relevant resolutions of the United Nations on the fight against terrorism. Committed to the ideals of peace and security the world over, it intends to make its own contribution to building a world from which international terrorism will be banished. Towards that end, Burundi endorses the various international conventions against international terrorism. It has already ratified three of them, and this morning we signed the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism, adopted in 1999. The necessary steps will be taken to sign and ratify the remaining conventions. Burundi hails the adoption by the Security Council of its resolution 1373 (2001) and stands committed to examining in depth its scope of application on our own national territory.

In light of the plethora of sophisticated juridical provisions — extant for nearly 30 years now — to fight against this scourge, a profound awareness and far more sustained collective action today is imperative. The Government of Burundi agrees with the content of Security Council resolution 1373 (2001), which emphasizes:

“... the need to enhance coordination of efforts on national, subregional, regional and international levels in order to strengthen a global response to this serious challenge and threat to international security” (*S/RES/1373 (2001), op. para. 4*).

That global response obviously, and as a matter of priority, is an imperative for us, the Members of this institution, the United Nations, on which the Charter explicitly confers the role of maintaining international peace and security.

As to the situation in my own country, Burundi, the present session is being held at a time when the peace process has just completed a particularly decisive phase. Indeed the Arusha Peace Accord, which Burundi signed on 28 August 2000, has begun to be resolutely implemented. May I be allowed to bring to the attention of the distinguished representatives gathered here certain major developments worthy of being emphasized. After a number of consultations

held among the signatories to the Peace Agreement, and after the Facilitation and Regional Initiative, the matter of the transitional leadership for the next three years has been settled. On 1 November 2001, the solemn inauguration of the President and Vice-President of the Republic and the transitional Government was held.

I wish to make a point of expressing the very sincere thanks of the Government and people of Burundi to the heads of State and other eminent personalities that elevated those ceremonies by their presence.

At this important stage in the peace process, I should like to take care of a pleasant duty, namely that of paying tribute first to the late Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, who was the first to play a mediator's role in the inter-Burundian peace process in an extremely delicate setting. Secondly, I wish to make it a point solemnly to hail the courage, vision, perseverance and tact that His Excellency the former President Nelson Mandela displayed throughout the inter-Burundian negotiations so as to help the Burundian people regain the path to peace, reconciliation and democracy. From this lofty tribune I wish to express to him our feelings of profound gratitude. We feel the same sentiments of sincere appreciation to the United Nations and all countries and personalities that have worked from near or afar to see to the signing of the Peace Accord, people who continue to invest of themselves in order to see the Agreement fully implemented. It is thanks to all these pooled efforts that some glimmer of hope is perceptible in the Burundian political skies.

The new Government has set itself as a priority task halting the war, rehabilitating victims and restoring the country in socio-economic terms. Notwithstanding, however, our firm determination to move forward, the programme continues to encounter enormous challenges, challenges such as the persistence of war and the exacerbation of poverty. With regard to the war, we must deplore the fact that armed groups continue to sow grief and desolation in various parts of the country, pursuing a nameless war, a war that is killing innocents in their homes, in the camps for displaced persons and along the roads, a war that favours pillaging and rape and that has destroyed social and economic infrastructures built at great cost. We denounce and condemn in the strongest terms this new type of violence, namely the seizing of school

children by rebel elements to press-gang them into guerrilla forces or to have them do their dirty deeds.

In this context the priority of all priorities for my country thus remains the quest for a ceasefire, which would make it possible to begin the major reforms envisaged during the transitional period. Notwithstanding numerous initiatives directed by our Government towards the armed groups — the Conseil national pour la défense de démocratie-Forces pour la défense de démocratie (CNDD-FDD), and the Forces nationales de la libération (FNL) — inviting them to subscribe to the peace process and join in negotiations, as yet there is no sign of a firm, formal commitment on their part that would allow us to move forward in that direction. Nonetheless we feel that these armed groups no longer have political claims that they can truly brandish, given the fact that the Arusha Accords envisage their participation in transitional institutions, their recruitment into defence and security corps and their social and professional reintegration if they so desire.

While thanking our partners for the variety of initiatives already launched to bring the Burundian rebels into the peace process, I should like once again to call upon all the countries members of the Regional Initiative, the Facilitation in the inter-Burundian negotiations, the Organization of African Unity, the United Nations, and the rest of the international community to continue to bring pressure to bear upon these armed groups so that they will lay down their arms and rejoin other Burundians around the negotiating table without further delay, in conformity with Security Council resolution 1375 (2001), adopted on 29 October 2001, and other resolutions of the Council. We particularly ask for the invaluable help of the countries in our subregion, all of them co-signatories to the Arusha Accords, so that all the necessary steps will be taken to stop these armed groups from attacking Burundi. Notwithstanding these various initiatives, if the rebels continue obstinately to refuse dialogue, my Government will call upon the international community and all parties signatories to the Arusha Accords to do all they possibly can to neutralize and disarm the FDD and FNL and, at the same time, the other negative forces allied to them.

The continuing deterioration in the socio-economic situation in my country constitutes yet another source of major concern for the new government team. Indeed, eight years of the worst kind

of fratricidal war, together with three years of unjustified economic embargo, from July 1996 to January 1999, have plunged the country into a state of extreme poverty which will be difficult to overcome. What is more, international cooperation since 1996 has, as it were, been frozen, thus confronting us with a lack of foreign exchange and a major erosion of our monetary situation. Furthermore, in the year 2000, economic activity continued to suffer from the heavy blows of drought, bringing about negative growth for two consecutive years in an essentially agricultural country.

Over the same crisis period, the situation with regard to health has significantly deteriorated. Notwithstanding efforts exerted by my Government, HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases such as those linked to malnutrition, continue to rage among our people, already weakened by the horrors of war. The major performance indicators for education reflect a net decline. Access to drinking water and general hygiene conditions have seriously deteriorated at a time when many of our dwellings and the basic social infrastructure, such as schools and health centres, have been destroyed by war.

Faced with a particularly trying situation, Burundi looks for a great deal from the United Nations and its agencies, its various bilateral partners, international organizations and non-governmental organizations to help our economy to recover, in the name of international solidarity and for the benefit of our people plunged today into a state of unprecedented poverty. I thus urgently appeal to my country's various partners to make tangible the reality of the promises made at the Pledging Conference for Burundi, held in Paris from 11 to 12 December 2000, for the purpose of rebuilding and helping the recovery of our economy. A round table following through on these commitments made at that Conference is to be organized in Geneva in December 2001. The Government of Burundi counts on the active participation of our partners, particularly in making available the aid promised.

On the international scene the delegation of Burundi hopes to see the implementation of the provisions of the Millennium Declaration adopted last year by the heads of State and Government of Member States of the Organization. It particularly supports the reforming of the Security Council and welcomes the fact that this matter already enjoys the broad-ranging backing of the Members of the United Nations. It

regrets nonetheless that discussions on the modalities that the reform is to take are at an impasse, and this, eight years after the establishment of the Working Group under General Assembly resolution 48/26, adopted on 3 December 1993. My delegation, notwithstanding all that, remains confident that the work of the Working Group concerned will be quickly concluded, the results being of the keenest interest in terms, once again, of galvanizing this major body.

Burundi wishes to draw the attention of the Assembly to the problems that have grown more and more serious and alarming because of the accumulation and excessive and destabilizing proliferation of small arms and light weapons and the arms race. In this connection it is ever more necessary and urgent to develop and effectively implement specific disarmament programmes. We welcome the adoption of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects at the United Nations Conference, held from 9 to 20 July 2001, here in New York. Our surest hope is for that Programme to be effectively implemented to relieve the suffering of people in the regions where this kind of weaponry continues to take the lives of thousands of innocent people. What is more, the Government of Burundi remains devoted to the goal of the total elimination of weapons of mass destruction, whether they be nuclear, chemical or biological.

To have peace and security prevail required adopting a working strategy for conflict prevention, with a view to understanding fully the motives and dynamics of confrontation and to curing this evil at its root. It also means resolutely attacking the structural causes that drive people to revolt, namely ignorance, want, disease, extreme poverty, underdevelopment and its corollaries, and inequities in the distribution of wealth. There is a chain directly linking desperate acts and the fanaticism bred of frustration and humiliation. Thus, the imbalance between the North and the South is unlikely to promote harmonious equilibrium. Indeed, on the basis of available statistics, more than one third of mankind lives in absolute poverty. This is liable to grow worse if the rich countries continue not to shoulder their responsibilities in terms of aid for development.

Improving the living conditions of people contributes, through its induced effects, to reducing other anachronistic factors growing out of poverty,

such as the child labour ban by International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions and the spread of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. My delegation continues to hope that the International Conference on Financing for Development, scheduled for March 2002 in Mexico, will adopt strategies to reduce these inequalities between and within countries. It expects from that Conference a definition of the strategic objectives in terms of consistent policies for integrating developing countries into the global economy, whatever their level of development.

