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President: Mr. Paul J. F. LUSAKA
(Zambia)

AGENDA ITEM 9

General debate (continued)

1. The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations Mr. Raúl Alfonsín, President of the Argentine Republic, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

2. Mr. ALFONSÍN (Argentina) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Mr. President, I wish first to express my personal congratulations to you on your unanimous election to your important position. We have two reasons to be pleased—that your well-known human and professional qualities represent an invaluable contribution to the success of the endeavours of the General Assembly, and that you represent Zambia and Africa, a brother continent of Latin America, whose hopes and demands we share.

3. I also wish to express our gratitude to Mr. Jorge Illueca, Head of State of Panama and an eminent Latin American diplomat, who so skilfully presided over the thirty-eighth session of the General Assembly. We Argentines have special reasons to be grateful to him.

4. At the same time, we welcome Brunei Darussalam to the United Nations. Its admission emphasizes once again the universality of the Organization.

5. Ten months ago, when Argentina was regaining its democratic life, I told the Congress of my country that our foreign policy would be the natural extension of our domestic policy. Both must be based on the same aspirations and, above all, on an identical system of values. Since we do not have two different moral codes, we do not have two different policies.

6. All the reasons that drove us to political struggle, the heartfelt convictions that guided and supported us throughout the years, were based on a set of values that my country needed. Those values transcend a people and a territory. They can be applied to government actions that regulate domestic political life, to the way in which we approach our relations with other States and to the positions we adopt with regard to the problems of the international community.

7. However, defining an ethical system as the source of political action, which is, after all, the issue, is not simply an option that soothes the conscience of those who govern or a way of avoiding the practical, concrete problems of our time. This is not an abstract or idealistic position; rather, it is essential. It is to

know why one governs, to know what type of society we seek for our countries, and what kind of world we want for mankind.

8. This thought stems from my conviction that the world order is dangerously distorted, the most obvious proof of which is that some countries seem not to wish for the rest of the world what they wish for themselves. In my opinion, this is the result of having replaced the moral view of the world order by a concept of power. It might be said that this is a naïve thought. But let us examine where the so-called pragmatic ideas have led us.

9. Two types of problems affect our world as a whole: the crisis in the political order and the crisis in the international economic order.

10. We are witnessing today the extent to which strategic purposes tend almost exclusively to define relations between States. On the basis of these strategic ideas, a new phase in the nuclear arms race has begun, one that makes the boundary between peace and war very much more precarious and frail. I am speaking of the boundary between the life and the death of mankind. This is a tragic prospect, for which the strongest hold each other responsible, while the majority of the countries of the international community are made to stand idly by.

11. Bystanders and actors appear to follow two kinds of logic: the logic of peace, which is susceptible to ethical arguments, and the logic of the arms race, which is the result of a political concept of power based on threats. The worrying thing is that those who hold to one logic do not listen to or hear those who hold to the other.

12. What good are our arguments if they cannot penetrate the logic of others, in particular the logic of those who are truly capable of altering the situation?

13. What means are available to us to moderate, with our ethical reasoning, the reasoning of power and threat?

14. Sometimes, everything seems to indicate that our role is limited to making demands, or possibly to denouncing this state of affairs. None the less, we shall continue our anguished clamour, because we know that our voice must be raised unceasingly in defence of peace. That is why I ratified the 22 May 1984 Joint Declaration, together with the Heads of State or Government of Greece, India, Mexico, Sweden and the United Republic of Tanzania [see A/39/277]. In that Declaration we stated that we share the conviction that there must not be another world war and that the advance towards global suicide must be restrained and halted. The world cannot oscillate between a devastating nuclear war and peace. We must work together to influence present and future events.

15. That position with regard to peace has been held consistently by all the democratic Governments of my country. Thus, in accordance with the policy which had been developed previously by President Hipólito Yrigoyen, another of my predecessors, President Arturo Frondizi, said in 1961, at the sixteenth session of the General Assembly:

“Invariably, with exemplary consistency, Argentina’s international policy has been based on the three fundamental principles of international life—the legal equality of States, non-intervention in domestic affairs, and the self-determination of peoples . . .

“ . . . We have opposed foreign intervention and any kind of pressure, whether political, economic, legal or ideological, by one nation upon another.” [1018th meeting, paras. 8 and 9.]

16. I further believe that the maintenance of peace involves a wider reality, in which we are not mere spectators. Indeed, in our world, it is not only arms that endanger peace. The international political order is not only increasingly a strategic military order, but is also increasingly dependent on the world economic order.

17. Over the decades we have related political questions to East-West tension, while, in connection with the economic order, we have referred to North-South relations. But I believe that even if we can identify two distinct kinds of tension—one among equals and the other among those who are not equal—these are not isolated from one another. Indeed, today we can assert that peace and security alike could be seriously affected by the enormous disparities between the rich countries and the developing countries of the world.

18. In a developing world characterized by instability and social tension, national conflicts have increasingly attracted the attention of those with strategic interests. The evolution of the social and economic conflict in the South has attracted the interest of the super-Powers. Our territories have thus become the victims of harassment by both Powers. This results, first of all, in the exacerbation of local conflicts; in this way, although the suffering continues to be national, the conflict becomes more and more a foreign one. Secondly, this interference intensifies the strategic conflict itself; in this way, the balance of the North—unstable and dangerous as it is—is reflected in clashes in the developing world.

19. We have seen and continue to see this phenomenon whereby a national conflict is intensified by strategic conflict to the point at which a nation is broken down. Hence, to our own problems is added the problem of a confrontation—covert or overt—between the big Powers on this third ground, in this third arena provided by the countries of the so-called South.

20. In sum, I believe that there are two things which threaten peace. On the one hand, there is the arms race and the direct strategic confrontation between the big Powers, and, on the other hand, there is the instability, injustice and poverty in the South. There is very little we can do about the first, but the second involves us directly.

21. It will suffice to note as an example of the second cause the extremely serious economic situation now obtaining in certain regions of Africa owing to a persistent drought and the lack of the material resources necessary to achieve self-sustaining growth

and development. Africa must have the support and solidarity of the whole international community if it is to overcome this crisis, with all its unforeseeable consequences.

22. It is a question not only of putting forward arguments favourable to the developing countries, but also of showing that the destiny of those countries directly affects the industrialized world.

23. The ethical reasons that make us call for a more equitable international order unite with practical reasons, for an unjust world is today more than ever before an unstable and insecure world. Justice in the South is today more than ever before a necessary prerequisite for peace in the North.

24. The Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Group of 77 have clearly pointed out the unjust and unstable situation which I have described. The international community as a whole, and the developed countries in particular, must show their willingness to listen to the economic and political proposals formulated by these groups of States, which represent two thirds of mankind.

25. I have stated that one of the characteristics of the present day is that international relations are increasingly relations among Powers rather than relations among societies. But I must say too that another disturbing fact of our day is that the economic order is increasingly becoming an exclusively financial order.

26. These are severe distortions that we must avoid, because a world in which politics is replaced by arsenals and economy by finance is simply a world in danger. We cannot accept that the future we seek for mankind should be based on and motivated by weapons and money. That is why I insist on the fact that ethical rebirth is a vital enterprise for our civilization.

27. It is painful to note the backward motion of our countries. Until some years ago, we were calling for the improvement of commercial and technological conditions in order to lessen the gap between our countries and the more advanced countries. Today, the objective of our claim is that of no longer being exporters of financial resources to the industrialized countries.

28. In Latin America, in 1983, the per capita gross national product was 10 per cent below the level of 1980. We have slipped backward six years, since we had already reached that level in 1977. This has greatly affected the welfare of our peoples, as has also the deterioration of our earnings brought about by the decline in the terms of foreign exchange.

29. The crisis of our foreign debt lies precisely in this deterioration of our economies, which are hindered from utilizing their productive potential, and in the reduction of employment and welfare. Last year, this debt meant, in terms of interest alone, the allocation of almost a third of the exports from the region.

30. Forgotten now are the international commitments agreed to during the first and second development decades—launched by the United Nations in 1961 and 1971—which obligated the most advanced countries to transfer 1 per cent of their national product to the developing countries.

31. Paradoxically, these commitments are reversed today. The developing countries are now the ones that must transfer part of their national product to

the developed countries; and it is not an annual 1 per cent, but an annual 3 per cent and sometimes more.

32. Owing to this overwhelming reality and to the attempt to restore rationality and good sense in the financial order, we in Latin America have proposed dialogue as a necessity—a dialogue between the richer countries and our countries, a practical dialogue about one of the questions that most upsets the financial order and stability of our countries: the question of foreign debt. We believe that this debt not only affects the debtor countries, but, because of its political impact, also directly involves the creditors.

33. We think that if everything depended on the manner in which the problem was being dealt with at present, we would not find a permanent and dependable solution. This is a subject that no longer has anything to do with the problem as it was in the early 1970s. Nevertheless, the solutions proposed are still the same. Only a joint political will can now give rise to new solutions for a problem that is no longer traditional.

34. Today, the question of debt is inextricably linked to the political and social destiny of our countries and, since it affects the whole region, it jeopardizes global stability in Latin America.

35. The meetings at Quito, Cartagena and Mar del Plata this year have been the best expression of the gravity of the situation. They also expressed our caution and moderation, which was translated into a call for a dialogue with the creditor countries. We hope that there will be a positive response to that call. Dialogue is not confrontation, as some people have alleged. Rather, confrontation arises when dialogue is precluded. I believe that both political logic and experience show this.

36. Perhaps on the basis of this concrete subject the aspiration for the North-South dialogue may materialize. It has been formulated many times, but up to now practical results could not be achieved.

37. This call for peace by the Argentine democracy is valid because we acted decisively for its preservation in the events in which we participated directly.

38. In one of those disputes—between us and the Republic of Chile—my country took resolute steps. In the framework of the mediation of His Holiness Pope John Paul II, whose assistance we highly value and appreciate, my Government showed its firm will to find an equitable solution that would put an end to a century-old controversy. What we can present before the international community are words of peace translated into peaceful actions through dialogue and negotiations.

39. In the other conflict, the one which continues between us and the United Kingdom over the Malvinas, South Sandwich and South Georgia Islands, our negotiating will and decision have encountered intransigence.

40. For almost 150 years, a portion of Argentine territory has been subjected to the colonial régime imposed by the United Kingdom. This unjust and illegal situation, which Argentina has never accepted, permanently affects our national life.

41. The mission of recovering the Malvinas, South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands for our heritage is a mandate that has been transmitted by successive generations of Argentines up to our day, and this process will continue until the attainment of that

objective. There should be no doubt about this, as this is a cause with which my people identifies deeply. We have the law on our side. The failure to understand it in this way is tantamount to ignoring one of the most important facts of the problem that exists between my country and the occupying Power.

42. It is a national cause, but it is also a Latin American cause inasmuch as Latin America has come forth in solidarity to defend a national integrity that it considers its own. Latin America now also views with alarm the presence in the South Atlantic of a military force equipped with the most sophisticated armaments, threatening the interests and stability of the entire area and constituting a dangerous intrusion of the East-West conflict into the region.

43. Argentina is firmly committed to seeking the restitution of the Malvinas Islands only through peaceful means. This my Government has stated, and it will fulfil this aim. There should be no doubt in anyone's mind about this. Our concept of democracy, which my country has now fortunately recovered, has two facets: a domestic one and one that looks outward. The first one is related to the full exercise of the Constitution—with the concomitant limitations upon the exercise of State powers—and respect for human rights. The second one, as I have already mentioned, involves relations with other countries. This outward projection of the democratic way of life translates into a behaviour that is civilized and law-abiding and may be summed up as respect for the prevalence of legal rules in relations among States.

44. The Charter of the United Nations, a true constitution of the international community, imposes on Member States the obligation to solve their disputes by peaceful means. Consistent with this legal duty, my Government has taken steps towards attaining the maximum flexibility compatible with national rights and has sought to reinstate negotiations with the United Kingdom to solve this conflict. Naturally, we also seek the normalization of the friendly relations which Argentina has traditionally had with that country. But that cannot be achieved if, from the very beginning of the attempts at normalization, we lack the certainty that a mechanism will be established to allow negotiation on the sovereignty dispute, which represents the main obstacle on the path leading to that normalization.