As to globalization, many indeed are those that denounce its perverse effects, as witness the clashes in Seattle and Genoa. In this context, we are duty-bound to see to it that globalization becomes a positive force for all mankind in the best interests of all. Yet another issue of concern to my delegation continues to be that of human dignity, which cannot be conceived as divorced from respect for human rights, including that of self-determination. Towards that end, the delegation of Burundi continues to hope that the Second International Decade for the Elimination of Colonialism, from 2001 to 2010, proclaimed by the Assembly by its resolution 55/146 of 8 December 2000, will help to eradicate its last bastions.

It is impossible to talk about international concord without calling to mind the right to justice, genuine justice and real fairness in the settlement of disputes. On that score my delegation would like yet again to reiterate the importance the Government of Burundi ascribes to the International Criminal Court, regarding which preliminary steps towards ratification are being taken. Indeed, my delegation shares the same conviction as the Secretary-General of our Organization, Mr. Kofi Annan, when he affirms that we must build a world where order and justice reign in terms of respect for the primacy of law in international relations.

The challenges confronting the international community are multiple and take many forms. The efficacy of the Organization will be judged by its ability to keep cohesion intact and to promote people's holistic development, so as to fashion a world where all can realize their potential and where we all espouse peace, fraternity and equality. We are all called upon to strive towards the realization of that noble cause.

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now call upon His Excellency Mr. Hasmy Agam, Chairman of the delegation of Malaysia.

Mr. Agam (Malaysia): My delegation would like to congratulate the distinguished Foreign Minister of the Republic of Korea on his election as President of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly. I have no doubt that under his able and wise stewardship he will be able to guide the proceedings of this Assembly to a successful conclusion. Our congratulations also go to the other members of the Bureau, including your good self, Sir.

I should also like to join other speakers in expressing my delegation's gratitude to Mr. Harri Holkeri for the excellent manner in which he conducted and guided the work of the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly.

I should also like to congratulate Mr. Kofi Annan on his re-election as Secretary-General for another five-year term. We are confident that he will continue to serve the Organization with the same single-minded commitment he has shown in the past. We also congratulate him and the United Nations on being awarded the centennial Nobel Peace Prize. That is due recognition of the many contributions that he and the Organization have made in the service of the international community.

We are gratified that we are finally able to convene the general debate after the uncertainties that we have had to face in the wake of the horrific events of 11 September 2001. Malaysia strongly condemned the terrorist attacks and shared the anguish of the American people over the senseless deaths of so many thousands of innocent people. We once again express our profound condolences to the United States and other countries that lost their nationals in that tragedy. We ourselves lost a number of our own and understand the pain of the bereaved. As an Islamic country, we are very much concerned that a group of misguided people, identified as Muslims, carried out such terrible acts in the name of our sacred religion. They have tarnished the name of Islam, which stands for peace, and have tried to equate their creed of terror with that of our faith, thereby doing a great disservice to our great religion and our community. Fortunately, their ploy has not worked. In this regard we are grateful to President George W. Bush and other world leaders for categorically rejecting the stereotyping and association

of Islam and Muslims with terrorism. In this regard, every effort should be made to ensure that people of the Islamic faith are not discriminated against simply because of their faith, ethnic background or the country they come from.

On an unrelated matter, my delegation extends its sincere condolences to the delegations of the United States and the Dominican Republic, and those of other Member States, for the loss of their nationals in the tragic air crash that occurred yesterday on Long Island.

Malaysia is ready to contribute to the global effort to combat the scourge of terrorism. In dealing with the issue, there is a need for the international community, through the United Nations, to work out a sound strategy incorporating all aspects of the problem. While we understand the natural urge for retribution against the people who are believed to be behind the heinous attacks and their supporters, we do not think military actions are the best and most effective solution, nor politically a wise one. We are concerned that military actions may raise more problems than they solve. A sound strategy should include, aside from the military option, political/diplomatic efforts and legal, economic and other measures. It should involve a long and sustained campaign in an effort to get at and destroy, once and for all, each and every root of the terrorist organization or organizations behind these attacks.

A concerted and coordinated effort on the part of the international community is the most appropriate and effective approach. For this purpose there is a need for the convening of an international conference at the highest level to consider the issue of terrorism in all its aspects and manifestations, including the necessity of agreeing on the definition of what constitutes terrorism. That is important so that pure terrorism, which cannot be excused under any pretext, can be differentiated from the legitimate struggles of peoples under colonial or alien domination and foreign occupation for self-determination and national liberation, as recognized by the relevant resolutions of the United Nations and other international declarations. Agreement on the definition of terrorism is vitally important so as to clear up any ambiguities and uncertainties that may hamper international cooperation. Such a conference should also address the important issue of the root causes of, or factors that spawn, terrorism. Those factors may be political, economic or social, but they must be addressed in all

seriousness and objectivity so that appropriate strategies and practical and effective measures can be formulated to deal with them.

As for Afghanistan, there should be an immediate cessation of the current bombings in order to spare the hapless people of Afghanistan further harm and suffering. They have suffered too long enough — 20 years too long. They should be allowed to return to their villages and homes to prepare for the cold winter season and Ramadan, which are fast approaching. The cessation of the bombings would also allow for the return of international relief workers so that they can resume their commendable humanitarian work. Enormous amounts of international assistance are required. We commend those countries that have responded generously and appeal to those that have not done so. We ourselves have set up an Afghanistan Relief Fund with a very positive response from both the Government and the public. On the political/diplomatic front, the United Nations should make every effort to bring peace to Afghanistan through a political settlement. We hope that the debate that is now going on in the Security Council on this issue will yield constructive results.

The situation in Palestine and the Middle East continues to be a matter of serious concern to the international community. The issue must be urgently addressed, not only for its own sake but also to prevent it from being exploited by certain groups of people for their own ends. It is imperative, if enduring peace is to be achieved in the Middle East, for the peace process to be revived on an urgent basis. We believe that the Mitchell report offers a good basis for bringing the situation back to the negotiating table. We commend the Palestinian Authority for unambiguously accepting the report. However, we regret that the Israeli side, while indicating general “acceptance”, rejected major parts of the report, including the call for the complete cessation of settlement activity, one of the main causes of the current cycle of violence in the occupied Palestinian territory.

The continued military offensive against the Palestinians raises questions about the sincerity of the Israeli leadership to work for peace. The Israeli authorities have tried to cow the Palestinian people by an overwhelming use of force, using an assortment of its formidable arsenals. That excessive use of force has resulted in more than 800 Palestinians being killed and more than 20,000 being wounded. Regrettably, the calls

of the international community have fallen on deaf ears as the Israeli forces continue their offensive against the Palestinians on the pretext of ending the campaign against terrorism. The aggressive actions by the occupying Power must cease if peace is to be given a chance to grow.

There is no military solution to the problem. Indeed, the provocative measures taken by Israel will only aggravate the situation. We therefore strongly urge the Israeli Government to desist from pursuing a military solution. A just, comprehensive and lasting solution is possible only through a negotiated political settlement — a process that the international community and this body must actively pursue. This must include the complete withdrawal of Israel from all Arab and Palestinian land occupied since 1967, including the city of Al-Quds al-Sharif and the occupied Syrian Golan. We also reaffirm our support for the establishment of an independent State of Palestine, with Al-Quds al-Sharif as its capital. Only the implementation of all international resolutions on the Palestinian issue can guarantee lasting peace between Israel and Palestine. We once again call on Israel to comply with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and all other relevant resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly. Equally, we look forward to the return of the Syrian Golan without further delay. We hope to see a future environment that will bring development and opportunities in a peaceful and stable Middle East.

Malaysia has consistently voiced its opposition to the use of sanctions as an instrument of collective punishment. No one can deny its debilitating effects on the general populace of the affected countries. We therefore strongly urge the international community, in particular the Security Council, to seriously review the impact of sanctions on Member States, particularly those imposed on Iraq and Libya, which in our view should be lifted as soon as possible as they have already served their purpose.

The danger of a nuclear holocaust remains real and serious. We should strive for the ultimate objective of a world free of weapons of mass destruction — nuclear, chemical and biological weapons. We should make every effort to strengthen all existing nuclear-related disarmament, arms control and reduction measures. The multilateral search for genuine measures for disarmament and non-proliferation, particularly in

the nuclear area, must remain the highest priority on the global disarmament agenda.

After more than 20 years of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, the United Nations finally recognized its catastrophic impact on populations around the world and convened a special session for an expanded response to the pandemic. It is now up to the international community to take resolute and concerted action to combat this scourge and to acknowledge that the world's most affected populations are also among the poorest and lack the much-needed resources to act alone. With about 95 per cent of all HIV-infected people living in developing countries, it is essential that every assistance be given to them to combat the scourge. We hope that a review conference will be convened a few years from now to assess how far we have come in our fight against this devastating disease.

Racism constitutes one of the most heinous forms of human rights violations, not only in itself, but as it also gives rise to other egregious forms of systematic human rights violations such as colonialism, slavery and genocide. These have in turn resulted in poverty, underdevelopment, marginalization and social exclusion for far too many. We are therefore heartened that the outcome of the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, held in Durban recently, contained elements that will further our efforts to eradicate racism, the most prominent of which is the recognition by the international community that slavery and the slave trade are crimes against humanity. Unfortunately, we view the outcome documents as inadequate as they do not sufficiently address the plight of the Palestinian people, who are victims of policies based on discrimination and exclusion.

We look forward to the upcoming special session on children as an affirmation of the centrality of children to our common future and a positive proof of our commitment to ensuring the survival, protection and development of all children around the world. While many of the goals set by the World Summit for Children have been achieved, an estimated 600 million children are still struggling to survive, eat and learn on less than \$1 a day. Let us also not overlook the plight of children affected by sanctions, such as the hapless children of Iraq, many of whom do not survive beyond the age of five.

Many of us in the developing world had welcomed, indeed embraced, globalization almost unquestioningly as if it were a panacea for all our problems, only to be disillusioned over time when we found that rather than a holistic process benefiting all of humanity, it was being pursued more often than not as a strategy for the benefit of a few. While the world is richer today, millions of people are still living in absolute poverty, suffering from want, sickness and malnutrition. Globalization is a complex process, with as many opportunities as challenges. While the impact of globalization is profound and pervasive, not all of it is necessarily positive. As we embrace it there is a need to ensure that we minimize its negative impact, particularly on the developing countries.

If globalization in its present form is pursued, characterized, *inter alia*, by weakened national sovereignty and growing ownership and control of new technologies by powerful nations, it will not be the universal remedy it was thought to be. The Asian financial crisis demonstrated forcefully the downside of globalization. It demonstrated the inherent instability of the world economic system, in which trade and economic liberalization have not necessarily led to faster growth and development for the developing countries. What is clear is that growth and development require an enabling international environment and international support that can promote growth with equity for the benefit of all.

To enable developing countries to participate in and benefit equally from globalization, adequate funding for development, among other things, is required. It is therefore most disheartening to see the steady decline over the years in the volume of official development assistance (ODA) to developing countries. The continued need for an inflow of ODA and new and additional financial resources will become even more critical with the advancement of globalization and the shift to the new knowledge-based economy. Unless the ODA situation improves, the developing countries will be further marginalized in a rapidly globalizing world economy, characterized by rapid change, high technology and stiff competition. The developing countries, particularly the least developed, must therefore continue to be assisted in a more sustained fashion in order to bring about a more equitable distribution of growth and economic prosperity. The developing countries, for their part,

must put their house in order by adopting sound economic policies.

The issue of financing for development is particularly relevant and vitally important in solving the problems of development faced by many countries. The International Conference on Financing for Development, in Mexico early next year, will provide the opportunity for us to achieve international consensus on issues pertaining to financing for development in all its aspects. We thank the Government of Mexico for its willingness to host that important Conference and look forward to participating constructively in Monterrey. We hope that the Conference will be able to address the core problems relating to financing for development, including other systemic issues such as the reform of the international financial architecture, on which, in spite of a general recognition of the need for reform, there has been no progress thus far.

As an innovative source of financing for development, the Conference in Monterrey could also consider, *inter alia*, the possibility of establishing an appropriate system of international taxation for the purpose of infrastructure-building in the least developed countries. This international tax, which was suggested by my Prime Minister, Mr. Mahathir Mohamad, will be contributed by those countries that have benefited from international trade, over and above the economic aid given by them to the developing countries. Malaysia is quite prepared to contribute to such an infrastructure tax.

The challenge facing developing countries in integrating themselves into the international trading system lies in their ability to fully and actively participate in the multilateral trading system. Regrettably, many developing countries have not benefited from global trade liberalization because of their inability to have access to the markets of developed countries. Although globalization carries with it the notion of free trade, many developed countries maintain protectionist regimes and subsidies as basic instruments of economic policy, even as they insist on opening up the markets of the developing countries in the name of globalization. It is also disappointing to the developing countries that, structurally, little has been done in the area of trade to improve their ability and capability to compete in the global market. There is, therefore, an urgent need to facilitate the integration of the developing countries

into the global trading system through, *inter alia*, the special differential measures provided for under the Uruguay Round. A new round, should it be launched, should ensure that negotiations effectively address the particular concerns and problems of developing countries. However, any negotiations will have to formally recognize that the least developed countries — indeed, for that matter, many of the developing countries — have neither the financial nor human resources to meet their existing obligations, let alone the outcome of future negotiations. In this regard we believe that the role of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), as one of the few mechanisms concerned with the development of the developing countries, is of the utmost importance. We hope that UNCTAD will continue to play a leading role in helping developing countries, particularly in efforts to reach the Millennium Declaration's development target of halving poverty by the year 2015.

With regard to the situation in Africa, my delegation welcomes the United Nations Millennium Declaration adopted last year, which, among other things, pledged to pay special attention to meeting the special needs of Africa. The international community must continue to assist African countries in their development needs. We should continue to assist our African brothers in their struggle for lasting peace, poverty eradication and sustainable development. Malaysia, for its part, has been able to make a modest contribution through the Malaysian Technical Cooperation Programme, launched in 1981. To date, many participants from African countries have taken part in various short-term and medium-term courses in the public, administration and technical fields in Malaysia. We have also developed economic relations with some African countries based on the concept of smart partnership, involving Governments and the private sector, with the goal of promoting sound and sustainable economic activities to ensure a win-win relationship for all. Within our limited resources, Malaysia looks forward to further consolidating our cooperation and solidarity with Africa in the spirit of South-South cooperation.

Malaysia welcomes the Secretary-General's pledge to move the United Nations from a culture of reaction to a culture of prevention. This culture should be the cornerstone of the Organization's collective security system for this century. It is a far better and

more cost-effective approach, in financial as well as in human terms, than mounting any operation or activity after a conflict has erupted. We are pleased to note that the Secretary-General continues to pursue that culture with the relevant regional organizations in order to further enhance a comprehensive approach by drawing on regional preventive strategies. We urge the Secretary-General to continue to consult the relevant regional or subregional groups in this regard.

In conclusion, I should like to raise an issue that was mentioned by my Prime Minister, Mr. Mahathir Mohamad, when he addressed the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly. The problem relates to immunities granted to nationals of Member States by virtue of the 1946 Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations and the 1947 Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of Specialized Agencies once they are appointed as officials of the United Nations, such as a rapporteur. While Malaysia acknowledges the need for immunities to be granted to ensure that these officials are able to carry out their mandate effectively, it seems that they are able to hide behind this cloak of immunity for every criticism made of their own Government, including words that fall outside their mandate. Surely even they should be treated as ordinary citizens, governed by the laws of the land, when they are not officially "on mission". My delegation calls for clear guidelines to govern the conduct of United Nations officials, especially when residing in their own countries, so that their actions fall strictly within their mandates and that they will enjoy immunities there only at such times as they are officially performing their functions as United Nations officials, and not all year round. Surely, also, there should be a better basis for the appointment of United Nations officials — a nominee should be one who is known for his or her neutral or unbiased views, and not who, in the words of my Prime Minister "is well known for his virulent attacks" — to report on any given matter. Surely on this issue the United Nations would be among the first to agree that while there is a need to protect and ensure the freedom and impartiality of its officials, it must also, at the same time, protect the rights and interests of its Member States.

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now call on His Excellency Mr. Anthony Charles Rolle, Chairman of the delegation of the Bahamas.

Mr. Rolle (Bahamas): The President has been elected to chair at what is undoubtedly one of the most challenging sessions of the General Assembly in recent times. My delegation congratulates him on his election. We pledge our full support to him and express our confidence that under his leadership the work of the Assembly will have a positive impact on our collective efforts to meet the many challenges facing our world.

My delegation would also like to take this opportunity to commend his predecessor, Mr. Harri Holkeri of Finland, for his leadership as President of the fifty-fifth session, the Millennium Assembly.

We are in times of great tragedy but also of laudable triumphs. The Secretary-General and the United Nations have rendered outstanding and inspiring service to the world's peoples. Mr. Secretary-General, we celebrate with you and this Organization the well-deserved Nobel Peace Prize awarded to you, even as we express our appreciation for the exemplary leadership that you continue to provide to the United Nations.

My delegation also wishes to take this opportunity to express its sincere sympathy to the Governments of the United States and the Dominican Republic and to the families of those who lost their lives in the crash of a United States commercial aircraft in New York yesterday.

While recognizing the many challenges the global community will face in the twenty-first century, leaders at last year's Millennium Assembly nonetheless were optimistic that peace and prosperity would be important hallmarks of the new century. Their hopes have been severely undermined by the indefensible acts of terrorism perpetrated in the United States on 11 September 2001. The horrific scenes of death and destruction in New York, Washington, D.C., and Pennsylvania, so indelibly etched in our minds, have no doubt changed the world forever. The Government and the people of the Bahamas mourned with countries all over the world, including our sister Caribbean countries that lost loved ones, and expressed our sadness at the senseless loss of life and wanton destruction of property.