45. Unfortunately, judging by recent bilateral contacts that culminated in the meeting at Berne in July of this year under the auspices of Brazil and Switzerland, up to now we seem to be left with nothing but the intention, clearly stated by the United Kingdom, to postpone *sine die* the fulfilment of the urgent call by the General Assembly for the parties to sit down at the negotiating table. Together with my gratitude to Brazil and Switzerland and to the Secretary-General for their laudable efforts, I wish to express my ardent desire for that request of the General Assembly to be carried out as soon as possible for the sake of law and justice.

46. Next year the international community will commemorate the fortieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations. There is no doubt that the Organization has fulfilled an essential role in the search for international peace and security, the economic development of peoples and the eradication of colonialism. Its work is not over. I am convinced that the overwhelming majority of Mem-

ber States will lend their assistance and best endeavours to achieve an international system based on justice and on the social, cultural and material progress of the peoples.

47. Mindful of these objectives, today we cannot fail to express our deep preoccupation with the situation in southern Africa, where the structures of colonial and racial discrimination still exist, in violation of international law and morality. Namibia must be made independent once and for all. The unjust system of *apartheid* must be eliminated for ever. Those who suffer under it can continue to count on the support of the civilized world.

48. There are areas of tension and armed conflict in the Middle East and the Gulf region; the United Nations must continue to give them special attention so that quick, just and peaceful solutions can be achieved.

49. My country also views with serious concern—as do, I am sure, all the other nations—the situation in Central America. In our opinion, the proposals and actions of the Contadora Group, expressly supported by the General Assembly, offer a suitable alternative to achieve the sought-after peaceful solution to this very painful conflict for all of Latin America.

50. I believe that if power relations replace relations among men, we shall have lost the ethical motivation that ensures progress and peace for mankind.

51. No one should doubt, in reviewing history, that civilizations live and thrive when they are based upon moral premises and that, by contrast, their extinction systematically stems from ethical confusion.

52. I believe that the fact that the world order is increasingly defined by the arms race and financial greed is an ethical confusion. Were these motivations to persist, there would be no well-being for the majority of our countries. It is also well to recall that what affects the South will sooner or later affect the welfare of the more advanced countries.

53. I have the firm conviction that, as recently stated by Pope John Paul II, today development is the new name for peace.

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

55. I now have great pleasure in welcoming the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Norway, Mr. Kåre Willoch, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

56. Mr. WILLOCH (Norway): Allow me first of all to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the high office of President of the thirty-ninth session of the General Assembly. I am convinced that the Assembly's proceedings will greatly benefit from your experience, skill and wise guidance.

57. Allow me also to extend warm congratulations to the Government and people of Brunei Darussalam on their admission to membership in the United Nations.

58. The thirty-ninth session of the General Assembly is meeting at a time of international tension and widespread human suffering throughout the world: the situation in Afghanistan, the Middle East, the war between Iran and Iraq and military conflicts in other areas give reason for great concern; disarmament negotiations have been suspended, while the arms

race continues; the contacts between East and West are far from adequate; the North-South dialogue is at a difficult juncture, while severe economic problems and climatic conditions have adversely affected millions of people; and a great many people are denied basic human rights.

59. However, important strides towards the solution of those and other problems facing mankind can be made. It all depends on the decisions and choices that we make. Political leaders must choose the direction in which they want the world to develop. We have the technological means, as well as the economic and human resources, to spread opportunity and prosperity to all parts of the world; but for this we must face our common challenges together. Events and developments in one country affect the lives and destinies of people in other countries more directly than ever before. The word "interdependency" designates a reality.

60. The United Nations continues to be the object of criticism. While pointing to the deficiencies of the United Nations, we should not overlook its achievements. At the same time, we should increase our efforts to enable the United Nations to play the role envisaged for it in the Charter.

61. Consequently, we should endeavour to strengthen the United Nations and thereby improve its ability to prevent conflicts and crises, and to settle such conflicts if they should nevertheless arise. In order to support the Secretary-General's efforts to this end, Norway, together with the other Nordic countries, has recommended, *inter alia*, improving the efficiency of the Security Council, strengthening the role of the Secretary-General, and enhancing the ability and capacity of the United Nations to launch peace-keeping operations.

62. The Security Council should feel a special obligation to bring about a strengthening of the United Nations. The necessary impetus should be given to ensure that the United Nations shall be able to meet the high aspiration of our peoples—that is, to enable every man and woman to enjoy freedom and peace in security.

63. Peace-keeping operations are important instruments in the hands of the Security Council. Such operations are a tangible extension of the authority of the Council to the area of conflict. By the same token, it is obvious that, in order to succeed, peace-keeping operations must have the full support of the Council, as well as the co-operation of the parties concerned.

64. Today, armament arsenals have reached such an extent that it is difficult to see that any additional increase would entail more security for those who possess them. Of course, every nation has the right to defend itself, but the continuing arms build-up becomes ever more dangerous and meaningless.

65. In our endeavours to create a safer world, efforts to achieve arms control and disarmament should be given the very highest priority. Agreements should be balanced and verifiable. Particularly with regard to nuclear weapons, it is important to improve the quality and consistency of the dialogue between the major Powers.

66. We can only hope that the Soviet Union will soon return to the negotiating table, without preconditions, and sit down with the United States in order to negotiate substantial reductions in nuclear weapons and accompanying measures which will

create an atmosphere of mutual trust and understanding.

67. This session of the General Assembly also has a grave responsibility to contribute to the resumption of such talks. In this connection, we should strive to create a basis for an agreed, balanced and verifiable freeze on nuclear weapons. In view of the present imbalances, such a freeze must be pursued in the context of negotiations on substantial reductions in nuclear weapons; that is to say, a freeze must be part of a settlement which at the same time establishes a balance between the nuclear arsenals.

68. As we prepare for the Third Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, we must also endeavour to strengthen the non-proliferation régime. Similarly, we attach great importance to the forthcoming Review Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction, as proposed for 1986. We must also seek ways to reach agreement on a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty.

69. While reductions in nuclear arms must have first priority, it is also of vital importance to seek balanced and substantial reductions in conventional weapons. At the Vienna Talks on Mutual Reduction of Forces, Armaments and Associated Measures in Central Europe, the necessary elements for an agreement have now been presented. It is equally important to stop the accelerated build-up of conventional arms in other parts of the world.

70. One area of particular concern is chemical weapons. It is with the greatest concern that we have learned that chemical weapons have recently been used. Such use must be denounced wherever and whenever it takes place. We must spare no effort in reaching an agreement on the prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of all chemical weapons, as well as on the destruction of existing arsenals. The United States draft of a chemical weapons treaty represents an important contribution to the negotiations in this field.

71. Outer space has always attracted man's attention, and with modern technology we can now use space for various purposes. It is important that we should now also be aware of the potential dangers. In our vision of a safer and more stable world, there is no room for the militarization of outer space. This should be prevented through bilateral as well as multilateral efforts. We therefore urge that there be agreement on talks to find a basis for arms control and disarmament in outer space.

72. Questions relating to the building of confidence and security are important elements in all negotiations on arms control and disarmament. These questions also constitute a key element in the Conference on Confidence- and Security-building Measures and Disarmament in Europe, meeting at Stockholm. Thirty-five nations have agreed to work for concrete confidence- and security-building measures that in turn can reduce the risk of military conflict and surprise attack. We hope that the Warsaw Pact countries will now demonstrate a positive will to discuss the concrete proposals presented by the Western participants. For our part, we are ready to give the most careful consideration to all relevant proposals presented by the other participants.

73. Let me also address another serious problem which requires our fullest attention. I am referring to the alarming increase in international terrorism. Nobody can tell today who will be struck by terrorist acts tomorrow. The problem therefore affects us all. Unfortunately, the appalling fact is that on several occasions there have been serious indications that Governments have been involved in such terrorism. That is, of course, a clear violation of international law. The assumption that the ends could justify the means is particularly dangerous since it would inevitably lead to anarchy. The world community must make an effort to counter terrorism and to take concrete steps to stop this intolerable development. The senseless attack on the United States Embassy in Beirut is a strong reminder of the urgent need to take international action.

74. The safeguarding of human rights must continue to be a priority task for the United Nations. Governments should comply fully with the provisions of the international legal instruments in this field. A more efficient international machinery, including a United Nations high commissioner for human rights, should be established. In our reactions to violations of human rights, it is essential that we apply the same standards irrespective of where the violations occur. We cannot accept the proposition that the violation of human rights in any one country is of no concern to the international community. On the contrary, there is a strong interdependence between respect for human rights and the prospects for international détente.

75. The policy of *apartheid* represents a clear violation of human rights. The recent constitutional changes in South Africa do not fundamentally alter that policy. On the contrary, the reforms must be seen as an attempt to consolidate the present system. The international community should therefore continue to put pressure on South Africa to bring the policy of *apartheid* to an end.

76. On the other hand, it has been encouraging to observe that democratic reforms are now under way in several countries in Latin America. This development should be welcomed in the hope that it will continue and be strengthened. In this situation we should offer our assistance and advice. However, no one has the right to exploit a fragile political and social situation in another country to promote his own interests. At the same time, we expect that a promise of democratic elections really means free elections where everyone can truly express his own conviction.

77. The Norwegian Government supports the efforts of the Contadora Group in bringing about a framework for peace, stability and economic development in Central America. We also welcome the talks initiated this summer between the United States and Nicaragua.

78. All our efforts should be aimed at meeting the needs and aspirations of the individual. Our task should therefore be to create a world where every human being will have a better life. We have the means and the resources; let us also demonstrate that we have the necessary political will.

79. The need for such political will is emphasized in the latest annual report of the IMF.¹ Although the report opens with some rather positive observations on the economic situation, it makes it quite clear that these heartening developments are fragile and will

not continue unless the major industrial countries adjust their policies and acknowledge their broad responsibility for the world economy. Those countries have a particular responsibility to contribute towards bringing about better living conditions in the developing countries. Our development assistance programmes should therefore be continued and intensified. There is also an urgent need for further concerted action to mobilize additional resources so as to meet, and if possible reach beyond, the objective set by the United Nations. Norway is ready to play a full part in such a joint effort. As regards official development assistance, net disbursements from Norway in 1983 reached the level of 1.06 per cent of the gross national product, a figure that will be surpassed this year as well as in 1985.

80. We must also increase our efforts to improve market access for developing countries. This would enable them to acquire a larger share of international trade and to service their debts, as well as to mobilize resources for their development programmes. In this way, they will improve their prospects for achieving better economic growth, which will also benefit the industrialized world. These questions will be in the foreground at the World Bank/IMF meetings starting today.

81. There is certainly no easy way out of these and other economic problems. It is obvious that national decisions and domestic action will not suffice. The situation therefore calls for international co-operation. What we need is to unite our forces in a common approach on a global scale. If we succeed in our joint efforts and co-operation, the results will have a beneficial effect on the world economy as a whole.

82. Our joint efforts to improve the lot of the developing countries will be frustrated unless we are able to address the problem of the far-too-high population growth in some regions. Some progress in reducing the growth rate has been made over the past years, but the overall picture gives reason for deep concern. The International Conference on Population, held at Mexico City from 6 to 14 August 1984, reached agreement on the need for a more active population policy.² We fully share the view that family planning must be seen in the context of economic and social development. We cannot substitute the one for the other. We particularly welcome the agreement reached at the Mexico Conference that improvement of the status of women is a prerequisite for any successful population policy.

83. The International Conference on Population has provided us with the basis for dealing with the population problem. It is now up to us, the States Members of the United Nations, as well as the other international organizations, to implement the decisions taken at Mexico.

84. More than ever, the peoples of the world have a common destiny. The political leaders of the world therefore have a common responsibility. Joint efforts are needed. This is not the time to retreat from international co-operation. On the contrary, we must increase our international collaboration. The United Nations, as a global organization, has a particular role to play. Every member country must therefore contribute to the increased effectiveness of the Organization. The Norwegian Government, for its part, is dedicated to the continued strong support of the Organization and its important work.