Even as events in Afghanistan unfold, the United Nations, and indeed the world, now face a dilemma: how to confront the grave challenge which international terrorism has defiantly issued to the world and at the same time meet the Charter obligations to

promote human rights and social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom. We must be visionary and creative in ensuring that the resources and energies of the United Nations and of the international community are used to implement a balanced agenda that will deal effectively and resolutely with terrorists and terrorism and that will also continue to have a positive impact on human rights, economic and social development and other common objectives.

The international community has spoken with one voice in condemning international terrorism as a major destabilizing force in the world. The acts of 11 September 2001 fundamentally shifted security concerns regarding terrorists and terrorism to the workplace, streets and homes of innocent people, creating anxiety, insecurity and uncertainty worldwide. Significantly, the terrorist acts have had serious and damaging consequences on a rapidly globalizing world economy. The economies of both industrialized and developing countries have been severely disrupted, with grave implications for future economic and financial stability. The economic outlook, particularly for many developing countries, is indeed grim. The small economies of the countries in the Caribbean have experienced massive disruption because of their vulnerability to external shocks and heavy dependence on tourism, especially from the North American market. There has been significant loss of employment in the tourism, financial services and related sectors, even as government revenues have fallen and foreign reserves are threatened.

The countries of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) have moved decisively to assess the implications of the terrorist attacks on its member States. As Chair of the Conference of Heads of Government of CARICOM, the Bahamas was host to a special emergency meeting of the Conference, held on 11 and 12 October 2001, which adopted the Nassau Declaration on International Terrorism. That Declaration sets out the action that Governments would take to mitigate the impact on the region's tourism, aviation, financial services and agricultural sectors, which are the major contributors to the gross national product, foreign exchange earnings and employment in the countries of our region.

CARICOM heads of Government also unequivocally condemned terrorism in all its forms and reaffirmed their commitment to work with the

international community in the multifaceted fight against terrorism, in accordance with international law and conventions. It is therefore our hope that the international community will support the countries of CARICOM during this difficult and challenging period.

We in the Bahamas have taken our obligation to cooperate in the fight against terrorism very seriously. We have complied with Security Council resolutions, including resolution 1333 (2000) which calls for the freezing of funds and other financial assets of Osama bin Laden, the Al Qaeda organization and individuals associated with it. The International Obligations, Economic and Ancillary Measures Order 2001, enacted in our Parliament in September this year, prohibits any person dealing with any property and any financial institution licensed in the Bahamas from transacting business with Osama bin Laden, Al Qaeda or any individuals or entities associated with them, who, for these purposes, may be designated from time to time. We have been able to take such timely action because of a comprehensive legislative regime enacted in December 2000 which put in place an effective regulatory regime to ensure that the Bahamas financial services sector is not abused by criminals for money-laundering or any other financial crimes. It was the enactment of that legislation that resulted in the Financial Action Task Force's removal of the Bahamas, in June of this year, from its list of non-cooperative jurisdictions in the fight against money-laundering. As part of its overall review of the international regime for action against terrorists and terrorism, in October this year my Government signed the United Nations Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism. We are following very closely the discussions on a comprehensive convention against terrorism, in order to determine what further action the Government will need to take in this area. We hope that a comprehensive, practical and implementable instrument will be adopted that will take into account the existing anti-terrorism regime. In this we see a clearly delineated role for the United Nations, and particularly the Security Council, which is well placed to articulate a coherent policy for global cooperation in the fight against international terrorism.

Meeting our obligations, however, has not been without sacrifice. The Bahamas, like many other Caribbean countries, has been obliged to divert scarce resources from other critical development objectives to initiate the sweeping security changes required at our

airports and seaports and otherwise to mitigate the impact of the 11 September events.

For the Government and people of the Bahamas, the ravages of hurricane Michelle have further compounded the significant economic setbacks caused by the 11 September events in the United States. Just last week, that hurricane made a direct hit on our archipelagic State, causing extensive damage to infrastructure, agriculture and vegetation in some of our major islands. The Government is still determining the extent of the damage but has already begun the essential period of reconstruction.

The President returned to the Chair.

Globalization and trade liberalization are, and must remain, central issues on the world's agenda. Generally, globalization has presented significant opportunities and has had a positive impact on many countries. However, for others, particularly in the developing world, the freer flow of capital, technology, finance, goods and services across national boundaries — which is the essence of globalization — has not met the stated objectives of improving overall economic prosperity, reducing poverty and closing the technological gap. On the contrary, the social costs of globalization — poverty, inequality and unemployment — remain serious challenges for many of the countries of the developing world. These challenges are further compounded by factors including an onerous debt burden, a limited or inadequate export infrastructure to effectively participate in the global trading system, and an inability to access the markets of the developed world. My Government, nevertheless, is cognizant that the international trading regime of the World Trade Organization (WTO) provides a significant framework within which countries may benefit from globalization and trade liberalization, and work towards appropriately addressing the costs and risks associated with the global trading system. In July this year, the Bahamas submitted its application for accession to the WTO, for WTO membership is a priority for my Government and we hope that our application will receive the requisite support.

We are in a period, leading up to late 2002, during which the United Nations is defining its economic and social development agenda with greater precision, through a series of assessments of international action in specific areas. The Bahamas was pleased to have participated in the Organization's

review of its work and setting of its agenda for further action in the areas of racism, racial discrimination and human settlements and the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. My Government believes that every effort should be made to consolidate those areas in which progress was made at the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance that took place in Durban, South Africa, from 31 August to 8 September this year. Global objectives in respect of human settlements received considerable impetus from the special session on human settlements that took place in New York in June 2001. The Declaration on Cities and Other Human Settlements in the New Millennium, adopted by the Conference, should prove invaluable in addressing chronic problems of inadequate shelter.

The United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects addressed a problem that for the small countries of the Caribbean is a particularly serious one. We wished the Conference could have been more forthright in its adoption of measures to better address these critical issues but readily accept the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects as an essential first step. Decisions taken at these and other United Nations meetings are indeed decisions of the Organization that the Bahamas hopes will be implemented as such by all Member States.

Few countries in the world, if any, have been spared the vagaries of HIV/AIDS. The statistics are compelling — more than 30 million people affected. With respect to the developing world they are even more compelling — more than 95 per cent of those affected live in the developing world. The Caribbean region has not been spared, but we are taking decisive action. Our Pan-Caribbean Partnership launched in February this year has the full support and commitment of heads of Government for effective action against HIV/AIDS in the wider Caribbean region. The Government of the Bahamas in this regard welcomes the contribution of the Government of Canada to the Caribbean HIV/AIDS programme. The special session on HIV/AIDS held in New York in June 2001 gave heads of State and Government the opportunity to set an agenda for slowing and reversing the destructive impact of HIV/AIDS throughout the world. It is an agenda that must be implemented to halt and reverse this tragedy that is devastating populations and

threatening to reverse the development gains made in many developing countries. The developing world will, and must, look for help and support to those having the technology, research capacity and resources by which they themselves have been able to control the spread of this deadly disease.

The year 2002 will also be an active one, both for United Nations benchmark assessments and readjustment of priorities and for addressing significant issues on the international agenda. The International Conference on Financing for Development will be convened in Monterrey, Mexico, in March 2002. As plans develop, we hope that all Members of the United Nations will come to appreciate the need to ensure that the Conference provides the framework within which commitments can be made so that technical assistance can be provided to poor countries for basic infrastructural development, the standards of people worldwide who live in endemic poverty can be raised, developing countries can be assisted to attract foreign direct investment, and information technology can be more freely transferred to developing countries. My Government, for its part, is of the view that small, developing, middle-income countries such as the Bahamas, because of their economic and ecological vulnerabilities, should not be excluded from development financing. It is also the view of my Government that the World Summit on Sustainable Development, to be convened in South Africa in September 2002, should be complementary to undertakings made at the International Conference on Financing for Development. Ten years after the Rio Summit of 1992, the ever-increasing fury of natural disasters, climate change and sea-level rise, and the depletion of biological resources and overall environmental degradation, are but some of the issues begging reassessment that must be part of the blueprint for determined action emanating from South Africa. Likewise, the Bahamas hopes that the Second World Assembly on Ageing, to be held in Madrid, Spain, in 2002, and the special session of the United Nations General Assembly on children, postponed to 2002, should assess progress but, more importantly, must emphasize action that will provide guidance for national, regional and international policy and planning in their respective areas.

The initiatives the United Nations will take up in 2002 to review and assess progress in a significant number of areas should bring clearly into focus the

actions that must be taken by Member States and by the Organization to accomplish agreed economic and social objectives. It is the hope of the Bahamas that these reviews will be followed by a period of intense implementation of decisions that have been agreed, so that qualitative and quantitative improvements may be realized in all areas. We believe that such improvements are essential but must be in concert with United Nations initiatives to meet demands in other critical areas, such as conflict resolution, war, and humanitarian crises worldwide. They should also be in concert with the Organization's efforts to address effectively and comprehensively issues such as the illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, alien smuggling and refugee flows, which do not respect national boundaries. In all such cases, the danger of inaction could have dire consequences, particularly for international peace and security.

In conclusion, the current preoccupation with terrorism has fortunately not paralysed the United Nations. What it has done is to emphasize the need for an effective and cohesive United Nations, capable of responding flexibly to unexpected and contradictory events in a timely and effective manner with little or no disruption of its programmes in other areas. We believe that the United Nations Charter constitutes a viable and firm foundation for the Organization to balance and achieve its objectives, to maintain international peace and security and promote economic and social progress. The Bahamas fully supports the United Nations in all its endeavours.

The President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Li Hyong Chol, Chairman of the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Mr. Li Hyong Chol (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) (*spoke in Korean; English text furnished by the delegation*): I congratulate you, Sir, once again on your election as President of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly. I also wish to express high appreciation to Mr. Harri Holkeri, who carried out his duties as President of the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly in an excellent manner. I would like to take this opportunity to extend warm congratulations again to Mr. Kofi Annan on his re-election as Secretary-General of the United Nations.

Last year, heads of State and Government throughout the world held the Millennium Summit in

this Hall and committed themselves to building a peaceful and prosperous world in the new century. That gave high hope and expectations to all people of the world. However, the developments that are now taking place on the globe overshadow possible implementation of the Millennium Summit commitments. The principles of respect for national sovereignty and equality that constitute a cornerstone of international relations are being undermined by certain forces that consider strength as the means to achieve everything. As long as there is acquiescence to acts of arbitrary power that seek to destroy strategic stability and hold absolute supremacy by establishing a missile defence system in defiance of international opposition, the world will be engulfed in another cold war and arms race.

The problem of the Korean peninsula always comes up as one of the major issues in deliberations on global peace and security. That is because of the power policy and arbitrary actions directed in most cases against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. We are exposed to constant threats from huge armed forces, including nuclear weapons, deployed around the Korean peninsula on the pretext of an alleged threat from North Korea, and that is the main source of instability on the Korean peninsula and in the Asia-Pacific region. That notwithstanding, we have been able firmly to defend the dignity and sovereignty of the country on our own in the face of the offensive by hostile forces, and under difficult conditions resembling an arduous march, unprecedented in our history, thus contributing to the peace and security of the region. That is entirely attributable to the outstanding army-first policies of the respected General Kim Jong Il. The great leader General Kim Jong Il conducted active diplomacy, including his visit to China and Russia and his meeting with the top-level delegation of the European Union this year, and thus made a great contribution to developing overall international relations and strengthening global peace and security.

In particular, the summit meetings and talks between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Russia and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and China resulted in the adoption of documents reflecting shared views on strengthening the leading role of the United Nations in resolving major international issues, ensuring strategic balance, and so on. This serves as an historic milestone in establishing

a fair, new world, based on the principles of mutual respect and cooperation for mutual benefit. We will, as ever, firmly defend our sovereignty and the socialist system of our country and advance convincingly along the road chosen by ourselves under the army-first leadership of the respected General Kim Jong Il.

It is the unanimous desire of all Korean people to reunify the divided country at the earliest possible date. Last year, the inter-Korean summit meeting was held and the North-South Joint Declaration issued for the first time in the history of the national division, thanks to the idea of national independence and great national unity of the great leader, Comrade Kim Jong Il. The Joint Declaration reflects the will and aspirations of the Korean people to achieve reunification independently by pooling the efforts of the nation. It enjoys wide support and is welcomed by the international community. The General Assembly, at its fifty-fifth session, unanimously adopted the resolution supporting the Joint Declaration. With the publication of the Joint Declaration, the enthusiasm for reunification was manifested throughout the Korean peninsula and dialogues and contacts in various fields took place between the North and the South of Korea. It demonstrated that the Korean nation could well open the door to reunification by itself, if the North and the South make joint efforts with sincere will for independent reunification. However, inter-Korean relations and the implementation of the 15 June Joint Declaration, which were proceeding well and in the right direction, now face a big obstacle due to the hard-line, hostile policy and unjust interference of the new United States Administration against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The half-century history of national division and, in particular, experiences during the past year, clearly show that the North and South of Korea should, above all, adhere to a stance of national independence if they are to implement the North-South Joint Declaration. Only when the North and South collaborate as one nation will they open up a bright future for the nation, without becoming a victim of outside forces. The most important element in implementing the North-South Joint Declaration and achieving peace and reunification on the Korean peninsula is to put an end to the hostile policy and interference of the United States against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. It is totally irrational to say that the United States deploys huge armed forces in and around the Korean peninsula and

conducts large-scale military exercises against us to advance peace, self-defensive measures taken by my country to cope with the United States military threat is a threat to peace. Our missile programme is of a purely peaceful nature and does not pose a threat to any country that respects the sovereignty of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

It makes no sense for the United States to argue that it needs to establish a missile defence system out of fear of our missiles while itself possessing thousands of nuclear bombs and missiles that could extinguish humankind many times over. That argument only covers up the United States strategy to gain domination of the world, based on superior power. Since the cold war is over and the North and South of Korea are proceeding towards reconciliation and cooperation in accordance with the 15 June Joint Declaration, there is neither reason nor any other ground whatsoever for United States troops to remain in the South of Korea. Withdrawal of United States troops from South Korea is an urgent issue whose solution should not brook any further delay in the interest of ensuring peace and security on the Korean peninsula and in North-East Asia. Dialogue should be conducted on a fair and equal basis. Resumption of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea-United States of America dialogue will only be possible when the present United States Administration gets rid of its cold-war mentality and adopts a stance at least at the level of the one taken by the Clinton Administration in the last period of its term of office.

During the past two years, we have established official relations with almost all member States of the European Union (EU) and diplomatic relations with the EU itself, and countries of other regions as well, on the basis of the principles of respect for sovereignty and equality. We are also ready to develop relations with the United States on the principles of equality and mutual benefit if the United States respects our sovereignty and freedom of choice, takes an attitude of good will towards us on an equal footing, and refrains from obstructing the reunification of Korea.

Another factor of instability that casts a dark shadow on the future development of the Korean peninsula and its surroundings is the orientation of Japanese moves, that is, the ultra-rightist inclination of Japan and its undisguised attempt to revive militarism. My delegation wishes to draw the attention of all Member States to this matter at this session of the

General Assembly held in the first year of the twenty-first century. The Japanese authorities are not willing to terminate their past crimes against humanity, but try instead to justify them, openly visiting the Yasukuni Shrine, where the departed souls of the war criminals are enshrined, distorting history textbooks for new generations and legalizing the overseas advance of the Japanese self-defence force.

On 29 August, Japan test-fired an H-2A large-size delivery rocket that could easily be converted into an intercontinental ballistic missile. That is a clear indication that the militarism of Japan has become politicized and is proceeding to an open and dangerous stage.

Japan, which has always stigmatized our peaceful satellite launch as a missile launch, said openly that its test-fire of the rocket was done to cope with North Korea's missile, thus invoking military confrontation. Japan should not misjudge our moratorium on satellite launches and the peaceful character of our missile programme. We strongly urge Japan to look squarely at reality; put an end to its past inhumane crimes, and sincerely turn to the road of peace in this new century. That will be good for the future of Japan.

The most important task of Member States today is to strengthen the central role of the United Nations with regard to international issues. It is essential that Member States honour and implement the United Nations Charter in good faith. The United Nations Charter enshrines the purposes and principles for developing friendly international relations on the basis of sovereign equality. However, certain countries do not hesitate to undertake unilateral coercive actions and even resort to the use of force against sovereign States, ignoring and violating the United Nations Charter. Member States should reject any attempt that goes against the United Nations Charter and other principles and norms of international law, and should strive to establish a fair, new world structure based on the rule of law, equality, mutual respect and cooperation for mutual benefit, with a view to ensuring world security and stability. If the leading role of the United Nations in dealing with global issues is to be strengthened, the United Nations should be reformed in a democratic way. In this regard, we are of the view that it is essential to strengthen the authority of the General Assembly. The General Assembly must be empowered to consider issues relating to world peace and security and approve major resolutions of the Security Council

on these issues. Reform of the Security Council should be pursued in the context of strengthening the authority of the General Assembly. We hold that the Security Council reform should be undertaken in full conformity with its intrinsic purpose. The Security Council reform must ensure enough representation of the developing countries and full fairness in United Nations activities for achieving international peace and security. We place on record our strong opposition to considering in any manner the permanent membership of Japan on the Security Council when it has neither put an end to nor recognized its past crimes, and while no agreement has yet been reached on increasing the number of permanent members.