85. I will conclude, Mr. President, by expressing the sincere hope that under your guidance the work of the thirty-ninth session of the General Assembly will bring us closer to our common objectives.

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

87. Mr. SEPÚLVEDA AMOR (Mexico) (*interpretation from Spanish*): On behalf of the Government of Mexico and on my own behalf, Sir, I wish to extend our congratulations to you on your election as President of the thirty-ninth session of the General Assembly. I am sure that your wide experience of the United Nations and your diplomatic gifts will enable you to guide our deliberations along the path of mutual understanding.

88. The election of the representative of Zambia bears witness to our recognition of the committed role in international affairs that is played by your country, with which Mexico maintains excellent relations of friendship and co-operation. In our view, your election also reflects the growing importance of the African continent in contemporary international relations. The peoples of Africa, freed from the yoke of colonialism, are a living symbol of the universal aspiration to build a more stable, pluralistic and democratic world.

89. I consider it my duty also to express our satisfaction with the prudent and persevering action of your predecessor, Mr. Jorge Illueca. Latin America has welcomed the dynamic and direct efforts of the President of Panama to promote dialogue and conciliation.

90. I should also like to express again to the Secretary-General the pleasure of the Government and people of Mexico at his official visit to our country last April and his visit to our capital on the occasion of the International Conference on Population last August. I offer him too our sincere congratulations on the effective work he has done in heading the Organization. His efforts to consolidate the United Nations system, to expand co-operation and, especially, to promote the cause of peace and security bring our nations new hope. His report to this session of the General Assembly on the work of the Organization [A/39/1] is clear proof of his clear-mindedness and political creativity.

91. My Government wishes to extend to Brunei Darussalam, the new Member of the United Nations, a warm welcome and best wishes for a peaceful and prosperous future in full exercise of its sovereign rights.

92. We are witnessing today a resurgence of old doctrines of power and new forms of intolerance that cast doubt on the usefulness of international organizations. In view of this, I should like to reaffirm the unwavering commitment of the people and Government of Mexico to the purposes and principles of the United Nations. We are certain that the world Organization is an irreplaceable instrument for the promotion of freedom, justice and peace. We accept also that it is a body susceptible of improvement.

93. In 1945, determined to live together in peace and to promote the progress of all peoples, we postulated as standards of conduct for all States full respect for the principles of law and a genuine will to co-operate with others. The United Nations was to be a forum for understanding and the pivot of a

collective effort towards further development and security.

94. Over the past years the Organization has played a decisive role in the promotion of the highest political ideals of the twentieth century. The liquidation of the most flagrant forms of colonialism has allowed almost 100 countries to attain political independence. The growing democratization of international society has contributed to the progressive development of a juridical order more in accordance with the demands of the peoples of the world. The international régime of human rights fosters respect for the basic freedoms of individuals and for the prerogatives of social groups, especially those of the least privileged.

Mr. Al-Khalifa (Bahrain), Vice-President, took the Chair.

95. The United Nations has been a determining factor in avoiding global confrontation and in encouraging the peaceful solution of a great many regional conflicts. Furthermore, as a result of its efforts, we have today a clearer view and understanding of the problems of the developing world. We in the countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America have increased our ties of identity and solidarity, coordinating our stands and establishing platforms of common principles and strategies. We have encouraged the creation of numerous mechanisms which would enhance effective international co-operation if all States acted responsibly and with a view to the future.

96. Some isolated voices attempt to ignore the magnitude of the task performed and the potential of the United Nations system. The difficulties of an effective dialogue between the great Powers certainly have contributed to the antagonism between those with hegemonistic aspirations. In a climate of tension between East and West, it is only natural that the crises multiply, that regional conflicts are exacerbated and that confrontations between the power blocs are transferred to third-world settings, thereby affecting the security, sovereignty and political and economic development of many nations. At the same time, the grave world economic crisis is negating important and just expectations of the developing countries.

97. Such voices would seem to be unaware of the fact that, save for the presence of the United Nations, even more devastating conflagrations might have broken out. They tend to forget that we would have lacked institutional barriers to offset the arrogant use of force, that the juridical and moral principles of peaceful coexistence among States would have been weakened even further—in short, that we would all suffer by the absence of an enormous effort at co-operation that seeks to lighten the burdens and sacrifices of the weakest. Those voices seem to have forgotten the highly innovative and transforming task of the United Nations in today's world.

98. The cause of the crisis of world society does not lie in the shortcomings of the organic structure of the United Nations or in the modalities of multilateral diplomacy. There are many who would like to make such limitations a pretext or a cover-up for more deep-rooted political realities. Indeed, when dogmatic views prevail there is no room for contrary or differing opinions. Manichaeism, by definition, excludes a world of varying criteria and attitudes. For those who think that way, multilateralism should be

replaced by a set of asymmetric, predominantly bilateral relations, which would necessarily benefit the most powerful.

99. This morning [*4th meeting*], the President of the United States, at the very outset of this General Assembly session, renewed hopes and expectations. By stating the willingness of his country to reinitiate constructive negotiations with the Soviet Union, mainly in the field of disarmament, in order to reduce the world arsenals, to institutionalize periodic consultations at a high political level and to establish better working relations between the United States and the Soviet Union in which understanding and co-operation prevail, President Reagan infused optimism into the community of nations on its difficult path towards peace and détente. Mexico expresses its recognition of and appreciation for this felicitous initiative and hopes that it may soon produce optimum results for all, without exception.

100. The international community must always act in accordance with the principles it has established, respecting the rights of all and giving each nation the unrestricted right to seek the economic and political system that is most in keeping with its interests. The United Nations, the supreme expression of the plural community of States, is thus the necessary setting for international democracy and an irreplaceable vehicle of co-operation. The values it represents are neither ephemeral nor circumstantial. They are, beyond any doubt, the only values that allow for civilized and orderly coexistence, beneficial to all.

101. Today, no country can live in isolation, separate from the rest. Any claim to autarky is illusory. Interdependence is an unavoidable fact of the life of States, even though that interrelationship has not been useful in distributing benefits justly and equitably to non-industrialized countries. The United Nations constitutes an organized framework that is capable of giving that interdependence a positive outlook and of transforming current international relations into respectful and peaceful coexistence, founded on equitable co-operation and mutual respect.

102. The fortieth anniversary of the United Nations seems a propitious moment not only for evaluating the functioning of the system and correcting deficiencies, but also for renewing our commitment to the principles and values that gave the Organization its life—principles and values whose validity must be reaffirmed not only with words but also with deeds. Let us recall that universality is part and parcel of the Organization's very essence. That is why the effectiveness of its decisions and the usefulness of its mechanisms of consultation must be based on the will of all States, and this must not entail a consolidation of privileges or the abusive use of different forms of the veto. The deficiencies of the Organization should be corrected democratically.

103. No one can seek to turn the United Nations into an arena of sterile confrontation, or an arena for unworthy attempts at subjugation or tyrannies of the minority. That would go against the democratic imperative of the Organization. Let us make our international institutions the setting for genuine dialogue, co-operation and constructive negotiation that are so greatly needed by our world today.

104. The strengthening of the international order also involves the renovation of regional forums, which must provide an increasingly faithful reflec-

tion of common interests and of the aspirations of developing countries. Latin America is currently seeking to consolidate its stands more effectively and to take joint steps to promote stability, development and full independence for the countries in the area as a real contribution to self-determination and world peace.

105. In the political sphere, the efforts of the Contadora Group express our unwavering determination to join together and find appropriate means of arriving at a peaceful solution of conflicts, avoiding any form of interference in the internal affairs of States. The nations of the area are, at the same time, combining their endeavours to achieve a rational and equitable economic order. The Latin American Economic Conference, held at Quito in January of this year, and the meetings at Cartagena and Mar del Plata of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs and the Ministers of Finance of 11 Latin American countries in June and in September, respectively, all have that aim.

106. A year ago the General Assembly adopted by consensus resolution 38/10, on the situation in Central America. The resolution reaffirmed the right of all the countries in the area to decide their own future freely, and it condemned the acts of aggression against the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of the Central American States. Unanimously, the General Assembly gave its firm support to the efforts of the Contadora Group, urging it to persevere in its role as a mediator.

107. In 1984 the Contadora process has been aimed at reaching specific agreements for dealing with the problems of peace, the strengthening of political institutions, and the process of development, which are of concern to the countries of the area. For months we have been engaged in an intensive process of consultation and negotiation which is now reflected in the instrument entitled "Contadora Act on Peace and Co-operation in Central America" [see A/39/562], whose purpose is to reconcile the legitimate interests of the Governments of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. This is a draft global agreement stipulating both general and specific obligatory commitments for the purposes of fostering understanding and co-operation among the countries of Central America.

108. We are convinced that the Contadora Act is faithfully designed to fulfil the requirements for stability in the area. The principles set forth in the Act encourage the establishment of a framework of reciprocal security and respect, mutual confidence and regional détente, which are essential for normalizing the political relations and all other relations among the countries of the isthmus.

109. For that reason, it is from here, the highest rostrum of the international community, that we call upon the Central American Governments to proceed with all due urgency to assume the legal commitments contained in the Act, and we express our appreciation to those States which have announced their intention to subscribe to the Act. The Contadora process and its arduous and difficult task of negotiation, which have now been in progress for 20 months, have been aimed at safeguarding the independence of States, preventing the further destruction of human and material resources that are essential to the well-being of their peoples, and

opening instead channels for far-reaching and sustained economic, political and social development.

110. We reiterate today that negotiating implies harmonizing legitimate interests in order to reach common goals—a partial surrender of one's goals, in order to attain a final objective that is considered fundamental to all. Regional security, a basic prerequisite for peace and development, can be attained only through honourable, just and responsible agreements based on conciliation and not on imposition. This is the immediate option of the five Central American Governments: to express their firm decision to protect the sovereign rights and long-term plans of each nation for the benefit of present and future generations, or to sacrifice a stable future for the sake of circumstantial illusions. It is the responsibility of the Central American Governments to choose between peace and war, between development and destruction. The Contadora Group, for its part, will continue to do everything within its power to facilitate the process of mediation.

111. The Contadora Act decidedly contributes to the establishment of a regional order founded on respect for pluralism and the rights of peoples. It offers, without a doubt, a viable opportunity for normalizing relations among the Central American countries. Unfortunately, the political and diplomatic effort has been severely hampered by a plethora of actions that aggravate tensions and undermine confidence in the area. Biased information has also been circulated with a view to harming the Contadora process and initiatives, and obstacles have been placed in the way of a more open and fluent dialogue among the Central American countries. The increased foreign military presence and the overt or covert support supplied to exogenous forces and groups, whose purpose is the overthrow of the established Governments of the area, have been two of the major obstacles to détente and understanding.

112. The historical experience of the nations of Latin America and the Caribbean has shown, over the centuries, that interference and intervention ultimately revert against their instigators. In the final analysis, the use of force is no solution but only leads to more force, hatred and lack of confidence. Let us try, with the invaluable assistance and support of the international community, to save Central America from even more serious harm and crueller devastation.

113. We call once again on those Governments with ties and interests in that region to give their unequivocal and clear support to efforts to halt the arms race and traffic in arms and the naval, land and air manoeuvres and to end the presence of foreign military advisers and bases. When Central America accepts and abides by the agreements reached, other States must inevitably assume their corresponding responsibilities.

114. Regional peace demands not only collective commitments but also the determination to solve bilateral differences. We also have here a long road ahead of us. In May of this year we applauded the establishment of a special commission of the Governments of Costa Rica and Nicaragua to resolve border conflicts, reduce tensions and foster a climate of mutual confidence. We should also note that the initial steps in a dialogue between the Governments of the United States and Nicaragua have proved encouraging. Mexico has promoted these conversa-

tions, and five meetings have been held to date. My Government will continue to lend whatever support the interested parties request. We believe that the dialogue of Manzanillo is a key element in the process of bringing peace to Central America.

115. For the past year, Mexico has had the honour of presiding over the Group of 77. During this time, we have sought, through an informal exploratory process, to dispel misunderstanding, clarify intentions and establish bases for a better understanding of the problems we face. With the participation of the industrialized nations and the developing countries, we are making efforts to establish frank, pragmatic and flexible communication.

116. Although considerable conceptual progress has been achieved and areas of common interest identified, the launching of global negotiations has again been postponed because of a lack of political will on the part of some industrialized countries and their reluctance to grant the United Nations in practice the competence that the Charter establishes.

117. During this period, we developing countries have made innumerable efforts to seek immediate measures to ease the crisis and to allow the gradual fulfilment of the commitments that we all undertook when the General Assembly adopted the International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade [*resolution 35/56, annex*]. Unfortunately, we have seen a virtual paralysis of the North-South dialogue and a systematic rejection of the use of the mechanisms of international co-operation for development.

118. The Group of 77 will decide, this very week at its ministerial meeting commemorating its twentieth anniversary, on the strategies that we should follow during the coming year in order to achieve our aims. We hope to receive a responsible reaction from the developed countries. The survival of the greater part of mankind and the supreme objective of peace and collective security are at stake.

Mr. Lusaka (Zambia) resumed the Chair.

119. For our part, we are determined to expand economic and technical co-operation among developing countries. Collective self-reliance is not only an ideological principle that brings us together but a practical method to facilitate economic recovery in our countries, strengthen their unity and independence, and promote reform of the prevailing international order. South-South co-operation is a fundamental step in the process of decolonization, and we are therefore determined to encourage it with imagination, efficiency and perseverance.

120. The problems of the world economy must be dealt with coherently and comprehensively. From a structural viewpoint, we must find viable long-term answers. Faced with the needs of the developing countries and the severity of the crisis, urgent and effective measures are required by the international community, together with the commitment of all States to promote the establishment of new and more equitable international economic relations. This will require responsible interlocutors endowed with a sense of solidarity and far-reaching vision.

121. The current crisis has sharply emphasized the negative aspects of economic interdependence. Measures adopted by some of the more influential members of the community of nations are having an adverse effect on the economic security of weaker countries. The gravity of the situation is even being

reflected in political and social disorders that threaten the stability of the system as a whole. The deterioration of the quality of life heightens tensions and fosters instability. Practically all countries acknowledge the magnitude of the problems we are confronting. The need now is to translate declarations and speeches into concrete actions of co-operation, free of any subordination or conditions.

122. Every State has the responsibility of promoting its own development, but the international community must assume the correlative obligation of establishing the conditions that permit the attainment of national goals. At considerable sacrifice, we have made adjustments in our own internal economy in order to overcome our difficulties. At the same time, we demand the elimination of unilateral actions that worsen existing imbalances.

123. Foreign debt is now the most burdensome economic problem for developing countries, particularly those of Latin America. The solution to this problem, as postulated by the Cartagena Consensus, signed by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs and the Ministers of Finance of 11 Latin American countries on 22 June 1984 [*see A/39/331*], demands a joint commitment by creditor and debtor nations. The aim is to distribute the costs and benefits of capital flow according to a principle of justice. It is impossible to demand austerity from those who have less, when more favoured countries have shown no readiness to make similar economic adjustments.

124. The Latin American countries have in recent months begun a process of negotiations to reschedule payments on their foreign debt, lessen capital amortization and reduce the costs of financing. New progress in establishing more equitable conditions must follow the achievements attained thus far. These negotiations, however, require the political framework essential for a fruitful dialogue among debtor Governments, creditor countries, the international banking network and multilateral financing institutions.

125. The problem of debt must be attacked at its roots and in all its complexity. To begin with, the trend that has turned our countries into exporters of capital must be reversed. To this end, we call for the opening up of markets and the elimination of protectionist measures in the industrialized economies. It is also necessary to stabilize prices of raw materials and to reduce interest rates. Beyond reasonable percentages, income derived from exports cannot be committed to the servicing of debts.

126. It must be recognized that the debt crisis is linked to drastic changes in the conditions in which credit contracts were originally drawn up, particularly where liquidity and interest rates, the structure of the debt, and economic growth perspectives are concerned. These changes, which took place in the industrialized countries, demonstrate the joint responsibility of creditors and debtors.

127. At the beginning of President Miguel de la Madrid's administration, Mexico decided to adjust its economy in order to undertake a fundamental reordering. This choice has not been easy for the Mexican people. After periods of apparent prosperity, they have had to enter a time of discipline, restraint and sacrifice. Nevertheless, the country's production structure has been safely maintained and the work force, including its best-qualified elements,

has remained intact. Employment opportunities will no doubt increase in the future.

128. The reordering of the economy has been undertaken with a view to reducing inflation and the instability of currency exchange, recovering growth capacity, preserving productive plant and employment, and protecting basic consumption. At the same time, a policy of structural changes has been established in order to tackle the main problems in the field of production, distribution and social participation in the development process. The ultimate aim is to establish a solid, permanent basis for rapid and egalitarian social development.

129. These efforts at economic readjustment have begun to yield fruit. The difficult transition to a more solid economy would not in any case have been possible without the civic conscience and solidarity of the majority of Mexicans and without a political régime that has invariably shown its maturity and prudence in critical moments.

130. The exceptional resources of our people notwithstanding, consolidation of our effort at recuperation will not be possible without a favourable international atmosphere. Mexico, together with other developing countries, therefore firmly demands the urgent restructuring of world economic relations. The maintenance of unbalanced economic relations such as those that provoked the present crisis, causing a severe deterioration of developing societies, is contrary to all ideas of equity. The international community must make a determined effort to correct asymmetries. Without such an effort, we shall enter an era of growing confrontation and instability.

131. The difficulties in the dialogue between the great Powers and the paralysis of the multilateral disarmament forums oblige us to take political decisions to stave off the danger of a nuclear conflagration.

132. The so-called strategic balance inevitably feeds an arms race that appears to be unending. The experience of the last 40 years proves that an increase in the arsenals of one Power is followed by a similar or greater development of those of its counterpart. The magnitude of their destructive power today is sufficient for mutual annihilation and the destruction of the entire planet.

133. Each new stage of this escalation would seem to move mankind further away from agreements to eliminate for ever the threat of nuclear war. The technical and military struggle between the super-Powers is placing us on the threshold of a new phase that could irreversibly block verifiable disarmament commitments.

134. Nevertheless, Mexico is convinced that it is possible to halt this absurd armaments spiral. We have insisted in numerous forums on a freeze of nuclear arsenals as a prerequisite for initiating a gradual reduction in arms, until they are eventually eliminated. Against the logic of strength and armaments we must pit the reason of disarmament and peace.

135. Stability cannot be based on a balance of terror that requires a capacity for reciprocal extermination as a means of guaranteeing peace. It is essential to banish this erroneous doctrine of deterrence.

136. We propose, on the contrary, that security should come about as a result of a gradual reduction of nuclear arsenals. In this way, the spiral would be

reversed without altering the balance of power, and progress would be made towards the goal of general and complete disarmament.

137. Furthermore, that could also be a means of severing the causal relationship between armaments and underdevelopment. Resources now allocated to the constant improvement of weapons should be used to improve the lives and economic condition of large sectors of the world's population.

138. Similarly, we reiterate our call for an end to the harmful trade in conventional weapons. In search of a security that is often illusory, many developing countries divert scarce capital to the acquisition of military equipment. Possession of new armaments further erodes trust, increases the risk of war and aggravates the economic weakness of those countries.

139. On 22 May of this year Mexico, together with Argentina, Greece, India, Sweden and the United Republic of Tanzania, called upon the nuclear Powers to assume their responsibilities in the task of disarmament. In their Joint Declaration, the signatory Heads of State or Government announced their determination to "take constructive action towards halting and reversing the nuclear arms race" [see A/39/277], echoing the pressing demand of an ever-increasing number of men and women of the five continents.

140. I should like to take this opportunity to reaffirm, on behalf of the President of Mexico, Miguel de la Madrid, our determination to continue fighting for disarmament. We urge the community of nations to make every possible effort to further that noble peace initiative.

141. There is an urgent need for the great Powers to subordinate considerations of expediency and internal policy to the supreme value of preserving mankind's existence. Their political will to maintain world peace must be in keeping with the responsibilities deriving from their power.

142. The principles of the juridical equality of States, the self-determination of peoples, non-intervention and the prohibition of the use of force allow of no exceptions. Their strict observance far outweighs casuistic interpretations or supposed threats to national or regional security.

143. A year has passed, and we repeat our appeal that Grenada return to the path of self-determination without limitations of any kind.

144. We note with concern the continued presence of foreign troops in Afghanistan. In spite of the intense mediation efforts of the Secretary-General, no significant progress has been made. Once again, we urge the parties involved to seek a prompt solution in accordance with those initiatives.

145. We reaffirm our support for Argentina's claim to sovereignty over the Malvinas Islands and again urge the parties involved to settle their differences through negotiation.

146. In the Middle East, unilateral efforts and expansionist policies for the solution of the regional conflict have been seen to fail. Lasting peace in the area can be attained only through the combined efforts of the parties involved and respect for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. All the States of the area have the right to live in peace within recognized borders.

147. The efforts at national reconciliation currently under way in Lebanon with a view to ending the civil

war deserve the broadest international support. Lasting stability and peace, however, depend on absolute respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of that country.

148. The conflict between Iran and Iraq is taking on added dimensions that are reflected, according to reliable information, in the indiscriminate bombing of civilian populations, the use of chemical warfare and the violation of international humanitarian law. We hope that new initiatives will emerge from this session of the General Assembly that will help to put an end to a tragic war which is destroying two developing countries.

149. Another year has passed and the people of Namibia still cannot exercise their sovereignty, while the infamous policy of *apartheid* continues. Once again, we express our repudiation of a system that violates the most elementary norms of human dignity, and we demand an end to the increasingly open support being given by certain countries to the South African régime. Mexico demands the implementation of the decisions of the international community to enable Namibia to attain its independence.

150. Every year here in the General Assembly we review the situations that endanger peace and security. In the Assembly, the international community recommends formulas and means of arriving at peaceful solutions to controversies between States.

151. The close relationship between maintaining peace and attaining development is emphasized here each year. The dramatic needs of our peoples are described, and proposals are made to banish hunger, ignorance and disease from the planet.

152. In spite of the desire for peace of the majority of States, the practical results have been tenuous. The aggravation of conflicts, the growing gap between the developing world and the industrialized nations, the severity of the economic crisis, the breakdown in talks between the great Powers and the stagnation of co-operation and economic negotiations are, unfortunately, the dominant features in the international situation. Such problems must be a source of grave concern to all States.

153. Mexico maintains its unwavering confidence in the strength of law. The imperatives of its history lead it always to defend the principles on which the civilized coexistence of nations is founded. We are certain that diplomacy is today the only feasible means of overcoming the differences that separate States. In these times, the reconciliation of interests and a genuine willingness to understand the views of others should prevail over every form of imposition or domination.

154. Mexico supports the institutions of the community of States. Places in which to meet and communicate with others in a world that is undergoing rapid transformation are a necessary condition of an orderly process of change. I reaffirm the full support of the people and Government of Mexico for the United Nations, the highest expression of international democracy.

155. In its internal affairs, Mexico upholds the rule of law, based on respect for the freedoms of individuals and groups, on encouraging the democratic participation of citizens and on social solidarity. We seek forms of coexistence that will provide an equitable distribution of the benefits derived from the work of all Mexicans. For that same reason, we wish to contribute to the endeavour of ensuring that

the society of nations will be governed by the same principles. That conviction is the coherent and solid basis of Mexico's commitment to the cause of peace and international co-operation.

156. Mr. AMEGA (Togo) (*interpretation from French*): This is the first time I have taken part in the general debate of the Assembly since my appointment as Minister for Foreign Affairs and Co-operation by General Gnassingbe Eyadéma, President and founder of the *Rassemblement du peuple togolaise* (Togolese People's Rally) and President of the Togolese Republic. I therefore feel all the more the weight of our common responsibility to rebuild our world, which is collapsing under the chaotic convulsions of the repeated crises brought about by our antagonisms, contradictions and dissatisfactions. We must reconstruct our world, not necessarily by applying new concepts, as is advocated by some, but by applying the existing concepts which comprise the fundamental principles of the Charter of the United Nations to which we all subscribe.