One of the major challenges to the United Nations and its Member States today is global poverty, which grows ever more serious. Poverty, which has resulted from colonialism in the past, continues to be aggravated due to the inequitable international monetary systems and neo-colonial policies. It also becomes a factor that begets conflicts, diseases and hunger and hampers the independent and creative life of peoples and their enjoyment of the right to development. If poverty is to be eradicated, a fair and equitable international economic order should be established and sustainable development ensured. We will have to draw due lessons from the demonstrations in Genoa last July and properly handle the issue of globalization. In this regard, it should be underlined that the developed countries and the international financial institutions assume big responsibilities. The United Nations should encourage Member States to direct their attention to considering more practical measures for eradicating poverty and achieving development.

It is the consistent and principled position of the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to oppose support, of whatever kind, to any forms of terrorism. The large-scale terrorist incident that occurred in the United States on 11 September was very regrettable and tragic and reminds us of the gravity of terrorism. The situation in Afghanistan is now grave, where instability and unprecedented human loss and material damage are brought about by the military operation of the United States. The prevailing situation requires that the leading role of the United Nations in preventing terrorism be definitely strengthened and the national obligations for the

elimination of terrorism be fully discharged by all Member States.

Yesterday we signed the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism and acceded to the International Convention against the Taking of Hostages. That shows that we are making every possible effort to eliminate terrorism in the world. As already stated, the aim of our opposing terrorism is to promote global peace and stability, defend the sovereignty of the country and nation and protect the lives and property of the peoples of the world. We are strongly of the view that imposing the label of terrorist on countries that advocate sovereign equality, while violating their sovereignty and inflicting immeasurable pain on the people by resorting to arbitrary armed intervention, sanctions, and so on, should in no way be tolerated. There is no justification in any case for the use of force or resorting to war and taking innocent lives, undermining the situation and destroying stability in the fight against terrorism.

My delegation wishes to reaffirm that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will continue to cooperate fully with all Member States to uphold and implement the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter under the ideas of independence, peace and friendship.

The President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Rashid Alimov, Chairman of the delegation of Tajikistan.

Mr. Alimov (Tajikistan) (*spoke in Russian*): This session of the General Assembly is facing the very important task of comparing and coordinating the positions of the members of the international community on the most urgent issues of our time, that is, ensuring strategic stability and equal security for all States, strengthening the coordinating role of the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security and the settlement of regional conflict, fighting poverty and disease, and creating conditions for sustainable development and prosperity of all peoples on our planet. It is clear that the search for a collective response to the unprecedented challenge thrown down to mankind by international terrorism on 11 September has become a key subject of this session.

The twentieth century proved convincingly that the United Nations has indeed become the centre for harmonizing the actions of nations in maintaining

peace, ensuring collective security, developing international cooperation, and ensuring respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. Thanks to the joint efforts of its Member States, the Organization has, in 55 years, become a universal forum capable of developing joint political approaches of the community of nations towards resolving the most urgent and complicated problems of world development. The role of the United Nations as the most representative international forum for discussing the whole range of problems faced by mankind, and developing approaches for international cooperation in dealing with such problems, is becoming more significant with each passing year. In the view of the President of Tajikistan, Emomali Rakhmonov, the task of strengthening the central role of the United Nations has become more rather than less urgent.

During the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly the Republic of Tajikistan will be celebrating the tenth anniversary of its United Nations membership. Since the first day of its international recognition, Tajikistan has been working closely with the United Nations. Cooperation with the United Nations in the first years of its independence helped Tajikistan to stop civil strife, to find an effective formula for peace and national accord and now to start post-conflict peace-building.

Mr. Botnaru (Republic of Moldova), Vice-President, took the Chair.

We will never forget that dramatic period and the selfless assistance and support that we were given by Member States, the Security Council, and specialized agencies. Our special gratitude goes to the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, whose contribution to the settlement of the inter-Tajik conflict deserves the greatest appreciation. We believe that the Nobel Peace Prize awarded to the United Nations also reflects the success achieved under its leadership by the international community in the peaceful settlement of the internal conflict in Tajikistan and in overcoming its consequences. We are convinced that the unique experience of peacemaking in Tajikistan deserves in-depth consideration and study. Practical lessons learned from the settlement of the inter-Tajik conflict and the United Nations peacemaking activities will enable the international community to find new approaches towards resolving conflicts in other hot spots on the planet.

The variety of problems dealt with by the United Nations highlights the unique and universal role played by the Organization in regulating international affairs. That is particularly important in the field of international security. The Republic of Tajikistan calls for ensuring strategic stability in the world based on maintaining the existing system of agreements and treaties on disarmament and a continuing process of arms limitation, on both a unilateral and multilateral basis. Tajikistan, for its part, is prepared to make its contribution to this process. In cooperation with our neighbouring States, we are actively working to implement the initiative of establishing a nuclear-free zone in Central Asia. We hope that a treaty to this effect will shortly be ready for signing by the heads of State in our region, and expect that all nuclear Powers will become its guarantors.

The appalling acts of terror perpetrated in the United States on 11 September forced the whole world to confront the issue of international terrorism and take a fresh look at it. In order to solve this problem, it will be necessary to analyse the whole set of new challenges and threats and develop new approaches towards creating a credible and effective system for countering them. May I remind Member States that, on behalf of the people of Tajikistan, immediately after the terrorist acts, President Emomali Rakhmonov conveyed sincere condolences and sympathy to the families of all those who had died or suffered. He expressed full solidarity with the people of the United States and readiness to cooperate closely with their Government and the Governments of other States in eradicating international terrorism.

Tajikistan has always condemned terrorism in all its manifestations and categorically rejects the use of terrorist acts as a means of achieving political or other goals. We reject any attempts to justify acts of terror on political, religious, philosophical, ethnic or racial grounds. International cooperation in combating terrorism and extremism is not an abstract notion for our country. The Tajik people are very well aware of the methods and practices of international terrorism. In recent years, Tajikistan has repeatedly been a target of terrorist activities carried out from outside. In addition to the huge material losses, such actions always entail loss of life and enormous human suffering. What is worse, terrorism attempts not only to derail the peace process in Tajikistan, but also to destabilize the situation over a vast region of Asia. Acts of

international terrorism constitute a grave threat to international peace and security. In combating terrorism in any part of our planet, the international community should be guided by similar criteria and act in a resolute, sincere and, most important, consistent manner. All States must unconditionally and fully implement the provisions of United Nations Security Council resolution 1373 (2001), including those which call for depriving terrorists and their sponsors of financial or any other support and haven.

We believe that one of the primary objectives of this session of the General Assembly is to consolidate the legal framework, under United Nations auspices, for the interaction of States in combating international terrorism. In our view, the early adoption of a comprehensive convention on combating international terrorism and the convention on combating acts of nuclear terrorism could be of great significance in this regard. On various occasions, in particular from this rostrum, the President of Tajikistan has called for uniting the efforts of the community of nations to combat the international terrorist underground. Our country has interacted effectively with other States in combating international terrorism on a bilateral and multilateral basis, in particular within the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and other international organizations. The United Nations, with its unprecedented experience and authority in coordinating the efforts of its Member States, is called upon to play the key role in establishing a global system to counteract a threat of such magnitude as international terrorism. It will take much effort and time. However, the lofty and vitally important goal of eradicating this dreadful phenomenon is worthy of such endeavour.

The five weeks that have elapsed since the beginning of the military operation in Afghanistan have proved that the Afghan problem cannot be resolved by means of force alone. There is simply no military solution to it, and history has provided convincing proof of that. At the high-level meeting yesterday of the Six plus Two Group, and today at the meeting of the Security Council on Afghanistan, the delegation of Tajikistan emphasized that under current circumstances the Afghan people have a unique opportunity to return to peaceful and stable development. This is an opportunity for Afghanistan to become a full-fledged member of the international community and to change

its unfortunate image of an accomplice in international terrorism and other criminal, destructive, destabilizing movements. The Afghan nation is on the threshold of fundamental change. The most crucial task, and I would say a matter of honour for the international community, is to help the Afghan people to take advantage of this opportunity. Everything must be done to make sure that in the future Afghanistan is no longer a threat to the Afghans themselves, to neighbouring countries and to international security overall. Everything must be done in order to ensure respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in Afghanistan, including putting an end to the shameful discrimination against women and girls. Everything must be done to restore to the Afghan people hope for a peaceful future and prosperity. Tajikistan is prepared, in cooperation with other concerned States, and with a central coordinating role for the United Nations, to assist Afghanistan, a country with a great history, to regain a worthy future and to restore its former attractive image in the eyes of the international community. We believe that determining the future of Afghanistan is the exclusive prerogative of the Afghan people themselves. One of the indispensable conditions for returning Afghanistan to a peaceful life is ending outside interference and uniting, under United Nations auspices, the efforts of the international community to accelerate the process of political settlement of the Afghan problem and the rehabilitation of the country. Furthermore, it is essential that all hotbeds of terrorism, elements of organized crime and the structures and — most importantly — the production potential of the drug business be eliminated in Afghanistan.

It goes without saying that the territorial integrity of Afghanistan must be guaranteed. Only the establishment of a freely chosen, effective, broad-based, politically balanced and multi-ethnic Afghan administration can guarantee peace and stability in the country. It also goes without saying that the Taliban movement as a political group has no place in a future Afghan administration since this could be fraught with the danger of the recurrence of terrorism and the drug trade in Afghanistan.

We are profoundly concerned about the grave humanitarian situation in Afghanistan. The refusal of the Taliban regime to fulfil the demands of the anti-terrorist coalition to hand over the masterminds and organizers of the acts of terror in the United States has

resulted in new sufferings for the Afghan people and an increase in the numbers of refugees and displaced persons. According to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, among the 22 million refugees throughout the world, at least one out of six is an Afghan. According to the estimates of the humanitarian organizations, the drought that has continued for three years in Afghanistan has already resulted in the incredible impoverishment of the entire population, and military operations and the approaching winter have placed millions of Afghan people on the edge of extinction. The actual reality is such that the coming winter threatens millions of Afghans with death from starvation. Right after the beginning of the United States anti-terrorist operation in Afghanistan, the Tajikistan Government issued a special decision expressing its readiness to open its airspace and related infrastructure for providing humanitarian assistance to the people of Afghanistan who have been suffering from the Taliban tyranny for a long time. We call upon all Member States and humanitarian institutions and organizations to give all the necessary assistance to the people of Afghanistan without delay. If that is not done, then Afghanistan will become the scene of a horrendous humanitarian tragedy. It could cause a wave of instability in neighbouring States and in the region as a whole. We cannot allow that to happen.

The policy of drug production and export pursued by the Taliban regime can be described as a policy against humanity. It is sad that Afghanistan, one of the founding Members of the United Nations and one of the cradles of world civilization and culture, has now, through the fault of the Taliban regime, become one of the world's largest producers of lethal drugs. According to the United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention, the considerable decrease in the poppy crop in Afghanistan this year has not resulted in a reduction of illicit heroin trafficking, either to neighbouring countries or to Europe. Huge amounts of raw opium stored in the Taliban-controlled territory were used for heroin trafficking. The quantity of heroin that has been destroyed in Tajikistan this year alone is three times as much as last year, and this amounts to tons of this deadly product.

As a result of the tragic events of 11 September, a new situation has emerged in Afghanistan. The United Nations has been unable to continue assistance to the Afghan farmers and exercise control over drug

production and trade. The Taliban movement, for whom, under the current circumstances, drug trafficking has become one of its major sources of income, took advantage of this situation. That has put an additional burden on neighbouring countries, such as Tajikistan, that are trying to block drug trafficking from Afghanistan. We understand that the drug threat emanating from Afghanistan can be eliminated only through a lasting peace settlement in the country and by establishing a new coalition government that would ensure fulfilment of all its international commitments. However, that will take time. For this reason we express our gratitude to the Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention and to all donor States that are funding the anti-drug programmes implemented by the Office, and call upon them to increase their assistance to Tajikistan in its noble struggle against illicit flows of deadly substances from Afghanistan, a struggle that serves the interests of millions of people in various countries. We in Tajikistan attach great importance to this struggle and view it as an important contribution to combating international terrorism by depriving it of one of the main sources of its financial support.

The Millennium Summit and Millennium Assembly, which have become milestones in the international dialogue, identified globalization as the main challenge to the international community. There is no doubt that globalization, which is an objective economic process, provides unprecedented opportunities for accelerated development. At the same time, it is obvious that the benefits of globalization are distributed quite unequally, and the balance of benefits and costs is definitely in favour of the developed nations. The conclusion is obvious: for various reasons many developing countries and economies in transition run the serious risk of finding themselves on the sidelines, away from the mainstream development of civilization. Only by applying all available mechanisms of multilateral international institutions can we stop the widening gap in development and incomes between rich and poor countries that was caused by globalization, and prevent an increase in poverty, unequal access to advanced technologies, cross-border crime and the spread of hidden forms of discrimination in international trade.

As for Tajikistan, it faces the long-term problem of rebuilding a country that has been heavily damaged by civil strife. The Government is undertaking all possible measures to strengthen civil society, to

encourage economic recovery and to create favourable conditions for healthy and sustainable social and economic development. We hope that the participants in the Consultative Group Meeting for Tajikistan, held in Tokyo in May 2001, will fulfil their commitments to Tajikistan, which would enable us to channel additional resources to rehabilitation projects. That would increase employment and substantially reduce poverty. The problem of combating poverty will remain, in the short term, one of the priority tasks for the Government of Tajikistan. The targeted comprehensive programme that is currently being implemented in the country envisages, in particular, measures to create new jobs, to improve primary education, to ease access to loans and microcredits, and, what is particularly important, to enhance the development of rural regions. We are carefully studying the experience of other countries in combating poverty. The progress made by some States — in particular in China, our neighbour — is quite encouraging. However, the high level of external indebtedness of Tajikistan is a major obstacle in this regard. It also impedes post-conflict peace-building and poses a serious threat to social and economic stability in our country. We are convinced that in order to support the developing countries and economies in transition in combating poverty it is important for the international community to become more dynamic and flexible in easing the debt burden for our countries.

In recent years we have witnessed an increasing number of major natural and industrial disasters, including hurricanes, earthquakes, floods and forest fires. Human casualties and material losses caused by them have become a serious destabilizing factor. For two years running, Tajikistan has suffered as a result of a large-scale drought, unprecedented in the twentieth century. One third of our cotton and grain crops was destroyed by drought. Cattle farming and animal husbandry products have sharply declined. Shortages of water, including fresh water, have increased. We express our gratitude to the Secretary-General, to the United Nations specialized agencies and donor countries for their prompt and generous response to the appeal made by our President in connection with the unprecedented drought in the spring and summer of this year. The concerted collective response of the international community to natural disasters is evidence of the increasing effectiveness of the available international machinery in this regard. The United Nations has played an important role in developing them. The outcome of the United Nations

International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction has shown the need to increasingly use national opportunities and to enhance international cooperation in this field.

In the context of globalization, natural and industrial disasters demand an appropriate global response. It is essential that the community of nations unite its efforts to prevent natural disasters and deal with their consequences by training personnel and exchanging experience and the results of scientific and applied research. That would also allow coordinated approaches to such global challenges as the greenhouse effect, the depletion of the ozone layer, endangered biodiversity and desertification. All these issues are directly linked to the problem of protecting the environment, a problem that is global by its very nature.

Among the environmental challenges of the twenty-first century, the problem of maintaining water equilibrium and access to fresh water is one of the most urgent. The population of earth is increasing, and the need for fresh water is also increasing, while natural water resources are not increasing. One out of six people on earth does not have access to fresh water today. The danger of the world's diminishing fresh water resources is quite evident: it represents a threat to the environment and to all life on earth. This tendency is not becoming less acute, and therefore Tajikistan, which possesses considerable water resources in Central Asia, greatly appreciates all efforts to deal with the problem of fresh water resources at all levels throughout the world. We are pleased that the initiative of the President of Tajikistan, Emomali Rakhmonov, to proclaim 2003 the international year of fresh water has received wide-ranging support in the community of nations. We believe that the preparation and holding of events dedicated to the international year of fresh water, at both international and national levels, will help us all to find answers to the global challenges faced by mankind and to come closer to a solution to the strategic problem of providing access to fresh water to every person on earth.

With the beginning of the new century, the number of problems faced by mankind has not diminished. The entire history of the United Nations has demonstrated that the best way to deal with problems is through collective action, based on an agreed platform. We have such a platform: the Millennium Declaration adopted by our heads of State,

on a basis of global consensus, in the autumn of 2000. The task that lies before us, the United Nations, is to mobilize energy and resources to achieve our common goals in meeting the challenges of globalization. The peoples of our planet believe in the effectiveness of our Organization. We should not fail to meet their hopes and expectations.

The Acting President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Serbini Ali, Chairman of the delegation of Brunei Darussalam.

Mr. Serbini (Brunei Darussalam): On behalf of His Majesty's Government, I should like to express once again my warmest congratulations to the President on his election and our appreciation to his predecessor, Mr. Harri Holkeri of Finland, President of the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly. I would also like to congratulate the Secretary-General on his re-election. We are extremely pleased that he is continuing to serve the United Nations. The award of this year's Nobel Peace Prize is a fine tribute to his work and to the United Nations agencies and workers in the field, who have served us all with such dedication to the principles of the Charter.

Sadly, of course, this comes at a time when their work is perhaps more crucial than ever before. The atrocities committed in the United States on 11 September have rightly received the absolute condemnation of all civilized people. There is no justification for terrorism. As we have stated both individually and in our regional associations, Brunei Darussalam will continue to do all it can to work closely with the United States and all members of the Security Council to play its part in overcoming the direct challenge that terrorism poses to the proper conduct of international affairs.