157. You must be aware, Mr. President, that my delegation is full of admiration for your impressive opening statement [*1st meeting*], in which you analysed, one by one and in an objective manner, the root causes of these crises and their solutions. That statement alone would have been enough to justify your election to guide the debate at this thirty-ninth session of the General Assembly. It bears witness to the philosophy that has always served as the basis for your efforts as a representative of your country, Zambia, which shares my own country's faith in the United Nations.

158. Situated at the heart of the African continent, in a region which is tormented as a result of the culpable arrogance and unjustifiable intransigence of a racist State, the country which it is your honour to represent in this great forum of discussion and dialogue is well known for its dedication to the freedom of peoples, the independence of States and international peace and security. In addition, Zambia is among those African countries which most firmly support the liberation struggle in southern Africa.

159. I am sure that these assets, combined with your unquestionable intellectual qualities, predispose you, Sir, to discharge with competence, skill and zest the weighty and noble responsibilities with which you are entrusted as President of the thirty-ninth session of the General Assembly. Having warmly congratulated you on your impressive election, I offer you my best wishes for success in your delicate but exalted task.

160. Imbued with the ideals of peace, justice and freedom—nourished by and nourishing the principles of the Charter—you have acquired a proven competence which, allied with a most engaging personality, commands both respect and esteem. For many years, you have placed that competence at the service of the United Nations, particularly in your role as President of the United Nations Council for Namibia, where your tireless efforts have helped to blaze a trail towards the independence of Namibia.

51. I followed with great attention the skill, lucidity and rectitude with which your predecessor, Mr. Jorge Illueca, conducted the work of the thirty-eighth session, and I wish to convey to him my great appreciation and sincere congratulations.

162. It is my pleasant duty also to pay a well-deserved tribute to the courage, perspicacity and

pragmatism which have characterized the work of the Secretary-General since the thirty-eighth session. He has spared no effort, and has sometimes risked his life, going to crisis zones in order to experience in the field the problems which the United Nations must resolve, whether they be political or economic.

163. Since I come from a country that knows how to appreciate a real friend, I wish particularly to reiterate the sincere thanks of the Government of Togo for the special attention the Secretary-General devoted to our problems during the visit to New York of General Gnassingbe Eyadéma, President of the Togolese Republic, and during his own journey to Togo last January.

164. Welcoming a new Member to the United Nations has always been a time of emotion, emotion which I can hardly restrain as I welcome the brother state of Brunei Darussalam, which, we are certain, will fan the flame of the Organization's grand design for universality.

165. For the thirty-ninth time—above and beyond the political and ideological differences which divide States, notwithstanding the tensions which are rending asunder a perpetually changing world, and despite the imperfections, failures and disappointments which have characterized certain actions taken in conformity with the purposes of the United Nations—the General Assembly is taking up the challenge facing the Organization.

166. For the thirty-ninth time we are assembled in this forum of discussion and dialogue to seek solutions in keeping with the many problems of our age. That search will be meaningful and effective only if our approach to the burning questions of our time leaves aside all complacency and demagogy, as well as all self-seeking partisan doctrines, in order to result in courageous, realistic conclusions reflecting a spirit of synthesis and compromise.

167. Because of their urgency and persistence and the variety of their repercussions, the challenges now facing mankind cry out to the universal conscience. Friendship among peoples and co-operation among nations no longer seem to derive from the indisputable interdependence which governs relations among States. Solidarity—the corollary of complementarity—has been cast adrift. The boldest and most generous declarations of intent no longer suffice to mask a steadily worsening ill.

168. The international economic crisis is the major challenge of our time, because it is a challenge to the progress and well-being of mankind, and it is heightening the selfishness of the wealthy countries and thereby complicating and multiplying the financial difficulties of the developing countries.

169. As a challenge to world stability and equilibrium, the pursuit of the unrestrained arms race is becoming a substitute for the dialogue of the deaf which persists between the super-Powers.

170. As a challenge to the flourishing of the noble ideals of the United Nations and particularly to human rights, the abject policy of *apartheid* is now further refining its devious manoeuvres by conferring upon itself a bogus democratic aura.

171. By both their duration and their state of deadlock, the many local conflicts which are a threat to international peace and security are tending to become established as necessary evils, whereas in fact they are the gangrenous parts of the international community.

172. One might be inclined to regard all this as a new alarmist refrain. This recital of risks, dangers and challenges may be written off by some as an example of anachronistic fatalism, of excessive pessimism.

173. Consistently guided by its profound faith in the virtues of peace and solidarity among peoples, Togo, my country, could not fail to draw the attention of this Assembly to the upheavals which now contribute to the weakening of the international community and the stifling of its conscience.

174. The tensions which are shaking the African continent continue to give rise to serious concern in the international community. In southern Africa, the white racist régime of Pretoria continues stubbornly to press the imposition of its alleged prerogatives: the policy of *apartheid* and the blocking of the process of genuine decolonization in Namibia.

175. The South African leaders, seeking to adapt themselves to the upsurge of the heroic struggle of the Coloured people against racial discrimination, have seen fit to confer a democratic veneer on the *apartheid* régime by electing a three-chamber Parliament, associating whites, Coloureds and Indians but excluding the blacks, who make up 73 per cent of the population.

176. The impressive success of the boycott by the Coloured and Indian communities of this parody of an election and the recent riots organized by the blacks have set in motion a mechanism of savage repression which reveals the failure and panic of white power.

177. This admission of failure and this panic is clearly indicated by the promise made by the South African Head of State concerning the subsequent improvement of the fate of the blacks and of their future representation in Parliament, accompanied by reservations as to the difference to be established between this type of representation and the representation of the Coloureds and Indians.

178. Togo, for its part, regards these expedient modifications as new manoeuvres by South Africa to mislead international public opinion about the development of *apartheid*. In fact, the system has not been fundamentally modified at all by these bogus reforms, which, ironically, are rejected by the great majority of those for whom they were devised.

179. The internal policies of South Africa are thus characteristic of the will of the *apartheid* régime to maintain the pre-eminence of white power. This will manifest itself externally by continued nuclear co-operation with Israel, co-operation which the Togolese Government vigorously condemns in the light of the grave threat which it poses to peace and security in Africa.

180. In regard to Namibia, by demanding as a precondition of self-determination for the Territory the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola, South Africa is trying desperately to delay the inevitable and avoid decolonization, which would not have the blessing of the *apartheid* régime.

181. However, the implacable struggle of the South West Africa People's Organization [*SWAPO*], the sole legitimate representative of the Namibian people, is an essential parameter which makes the accession of Namibia to true independence quite inevitable.

182. In this regard, the position of the Togolese Government has always been clear. SWAPO enjoys the unswerving support of Togo, and the implementation of Security Council resolution 435 (1978) cannot be linked to the withdrawal of Cuban troops, whose presence is legally justified by the existence of an agreement entered into by Angola and Cuba as sovereign nations.

183. Moreover, the Togolese Government appreciates the underlying motives which led Angola and Mozambique to conclude the Lusaka and Nkomati agreements. While not calling into question the continuance and the successful conclusion of the liberation struggle of SWAPO and the African National Congress of South Africa, those agreements have the advantage of keeping the peace in the region.

184. The crisis in Chad, another Gordian knot in the African continent, could move towards a settlement if the decision arrived at recently between France and Libya were to be effectively implemented and if all troops were to be simultaneously withdrawn from Chadian territory after 27 September.

185. With regard to Western Sahara, the hope generated by the resolution adopted by a broad consensus at the nineteenth ordinary session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity, held at Addis Ababa from 6 to 12 June 1983,³ seems to have been dashed as a result of the refusal of one of the parties to the conflict to sit down at the negotiating table with representatives of the Frente POLISARIO⁴ to make possible the exercise of the right of self-determination by the Saharan people.

186. My country, which respects the principles which govern inter-State relations and particularly the right of self-determination of peoples, was one of the first States to recognize the Saharan Arab Democratic Republic. However, when it became necessary, in the interest of moderation and conciliation, the Togolese Government did not hesitate to attempt, with other African countries, to persuade the Saharan Arab Democratic Republic to freeze temporarily its participation in the work of the pan-African organization in order to avoid the paralysis of that organization.

187. Togo, which is faithful to its commitments, continues to be open to any new initiatives designed to secure common understanding among the parties to the conflict and self-determination for the Saharan people.

188. The Middle East, which has been a turbulent region for more than 30 years, this year again witnessed dramatic upheavals. The intransigence of the expansionist policy of Israel is the prime obstacle to peace and security in that region. In the view of the Togolese Government, the right of Israel to its identity as a State within secure and internationally recognized borders does not exclude the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination within the framework of an independent and sovereign State. As long as Israel persists in its determination to destroy the Palestine Liberation Organization [*PLO*], the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, peace in the Middle East will continue to be an absolute myth.

189. The voice of reason and wisdom therefore recommends that all the parties involved in the Middle East conflict as well as all the parties

interested and concerned work for a peaceful, comprehensive settlement of the crisis within the framework of an international conference on Palestine.

190. The latest developments in Israeli politics seem to suggest that Israeli forces will be withdrawn from Lebanon. Togo therefore appeals to the new Government of national unity to put into effect its planned withdrawal as soon as possible. Such a venture would greatly contribute to a lessening of tensions in the region and the restoration of political stability to Lebanon.

191. In Asia, foreign interference continues to sabotage the search for solutions to the grave crises in the region, while a most devastating armed conflict continues.

192. Because it was clearly seen to be a new form of interventionism, the occupation of Afghanistan by foreign troops was condemned almost unanimously by the members of the international community. Persistence in the occupation of Afghanistan constitutes defiance of international law and of General Assembly decisions. It is therefore necessary that political and strategic calculations yield to the complete withdrawal of foreign troops in order to enable the Afghan people freely to determine their own destiny without any foreign interference.

193. By turning a deaf ear to the appeals made to them by the international community for the implementation of the resolution adopted by the General Assembly at its thirty-fifth session [*resolution 35/6*], as well as the decisions of the International Conference on Kampuchea, held in New York in July 1981,⁵ the States involved in the occupation of that country have rendered themselves guilty of a permanent violation of an essential provision of the Charter of the United Nations.

194. Faithful to its traditional position, Togo cannot be stinting in its support for the heroic liberation efforts of Kampuchea to rid itself of the foreign yoke and to maintain its seat in the United Nations.

195. The Togolese Government also appeals to the Government of Viet Nam to recognize the legitimacy of the tripartite coalition directed by Prince Norodom Sihanouk.

196. The persistence of the division of Korea into two States continues to be a source of frustration for the Korean people, who rightly call for the independent and peaceful reunification of their country. In this regard, the Togolese Government views the eradication of harmful foreign influences and the determination to overcome political and ideological divergencies as prerequisites of direct negotiations between the two Governments on the basis of the proposals made by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

197. It is essential that the international community, which has always viewed the consequences of the continuing armed conflict between Iran and Iraq as one of its crucial concerns, bring the two parties to the conflict to consider as binding the decisions and resolutions adopted by the Security Council and the General Assembly.

198. Because of our powerlessness or our indifference, we are now witnessing as spectators but also as accomplices an intolerable tragedy: that of two countries which have poured their human resources, their national wealth, their creative genius and patriotism, their human, economic, military, intellectual and psychological potential, into a ruthless war,

a war which continues to cause a distressing haemorrhage in terms of violations of humanitarian law and which sometimes reminds us of the worst moments of the Second World War.

199. As the Head of the Togolese State has said about the horrors of war: "One always knows when and where it will start, but one never knows when and where it will finish."

200. To the thousands of men, women and children who have already fallen on the battlefields of Iran and Iraq—the victims of the intransigencies of their countries—there will unfailingly be added many others. Hundreds of thousands of people will fall unless the international community reacts vigorously—in other words, if the international community does not take an immediate, concrete and realistic initiative to bring the two parties to respect a truce capable of leading to peaceful negotiations.

201. As the safety of navigation of oil tankers is seriously threatened in the Persian Gulf because of this situation, there is a grave danger that in due course this armed conflict will come to our very doors and even lead to a cataclysm of frightful scope and intensity.

202. My delegation is therefore determined to lend its support to any effort to stop the human and material blood-letting caused by the Iran-Iraq war.

203. My delegation continues also to be concerned about the question of the Falkland Islands (Malvinas). It is high time this question found a peaceful solution. Togo reiterates its appeal to the Governments of the United Kingdom and Argentina to resolve by negotiation this question, which has caused immense material damage and loss of life.

204. The international crisis which is disorganizing and threatening to shake the economic and social structures of the nations is now joined for the developing countries, particularly some countries of Africa, by another scourge, the scourge of drought, which afflicts more and more widespread regions and is causing an apocalyptic prospect for the future.

205. No one can remain insensitive to this unspeakable misery that is afflicting these underprivileged areas. It is for the international community to mobilize itself and show active solidarity to provide urgent solutions for the acute problem of drought.

206. This is certainly the proper place to pay a well-deserved tribute to the Secretary-General, who made a personal visit to the drought-stricken countries in order to see for himself the real state of affairs and in order to be better equipped to seek, with the countries concerned and the international community, ways and means of putting an end to this calamity, which is intimately connected with the problem of hunger.

207. It is also fitting to pay a tribute to the developed countries which have generously and of their own accord responded to the Secretary-General's appeal by taking concrete, effective action to relieve the hunger and the sufferings of the victims of this disaster.

208. Just as the problem of drought is intimately linked with the painful problem of hunger, this latter problem in turn brings to mind another notion, that of solidarity—in other words, that of international economic co-operation. No one now can seriously question the necessary complementarity between States and peoples. "Necessary" is a word I use

advisedly in its prime sense, meaning that it is required of us all. Because we cannot deny the complementary nature of the problem, which is evident from the facts, it is essential for us to become aware of this reality and to move from the phase of pious wishes to a rational reorganization of the world economy. Of course, this requires courage—the courage to rid oneself of national self-seeking. It means that the Governments must persuade their peoples of this truth, namely, that no nation, however powerful, could develop and defend its own interests indefinitely and in an isolated manner without consideration for the interests of other nations, and in a manner detrimental to them.

209. How, in this context, when the world is stricken with hunger and drought, can one understand the political blindness of the Powers that are investing fabulous amounts of money in the arms race—an arms race which is a constant danger to the human species, hanging over it, like the sword of Damocles, with its spectre of death and destruction; an arms race which is diverting from the sphere of development vast amounts of money which it is unnecessarily absorbing?

210. As a corollary to the quest for peace, security and economic co-operation, one must therefore raise the struggle to the level of men's minds in order to bring about full-scale disarmament. Togo reiterates its appeal to the super-Powers to continue the negotiations which will gradually lead to that final phase.

211. It is well known that dedication to international peace and security is one of the sacred values underlying Togo's foreign policy. That is why, in order to help promote an increased awareness of the problems of disarmament, my country at the beginning of August this year organized at Lomé a National Seminar on Peace and Disarmament with the effective participation of the Secretary-General.

212. The Lomé Peace Message, which was the final document of that important Seminar [*see A/39/529*], recommends, as a way of promoting research on peace and of intensifying the information campaign on disarmament throughout Africa, the establishment at Lomé of a regional institute for research on peace and disarmament. It also recommends the organization in Togo early in 1985—the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations—of a regional seminar on peace and disarmament involving the States members of the Economic Community of West African States and the Economic Community of Central African States, with the assistance of the United Nations. Lastly, the message appeals urgently to the super-Powers to ensure that their ideological differences do not prevail over the real problems—those of peace and security and of economic and social development.

213. It is distressing to see the number and magnitude of the conflicts which are shaking our planet and the ills that man has brought upon himself. It is distressing to see that the world has learned no lesson from the horrors and desolation which it has suffered and which led, indeed, to the establishment of the United Nations.

214. However naïve our efforts might seem to cynics, Togo, my country, considers it its duty to refer to the threat of total destruction that hangs over mankind and to the noble ideals of international peace and security which the United Nations has

sworn to uphold as the most precious possession of all. That threat still hovers over us. Togo also feels it to be its duty to appeal for a rapid awakening of consciences, for the establishment of active solidarity and international co-operation. Moreover, that is what the Secretary-General called for in his report on the work of the Organization submitted to the thirty-seventh session of the General Assembly.⁶ May the conscience of mankind awake before it is too late.

215. Mr. DA GAMA (Portugal):* I should like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your election to an office in which you will represent the Group of African States. Portugal has worked closely with your country, and I want to express here my appreciation of the efforts undertaken by Zambia with a view to finding a constructive solution for the problems of southern Africa. I am convinced that your well-known qualities and wide-ranging knowledge of the United Nations will enable you to make a decisive contribution to the success of the work of this session of the General Assembly.

216. I also wish to pay a tribute to your eminent predecessor, Mr. Jorge Illueca, of Panama, the representative of a country and a group with which we are linked by traditional ties of friendship.

217. I also wish to express my satisfaction at the admission of a new Member State, Brunei Darussalam.

218. I address the General Assembly completely aware that I represent a small country devoid of hegemonic ambitions and of any wish to exercise any kind of dominance over other nations. However, I am also fully aware that I represent a nation with more than eight centuries of history; a nation which is the cradle of a language spoken by more than 150 million people and therefore one of the main means of communication in our time; a nation which consequently does not regard itself as a lesser participant or as less responsible in the great questions with which humanity is concerned as we approach the end of this century. Small countries have the right and the duty to make their voices heard. By virtue of their size, with all that that implies, their experience and vision differ from those of the great Powers and they can make a valuable contribution in helping to find just and balanced solutions for many of the problems that beset the international community.

219. As in the case of other countries represented here, the struggle for independence, the preservation of our national identity and the maintenance of a foreign policy not subject to alien interests has been a constant in our history.

220. In our opinion, the main world problems burdening our generation are not insoluble. On the contrary, they are amenable to constructive solutions based on recognition of the fact that others have the right to exist and to be different, for only with an understanding attitude and goodwill can peaceful coexistence among States be preserved.

221. The great majority of the conflicts and tensions that disrupt the international scene in our day gravitate around two main axes: that between the northern and the southern hemispheres, and East-West relations.

222. The ever-widening gap that separates the rich countries of the North from the less developed countries of the South is undoubtedly one of the

main challenges facing the international community today and must be addressed with courage and determination, but also in an intelligent and efficient way.

223. In an epoch such as ours, characterized as it is by prodigious progress in science and technology, the struggle against underdevelopment and the train of miseries and human suffering which it carries with it is, in our opinion, first and foremost a moral imperative which no State belonging to the international community can ignore. Our participation in and commitment to the North-South dialogue should be seen in that context. The convening at Lisbon last April of a conference under the auspices of the Council of Europe on the theme "North-South: Europe's Role", the conclusions of which can be found in the Lisbon Declaration [A/C.2/39/12], is evidence of that commitment.

224. My Government has been receiving positive reactions to that Declaration from countries on several continents. Its recommendations are being followed up within that European organization, where on this very day a round-table on this theme is beginning with the participation of decision-makers from several European and third-world countries.

225. We reiterate that we continue to consider indispensable the launching of global negotiations within the United Nations—without prejudice to ongoing sectoral negotiations in competent forums—on the main problems relating to international co-operation, with the aim of supporting the efforts of the poorest and least developed countries, which are faced with difficult problems resulting from the protectionist trends in international trade, the increase in interest rates, the appreciation of the dollar and the burden of their external debts.

226. The United Nations should not abandon the high mission which has been entrusted to it of bringing about an authentic North-South dialogue based not on the logic of egoism but on the spirit of solidarity.

227. Next year we shall celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the adoption at the fifteenth session of the General Assembly of a series of resolutions and declarations—among them resolution 1514 (XV), which is of particular importance—that have contributed decisively to the implementation of the right of peoples to self-determination, a right enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. That has led to the appearance in the international community of many new States, particularly from the great African continent, to which my country is linked by historical and cultural ties and a spirit of understanding and friendship, and which holds a very special place in Portuguese feelings.

228. Indeed, in a little over two decades the colonial empires became part of history and, with greater or smaller vicissitudes that need not be recalled, were slowly replaced by newly independent States with varying resources and specific problems. However, all of them strive to achieve a common goal: to play a constructive role in the international community and to struggle for the progress of Africa and the improvement of the life of their peoples, while respecting their traditional values and their own identity.

229. This task, the magnitude of which makes it necessary to take the maximum advantage of available human and material resources, the stability of their societies and economic growth, has unfortu-

*Mr. Da Gama spoke in Portuguese. The English version of his statement was supplied by the delegation.

nately been made even more difficult by the persistence of grave international tensions which, we regret to say, have not yet been eliminated. Similarly, the recession in the world economy since the beginning of the 1970s, which is largely responsible for the fall in commodity prices, has sharpened structural disequilibrium, which, in turn, has had an unfortunate impact on the stability of institutions taking their first tentative steps.

230. In spite of the worthy efforts of the FAO, food shortages in the African continent have been increasing dramatically. This is an extremely serious phenomenon not only from the humanitarian point of view but also socially and politically. None of the countries represented in the General Assembly can neglect it, especially in view of the surplus in world food production. FAO and IFAD can make a valuable contribution in addressing this problem. However, this will be possible only if the countries with the necessary means increase their financial support for those institutions.

231. It was recognition of the fact that there was a link between the drought in Africa and the slump in grain production in that continent that led the Secretary-General to make his appeal in December 1983. That appeal retains all its urgency and validity.

232. The drought continues at a tragic level and nothing points to its end; rather, the threat of desertification now arises.

233. Forced to try to meet within a few years challenges that other nations overcame in the course of centuries, Africa has been trying to find solutions for its problems of economic development that would give real substance to the notion of non-alignment. With that in mind, Africa has spared no effort to safeguard the identity of its peoples and the independence of the continent.

234. Portugal has sought to support initiatives aimed at alleviating suffering, intensifying international co-operation, promoting the development of the areas of the world where deprivation is greatest and helping the victims of natural disasters, regional conflicts or cyclical famines. It was with this goal in mind that my Government, in spite of its limited financial resources, sought to participate actively in the Second International Conference on Assistance to Refugees in Africa, held at Geneva from 9 to 11 July 1984; my Government considers that Conference to be an extremely positive example of the possibility and desirability of international co-operation. We believe that international co-operation should be strengthened to prevent new flows of refugees. Every effort should be made by the various countries to address the causes of these movements of population which originate in food shortages.

235. In this context, I would also mention that my country is among the 30 main contributors to the financing of the programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. My country also intends shortly to sign a general co-operation agreement with the Intergovernmental Committee for Migration.

236. The recent adherence of Portugal to the constitutive agreement of the African Development Bank and the furtherance of relations it implies form part of the same policy.

237. I should also like to express our satisfaction at some initiatives in matters of North-South co-operation recently undertaken by the consulting groups of

the World Bank and UNDP. I think it is appropriate to mention in this context the recent co-operation agreement between Portugal and UNDP concerning the recruitment and participation of Portuguese technicians in the programmes to be carried out by United Nations volunteers in the African countries with which we have special relations of co-operation.

238. Similarly, we have endeavoured to participate actively in regional development schemes, as in the case of the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference [SADCC], which is a living example of what can be attained when a group of countries decide to pull together to take advantage of the specific potential of each for the benefit of all. The hoped-for success of this SADCC experience, in several of whose projects we have participated, and its contribution to the balanced development of its member States will certainly have an important impact on their stability and allow us to envisage with greater confidence the future of the area.

239. I would now like to make a brief reference to the situation in southern Africa and the sense of anticipation with which we have been following the developments in that region in the last few months. These developments have allowed some hope that a sincere dialogue may have begun in the region, a process that has been eased by the creation of a climate of mutual confidence and that may lead to a just and lasting solution to the problems of the region.

240. For the past few years, the question of Namibia has been one of the most serious concerns of the international community and of the United Nations, which has spared no effort to solve it.