The existence of terrorism is, however, a grim reminder that the United Nations agenda, set over the last half of the twentieth century, has yet to be completed. There are many unwelcome legacies from the past 50 years. Though none justify acts of terror, many offer justification for deep resentment and profound despair. Perhaps the most apparent of all at this time is the situation in Palestine, where the justice implicit in the Security Council's resolutions on Palestine is still denied to what is now a third generation of Palestinians. In this respect, we welcome the recognition given by many world leaders, including the President of the United States and the Prime

Minister of the United Kingdom, to the principle of a Palestinian State. Brunei Darussalam hopes that all concerned and interested parties involved in the Middle East peace process will act with urgency in order to bring this about.

As we all know, dispelling feelings of past injustice is an extremely difficult task. In essence, we believe it must involve new approaches to security. We believe all members of all regional associations have a crucial role in this. Brunei Darussalam is trying to do this through the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) Regional Forum in an approach that has been taking shape over nearly a decade now. This involves all the nations of South-East Asia and our partners in North America, East Asia, Europe and Oceania. We seek common understandings through consultation and various confidence-building measures. Members have recognized the complex nature of modern conflict. They have accepted that its roots are often deep and intricately entwined. As elsewhere in the world, it can be the result of long-standing territorial claims, centuries-old animosities and instinctive suspicions or conflicting ideologies. Or it can be as basic as local land disputes or simple lack of basic resources.

Whatever the cause, however, the members believe the Forum is seeing signs of success. This year, for example, it has been able to move things another stage forward and is now looking into the very challenging area of preventive diplomacy. In short, the members see dialogue and consultation not as a series of meetings but as a process. As such, it may never end. In fact, in the long run, the process itself may indeed become the solution.

That, we think, is the framework within which the ideas expressed at the Millennium Summit can be pursued successfully. In short, we believe that the key to security today is the capacity to think locally, regionally and globally at the same time. To us this means that a positive, forward-looking United Nations is crucial. It is here that all these thoughts can truly come together. It is here that all nations can renew and strengthen the tolerance and friendship that are the real building blocks of security.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Nguyen Thanh Chau, Chairman of the delegation of Viet Nam.

Mr. Nguyen Thanh Chau (Viet Nam): I am again the last speaker of the day, but I am happy because it gives me a little extra time to congratulate the President on the effective manner in which he is conducting the work of the session, which gives us every reason to believe that it will be steered to a fruitful conclusion.

I wish also to extend our heartfelt condolences and sympathy to the families of the plane crash victims of yesterday. Let us pray that it had nothing to do with terrorist acts, as the tragic events of 11 September alone were more than enough to bring to the fore the fight against terrorism as one of the top priorities of the United Nations and the international community. Cognizant of the distinction between terrorism and the struggle to exercise a people's right to self-determination, Viet Nam persistently condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, which takes a heavy toll of innocent lives. We fully support the international endeavour and cooperation to ensure world peace, stability and security in full conformity with the United Nations Charter and with fundamental principles of international law, particularly those respecting national independence and sovereignty. No individual country can go solo or have double standards in this fight. While members of the international community must act in a responsible manner by not tolerating, nurturing and/or supporting terrorists on their soil, they should also bring the terrorists to justice or extradite them to the country where their crimes were committed, so that they can be duly punished.

Though combating international terrorism has become the pressing task of the day, it must not overshadow the challenges of the twenty-first century. Poverty, the widened development gap, the HIV/AIDS epidemic, the deteriorating environment, regional tensions and conflicts, all point to the potential instability of the world today, as mentioned by our leaders a year ago. The Summit Declaration, in reflecting the genuine wishes and resolve of the world's peoples, vigorously reconfirmed the values and principles of the Charter, defining the priority objectives of the United Nations and the international community for the years to come, thus becoming our platform, our programme of action for the new millennium. To implement the Declaration at the global level, the United Nations last year conducted numerous activities, including the organization of a series of

special sessions in the economic, social and security fields. The international organizations in the United Nations system — such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) — are actively coordinating with nations to incorporate in their national programmes the specific objectives set forth in the Summit Declaration. This is a significant start which should be further promoted, as the most pressing challenge to us all is how to eradicate poverty on a global scale. In this spirit we wish to congratulate the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, who started his second term in office with the Nobel Peace Prize. We are fully convinced that the Secretary-General will continue to contribute to the cause of all nations and peoples.

Against the backdrop of globalization spearheaded by the information technology revolution, the other side of international political and economic life has been further exposed. The gap between rich and poor has widened further, and adverse circumstances in international relations have emerged, further underscoring the disadvantage and vulnerability of the developing countries. The Secretary-General once said words to the effect that poverty and the gap between rich and poor are the seeds of instability and precarious development, and that today's main challenge is how to ensure that globalization becomes the driving force of development instead of leaving a billion people in abject poverty. A common concern at present, however, is the tendency towards decreasing official development assistance (ODA), particularly the decrease in contributions to the development organizations in the United Nations system, which will surely hamper their activities. More than ever before, the United Nations, the international community, the developed countries in particular, should further assist the developing countries in the eradication of poverty, disease and illiteracy, and facilitate their fuller and equitable participation in international economic life.

Development requires an environment of peace and stability. But complex implications arising from the conflicts in some parts of the world and the possible intensification of an arms race, are not conducive to development at all. Of particular concern is the escalation of violence in the Middle East. We join the community of world peoples calling for an

early end to violence, the resumption of peaceful negotiations for a just, long-lasting solution in which the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and the legitimate rights of all parties concerned, would be guaranteed. By the same token, the embargoes imposed upon Cuba, Iraq and Libya, which cause untold suffering to these peoples, should be lifted so as to enable them to concentrate their energy and efforts on national reconstruction and development.

This year, South-East Asia has witnessed certain complex developments, but peace, stability and cooperation remain the burning aspiration of our peoples and continue to be the main tendency. The Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries are determined to build a zone of peace, development and prosperity and to coordinate efforts to effectively cope with regional and global challenges. In that context, the success of the 34th Ministerial Meeting, the eighth ASEAN Regional Forum held in Hanoi last August and the ASEAN Summit held in Brunei Darussalam in early November, all contributed to establishing priorities and effective measures for the future of this region. These meetings reaffirmed ASEAN's determination to further promote solidarity, cooperation, dialogue and mutual understanding within ASEAN, and between ASEAN countries and their dialogue partners, especially China, Japan and the Republic of Korea, for the peaceful settlement of their differences on the basis of respect for fundamental principles and norms of international law, particularly those regarding consensus and non-interference in the internal affairs of others. The Hanoi Declaration on Narrowing the Development Gap for Closer ASEAN Integration and other important documents were adopted on confidence-building and the promotion of mutual understanding for peace and stability in South-East Asia, as well as in Asia and the Pacific. They welcomed the promising progress in the ASEAN-China consultation regarding a code of conduct in the Eastern Sea, reaffirming those principles of the 1992 ASEAN Manila Declaration on the settlement of conflicting claims of territorial sovereignty in the Eastern Sea. We sincerely hope that the United Nations and the international community, in line with the Millennium Declaration, will deliver active support and assistance to the implementation of our regional cooperation for peace, stability and development in the region and throughout the world.

In the course of 15 years of rebuilding, Viet Nam has recorded great achievements in all fields. The ninth Party Congress has drawn necessary lessons from our own experiences, reaffirmed our resolve to continue the course, stepping up industrialization and modernization programmes, and mapping out the socio-economic development strategy for the years 2001 to 2010. While trying to bring into full play our inner strength, we will create more favourable conditions to attract investment and expand further effective cooperation with foreign partners and countries. We will continue to pursue our foreign policy of independence, openness, international economic integration, friendship and trusted partnership with all countries in the international community in the endeavour for peace, independence and development.

The Millennium Summit and its Declaration provided us with a momentum in the new millennium, which should be maintained through the active implementation of the guidelines unanimously endorsed by our leaders. The United Nations and each Member State should make efforts to achieve those objectives.

In order to contribute effectively to the common cause, the United Nations should speed up the process of reform, renovation and democratization. Viet Nam fully supports the central role of the General Assembly, the highest representative body of the whole membership, and the reform and expansion of the Security Council in both the non-permanent and permanent categories. The developing countries should have fuller representation and participation in the Council's decision-making. But it is of the utmost importance that the United Nations should design measures to concentrate resources for development and the eradication of poverty and for the other major objectives included in the Millennium Declaration. It is the expectation of the whole membership that the United Nations should become a worthy world body, operating in a more effective manner in the interests of all countries and for a just, humanistic and better world in the new millennium. We believe that the United Nations will surely live up to this expectation and Viet Nam pledges to contribute actively to this common endeavour.

The meeting rose at 7.25 p.m.