241. The position of Portugal in this matter is well known. We support the independence of Namibia and firmly oppose all actions liable to delay the exercise by the people of Namibia of their right to self-determination in order to choose freely their own future. Whether at the United Nations or in contacts with other countries or representatives of the Namibian people, we have expressed unambiguously the concern we feel at the delay in implementing the relevant United Nations resolutions, in particular Security Council resolution 435 (1978). We have also stressed the dangers that may arise for southern Africa if this matter continues to drag on, believing as we do that the necessary conditions for a negotiated, peaceful and internationally acceptable solution now exist.

242. We therefore hope that, in this matter also, realism and a spirit of dialogue will prevail so that the political obstacles that have so far delayed the independence of Namibia may finally be removed.

243. It is only fair to mention the efforts that the front-line States have made in this respect. They are amply demonstrated by recent international meetings promoted in that region of the continent, which lead us to believe that their possibilities of intervening in that process are by no means exhausted.

244. The Republic of South Africa will have to respond in a constructive manner to the appeals of the international community regarding Namibia and abandon in favour of negotiation a position of confrontation which has led to deplorable acts of direct aggression against neighbouring States—a course of action which cannot and should not be allowed.

245. If these negotiating efforts are to have a lasting, beneficial effect, it is not enough that they be pursued in a spirit of openness and flexibility and within the context of scrupulous respect for the obligations freely assumed by the parties. It is necessary to move without timidity or artifice towards the complete abolition of the system of *apartheid* and bantustanization, which lies at the source of and exacerbates the serious internal tensions. Portugal, whose direct opposition to any form of racism and racial discrimination is well known, cannot but condemn these practices in the clearest terms.

246. The solution, therefore, to the grave problems afflicting southern Africa, as recent facts show, lies fundamentally in intensifying the dialogue in a constructive spirit, progressively permitting the creation of the conditions for a better understanding that will allow all those living in the region to exercise, without undesirable external interference, in peace, justice and freedom, their legitimate rights as free men and full citizens of their countries.

247. Thus, Portugal, as the European country geographically and historically closest to Africa, cannot but support the efforts of the African leaders and of the Organization of African Unity to preserve the identity and genuine independence of the States of the continent. For that reason, we believe that we are particularly able to understand the just aspirations of Africa, its desire for progress and its wish to preserve its roots in a rapidly changing world. The cultural vitality of the African civilizations enabled them to survive the colonial period. With self-determination, political freedom was attained in recent decades. It is now the task of all of us, in particular within the framework of the United Nations, to help Africa meet its great and possibly most important challenge: the acquisition of economic independence. For our part, we will do everything within our means to respond positively to requests for assistance in achieving that goal, one that must be reached as soon as possible for the good of Africa and, I would add, for our own good as well.

248. The question of the Middle East—we say this with concern—continues to be a serious source of international instability, and efforts to solve it satisfactorily have yet to prove successful.

249. As I had occasion to say here at the thirty-eighth session [*6th meeting*], the Palestinian question is at the core of the situation in the Middle East. Until it is satisfactorily resolved we cannot hope for decisive, or even important, progress along the road to peace in that region.

250. No efforts should therefore be spared to find a solution that takes into due account not only the right to existence and security of all the States of the area but also the recognition of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to self-determination and the right to a homeland. Portugal has supported, and will continue to support, all initiatives based on those principles, which will open the way for understanding among the parties and take into consideration their legitimate expectations.

251. The situation prevailing in Lebanon also causes us the greatest concern, for we see that a country which just a few years ago was one of the most stable in the region is now on the road to fragmentation, its territory serving as a battlefield for factions and foreign Powers, carrying with it the risk

of an escalation that may create a conflict of even greater proportions.

252. The war between Iraq and Iran is also spreading, slowly but surely, to the Gulf region, threatening the stability of the countries of the region and the freedom of navigation. The consequences of this aggravation are too serious for us to remain indifferent. We expect, therefore, that no efforts will be spared to try to find a solution acceptable to the conflicting parties, bringing to an end a war which has lasted for four years with extremely heavy costs in terms of human life and material resources and which seriously endangers world stability.

253. My country, for historical reasons of consanguinity, language and civilization, is connected to Latin America by profound ties that help us to understand in a more direct manner the problems afflicting the region. Such problems are ancient, deriving from great economic backwardness and social injustice and, in many cases, from a blatant lack of political democracy.

254. As a point of departure, it is therefore necessary to understand the legitimate aspirations of the peoples of the region who, we are certain, will be able to find their path to economic development, social well-being and pluralism.

255. We are also well aware that in the past few years the tensions between the super-Powers have superimposed themselves on those endogenous vectors. My country has condemned interference, from wherever it may come, because it believes it essential that the peoples of the region, free from external pressures or subversion, find solutions to their own problems. In our opinion, such solutions can only be the result of a peaceful dialogue between the contending factions. The Governments in power should also realize that the elimination of the opposition will not bring peace and that the conflicts among the different countries cannot be resolved by force but only through a global political and diplomatic solution.

256. In line with our support for General Assembly resolution 38/10, we will follow with the greatest interest the efforts of the countries like those of the Contadora Group which are familiar with the diversity and complexity of the problems and the specific circumstances and characteristics of the conflicts.

257. In effect, Central America has now reached a crucial moment when the risk that the conflict may become generalized has never been greater and when the attainment of serious solutions establishing a just balance between the various contending interests is imperative, so that tensions may decrease, respect for the inviolability of borders be maintained, levels of armament reduced and free societies built.

258. Within this context, my Government will participate in a few days' time in a meeting in Costa Rica with the Central American Governments, those of the countries of the Contadora Group, of the European Economic Community and of Spain, where an attempt will be made to find new orientations in the fields of political and economic co-operation that may point to solutions to the problems of the region. The peoples of the region, having suffered so much in past decades, have the right to redoubled attention and support from the international community. We sincerely hope, therefore, that this meeting will be fruitful and will signal the beginning of a process of regional appeasement.

259. I will now speak about human rights, a theme to which my Government assigns the highest priority. In effect, we believe that political and social institutions, both national and international, ought to serve the dignity of mankind. Thus, we do not believe there is any justification for discriminatory attitudes and diverse criteria in judging the instances of human rights violations that continue to occur systematically, not only in countries of Latin America or Asia or in South Africa but also in other areas, namely, the Soviet Union.

260. In the long list of acts perpetrated against human rights, one which my country considers most degrading is that of torture, still so prevalent in certain countries. My Government therefore hopes that the draft convention against torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment⁷ which will be presented to the Assembly at this session will be approved without difficulty.

261. It is necessary to overcome once and for all the false concept that the sovereignty of the State can be legitimately invoked to deny the international protection of human rights. Moreover, we must provide the United Nations with means allowing the international community to verify *in loco* respect for these rights in the various States.

262. In addressing the matter of human rights I shall mention the question of East Timor. I should like to call attention to the progress report of the Secretary-General [A/39/361], which informs the Assembly of the consultations which have taken place and the contacts between Portugal and Indonesia through their permanent representatives in New York. The report also describes the activities of the humanitarian international organizations in East Timor, which we would like to see work more.

263. Those consultations and contacts were very useful, and we therefore cannot but praise the actions of the Secretary-General. His efforts deserve our firm support. It was in this spirit that we agreed to postpone the debate on the question of East Timor until the fortieth session of the General Assembly. Without dialogue there can be no solution to international conflicts. We are entirely sincere when we say that we want to see a solution found to the problem of East Timor and that we are confident a global solution, one that respects international principles and human rights principles, can be found if this dialogue continues.

264. The state of East-West relations has been deteriorating in the past few years as a result of a series of events, among which we might stress the invasion and occupation of Afghanistan by military forces of a foreign Power; but other unilateral actions, in clear violation of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, have also contributed to this deterioration.

265. As is the case with international relations in general, it will not be possible for East-West relations to evolve to more stable and constructive patterns if the countries responsible for them do not show moderation in their conduct and do not respect the independence and legitimate interests of others—if, in short, they do not respect the principles enshrined in the Charter, particularly the principle of the non-use of force or threat of force.

266. We are convinced that if they do show such respect, a constructive East-West dialogue will resume, one that will reduce the arms race, that will

make more remote the danger of an armed conflict and that will contribute to the greater economic and social development of all concerned. In this context, particular relevance must be attributed to arms control negotiations, to the Conference on Confidence- and Security-building Measures and Disarmament in Europe, now in progress at Stockholm, and also to the Vienna Talks on Mutual Reduction of Forces, Armaments and Associated Measures in Central Europe, both those that are already taking place on the reduction and control of conventional forces and those that—it is still hoped—may begin shortly with the goal of preventing an arms race in outer space, particularly in the nuclear field.

267. The stockpiled military arsenals already constitute a threat to the survival of humanity and of our civilization, and they absorb resources which, if used in another way, would contribute to boosting the social, economic and cultural progress of peoples. However, just as weapons do not cause wars, so arms control and disarmament, by themselves, cannot guarantee the keeping of the peace. Peace must also be assured by the creation of a climate of confidence in international relations and by the adoption of measures that promote openness in the field of military activities, thereby reducing the possibility of surprise attacks; hence the importance we attribute to the success of the Stockholm Conference.

268. Equally, chemical weapons, because of their particularly inhumane effects, have long since aroused mankind's revulsion. Portugal considers that the total prohibition of these weapons would be a significant step towards achieving the goals of disarmament.

269. If arms control is not a sufficient condition for keeping the peace, we must also guard against the perverse effect—that it might become a factor for disturbing the peace. Arms control makes the eruption of armed conflict more remote only to the extent that it contributes to a stable balance of forces at the lowest possible level. We therefore believe that the beneficial potential of such agreements can be maximized only if they lead to balanced and verifiable results. We hereby renew our plea for the resumption of a dialogue between the super-Powers on all the relevant aspects of this vital question, while at the same time we urge them to avoid the temptation to use such important endeavours for propaganda effects or for obtaining unilateral advantages.

270. Moved by these beliefs in the need to create a more peaceful and secure world, where a collective security system may become an effective fact, my Government wishes, finally, to express its confidence in the role that the United Nations may come to play. I am thinking mainly of strengthening the role of the Organization in the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, of situations that lead to international friction or threats to the peace. We think that in such cases the Security Council and the Secretary-General ought to play a more active role, so as to overcome the current situation where disputes get to the United Nations only when they reach the point of insolubility.

271. We therefore regard as being of the greatest interest the suggestions by the Secretary-General, in his report on the work of the Organization [A/39/1], for making the actions of the main organs of the Organization in defence of peace more effective.

272. Indeed, never more than today has the use of multilateral forms of negotiation, dialogue and co-operation been so necessary. And, paradoxically, never has the use of formulas of multilateral co-operation been so forgotten or passed over in favour of other forms of intercourse between States which, under the pretext that they are more efficient or expeditious, have sometimes led to situations of greater political tension.

273. For small countries like ours, with a humanist, open, tolerant and peaceful vocation, this retreat from international solidarity is disquieting. Let us then, we ourselves and all the rulers of the world, devote our keenest attention to this matter, so that confidence in international institutions may be renewed.

274. Next year we shall celebrate the fortieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations. There could be no more appropriate occasion for serious reflection, which our political and ethical duties and the imperatives of universal consciousness make ever more necessary. The United Nations can and should see the scope of its action in modern international life widened.

275. Mr. HAMEED (Sri Lanka): It is with great pleasure that I extend to you, Sir, the warm congratulations and good wishes of Sri Lanka on your unanimous election as President of the thirty-ninth session of the General Assembly. Zambia and Sri Lanka, founder members of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and fellow members of the Commonwealth, have enjoyed the most cordial of relations. We have admired your negotiating skill and witnessed your gentle but firm use of the gavel at many United Nations and non-aligned forums. Sri Lanka is therefore pleased that you, a distinguished son of Zambia, will guide us through this session.

276. My delegation wishes to place on record its appreciation of the admirable manner in which the outgoing President of the General Assembly, Mr. Jorge Illueca, conducted the business of the thirty-eighth session.

277. Sri Lanka welcomes the entry of a fellow Asian State—the State of Brunei Darussalam—to the United Nations and wishes it well. Brunei Darussalam, with its long history and traditions, its resources and its location, could play a considerable role in the life of the international community.

278. In a survey of the international landscape, both political and economic, an overall impression of bleakness is unavoidable, making the imperative of international co-operation all the more compelling.

279. In the economic sphere, the prospects of a global, co-operative approach to restructuring international economic relations are dim, and economic disparities between nations have heightened. A climate of economic recovery among the developed countries will, of course, provide grounds for some optimism as regards restructuring. But there is every reason to believe that the recovery of the last year may not prove to be durable.

280. As a recent study of a Commonwealth expert group on the international debt problem has indicated, the recovery owes virtually everything to the build-up in the last two years of unsustainable budget deficits through expansionary policies in a single powerful economy. It is therefore inherently fragile in not being sufficiently broad-based. At the same time, the thrust of economic policy elsewhere has been

profoundly recessionary. In a word, over-expansion on one side and over-restriction on the other is the combination of macro-economic policies that needs to be corrected if the current recovery is not to turn down once again into a deep depression.

281. It is our responsibility to prepare our countries for ways of coping with the eventuality of another depression. Everyone in this forum is aware of the fact of global economic interdependence; and any recession originating with the developed countries cannot fail to have damaging consequences for developing countries as well.

282. The long-term strategy surely is to strengthen economic linkage within the third world so that we become less vulnerable to disturbances emanating from economic policy failures in the developed world. A third-world bank, or bank of the South, is one solution that has been advanced, and this is currently under negotiation within the Group of 77.

283. It would be idle, however, to pretend that such initiatives would yield fruit in time to insulate the developing countries against the impact of any collapse of the current bout of recovery. What is required to moderate the resulting chain reaction of collapse within the third world is adequate and flexible methods of balance-of-payments financing. This can come about today only from long overdue reforms in the Bretton Woods institutions—namely, the IMF and the World Bank. There must, at a minimum, be put in place a facility that would provide unconditional and substantial-enough finance when countries experience an external shock such as a collapse of commodity prices. The facilities available today are notoriously inadequate.

284. Otherwise, the budgets of developing countries would in turn collapse—for example, from the failure of export revenues. Countries would then be faced with an impossible choice between curtailing their development programmes, on the one hand, and, on the other, risking inflation by printing the money needed to finance their budget deficits. A second emergency requirement would be an IMF facility to meet the international debt problem. Finally, there is the need for IMF to create special drawing rights in the required measure. An irrefutable case has been made for this by numerous organizations and authorities. This gains special weight during a period when recovery in the developed countries is as delicate as it is and when inflation has declined. A genuine and enduring recovery of the international economy requires, in brief, a global effort.

285. Only a truly international effort within the framework of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea can ensure that the full bounty of the oceans is developed for the benefit of all mankind. The developing countries need to acquire capabilities in marine affairs, particularly in science and technology, which can be best advanced through the establishment of a well-planned and co-ordinated programme under the United Nations to operate at the global and regional levels. The Indian Ocean, which is bounded by Africa and Asia, requires special emphasis in this context. A co-operative United Nations inter-agency effort would be timely and invaluable for realizing the benefits of the new ocean régime.

286. The Antarctic continent must remain free of militarization and international confrontation. The resources of that vast continent should be developed

equitably, rationally and safely. Sri Lanka supports a comprehensive study of the entire Antarctic system and the establishment of an *ad hoc* committee for that purpose.

287. In political terms, international tension has risen and in some areas has led to situations of confrontation and conflict. Relations between the two major defence alliances have been deteriorating, and a dizzy acceleration of the arms race has been one alarming fall-out. The nuclear dimension of the armaments race bodes ill for all mankind. The nuclear deterrent theory, which is advanced as a means of securing peace, is being perilously maintained at constantly rising levels of armaments, increasing, rather than reducing, the threat of a global confrontation. Sri Lanka will always welcome, therefore, any initiative to promote dialogue and negotiation on the priority questions of disarmament in order to break down dangerous barriers of doubt and suspicion, particularly between the super-Powers.

288. The oceans and the land mass of this planet have long been fouled by the contaminants of militarization. Now even man's last frontier, outer space itself, faces the ultimate pollution of the arms race. Sri Lanka hopes to continue at this thirty-ninth session an initiative pursued at the last two sessions for the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

289. An initiative in disarmament of special significance for Sri Lanka is the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace. The States of the Indian Ocean, the great Powers and the major maritime users of the ocean are engaged in an exercise of co-operative endeavour to convene the Conference on the Indian Ocean at Colombo next year. The Conference itself will not establish a zone of peace overnight but will chalk out the essential principles and the appropriate modalities, mechanisms and machinery for the establishment of the zone of peace.

290. One of the natural extensions of the Indian Ocean is the Gulf, where two non-aligned Islamic States with which Sri Lanka has the closest of relations, Iran and Iraq, are in conflict. We hope that this tragic dispute will come to a speedy end, bringing peace once more to the peoples of Iraq and Iran and security to the region.

291. The Middle East as a whole continues to be an area of tension. Numerous international gatherings held under the sponsorship of the United Nations, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the League of Arab States and the Organization of the Islamic Conference have identified the key elements of a Middle East settlement, and international consensus has been established on these elements. It is clear that the question of Palestine is the core of the Middle East question and that no just or viable settlement is possible without the withdrawal of Israel from all occupied Arab and Palestinian territory and the restoration of the inalienable national rights of the Palestinian people. These rights include the right of the Palestinian people to return to their homeland, the right of self-determination and the right to establish an independent State in Palestine. In the settlement of this question, the PLO, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, must participate in full measure and on an equal footing with other parties. Sri Lanka has been happy to host at Colombo a resident mission of the PLO with the full diplomatic status of an embassy.

292. Sri Lanka is greatly concerned about developments in Lebanon and calls for full respect for the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of Lebanon within its internationally recognized boundaries.

293. It is our firm view that, like the PLO in Palestine, SWAPO in Namibia constitutes the vanguard of the struggle by a majority people against the tyranny of a racist minority. For Namibia, a comprehensive peace plan already exists in the form of Security Council resolution 435 (1978) but, because of the intransigence of *apartheid* South Africa, this remains unfulfilled. Sri Lanka rejects the linkage of extraneous issues, such as the presence of Cuban troops in Angola, with Namibian independence.

294. In South Africa itself, the *apartheid* régime has sought to foster so-called constitutional reforms to tighten its grip on the majority people of South Africa. Sri Lanka expresses its solidarity with the majority people of South Africa in their legitimate struggle for a non-racial democratic society in a united, non-fragmented South Africa.

295. Although the respective situations in Afghanistan and Kampuchea have each a separate and distinct complex of circumstances at root, Sri Lanka believes that a just and lasting peace is not possible in either country unless it is founded on a comprehensive political solution in which the indispensable elements would be the withdrawal of foreign forces and guarantees to ensure the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of the respective States. The Secretary-General's efforts to find solutions to these questions require the full support of the international community, particularly the parties directly concerned.

296. The instability and insecurity sensed by the States of Central America cause us concern. It is hoped that the Contadora process will help ensure the preservation of the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of those States and bring stability and security to that region.

297. Sri Lanka supports the desire of the Korean people to reunify their homeland peacefully through direct dialogue, without foreign interference and in conformity with the principles of the South-North Joint Communiqué of 4 July 1972.⁸

298. In regard to Cyprus, we support the endeavours of the Secretary-General to encourage meaningful intercommunal talks in order to effect a viable settlement which will bring peace to the Republic of Cyprus. No settlement is possible without the unconditional withdrawal of foreign forces from the northern section of Cyprus. Sri Lanka has consistently supported the independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-aligned status of Cyprus. I should like to emphasize that no State should use its armed forces to interfere or intervene in the internal affairs of another State on any grounds. Interference and intervention on the grounds of ethnic interests and affinities with people in other States should be severely checked, in the interest of international stability. Aggression remains aggression even when wreathed in expressions of concern for the welfare of kindred racial or religious groups elsewhere.

299. In the aftermath of the Second World War, individual States, depending on differing perceptions of their defence needs, followed different strategies. Some joined mutually exclusive military alliances; some opted for neutrality; and many committed

themselves to a policy of non-alignment. In post-war times, many States have had to endure threats to their independence and freedom. It is important to note that those affected have been mainly small States: Cyprus, Kampuchea, Afghanistan.

300. It is therefore relevant in this connection to recall the Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Co-operation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations [*resolution 2625 (XXV)*] and to reiterate that the territory of no State should be permitted to be used for the preparation or commission of hostile acts against the territory of another State. There can be no contextual application of these principles, no limiting qualifications, no extenuating arguments to justify threat, pressure or subversion. These principles apply universally, be it in Sri Lanka's own area of South Asia or in the distant region of Central America.

301. Sri Lanka is a democratic, multiracial, multi-lingual, multireligious country. We are committed to the rule of law. We respect the rights of the individual. The Constitution prohibits discrimination on the grounds of race, religion or language. Historically, we have been a model of communal harmony for centuries. The communal disturbances of July of last year were therefore a tragic development in the life of our nation. Attempts have been made by certain ill-motivated parties outside Sri Lanka to pillory us and to place us permanently in the dock. It is a sad commentary on international relations that the aberrations of small States are sensationalized and blown up to massive proportions.

302. The President and the Government of Sri Lanka have been working, despite set-backs, to find a political solution to the problems we face. An all-party conference, in which the majority groups as well as the minority groups are represented, is meeting under the leadership of the President and is striving to find solutions that will meet with the acceptance of all concerned.

303. Meanwhile, motley groups of terrorists who seek to impose, through violence and terror, a separate State based on racist grounds have made the application of the democratic process much more difficult. These terrorists, who constitute only a small minority within the Tamil community, direct their violent campaign not only against the majority community and security forces but also against innocent civilian members of the Tamil community who are committed to a united multiracial Sri Lanka.

304. The terrorist group finds refuge, training, sympathy and even encouragement on foreign territory, posing a rising threat of destabilization of the country.

305. Terrorism has its sordid international ramifications. International co-operation is therefore vital in dealing with and eliminating international terrorism. Last year the General Assembly adopted by consensus a resolution which called on all States to

fulfil their obligations under international law to refrain from organizing, instigating, assisting or participating in acts of civil strife or terrorist acts in another State [*resolution 38/130*].

306. The President of Sri Lanka has proposed concerted action by the international community through the United Nations to eradicate international terrorism. The United Nations, in keeping with agreed international instruments, should once more urge and, indeed, ensure that all States co-operate more closely with one another, especially through the exchange of relevant information concerning the prevention and combating of international terrorism and the conclusion of special treaties, in particular to ensure the extradition or prosecution of terrorists. We believe that the United Nations should take effective steps to establish machinery to implement agreed measures against international terrorism.

307. It has been my privilege to represent Sri Lanka at several General Assembly sessions. The perspective that presents itself at this session, on the eve of the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations, is neither worse nor better than that of the last few years. We must therefore guard against a sense of resignation, which would lead either to despair and apathy, on the one hand, or to an aggressive and callous pursuit of narrow interests, on the other. Both extremes are dangerous.

308. Recently, the Secretary-General described the option before us as between unilateralism and multilateralism. The United Nations is composed of 159 independent nations, each with definite commitments to its people. In exploiting the full potential of this great Assembly for building greater global harmony and understanding, we should ensure that all States, irrespective of differences in size, economic strength and military muscle, command equal acceptance, respect and dignity in the demonstration of the Organization's will.

The meeting rose at 7.15 p.m.

NOTES

¹International Monetary Fund, *Annual Report of the Executive Board for the Financial Year ended April 30, 1984* (Washington, D.C.).

²See *Report of the International Conference on Population, 1984* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.84.XIII.8 and corrigenda).

³For the text, see resolution 38/40, para. 1.

⁴Frente Popular para la Liberación de Saguia el-Hamra y de Río de Oro.

⁵See *Report of the International Conference on Kampuchea* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.81.I.20).

⁶*Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 1.*

⁷E/CN.4/1984/72.

⁸*Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 27, annex I.*