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GENERAL ASSEMBLY

PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE FOURTEENTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,  
on Monday, 28 September 1987, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. FLORIN (German Democratic Republic)

- General debate [9]: (continued)

Statements were made by:

Mr. Wakil (Afghanistan)  
Mr. da Luz (Cape Verde)  
Mr. Malile (Albania)  
Mr. Londofiez Parades (Colombia)  
Mr. Akinyemi (Nigeria)

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

AGENDA ITEM 9 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. WAKIL (Afghanistan) (spoke in Dari; English text furnished by the delegation): On behalf of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan, it is my pleasure to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the high post of the presidency of the forty-second session of the United Nations General Assembly. It is our conviction that, under your able guidance, our gathering will bear fruitful results in the preservation and consolidation of peace.

I should like to express my Government's full appreciation of the efforts of Mr. Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, the United Nations Secretary-General, and his wise conduct of the Organization's work.

The people and Government of Afghanistan attach enormous importance to the role played by the United Nations in regulating international relations and peacefully resolving conflicts through political means, based on acceptable and just solutions.

The international problems under discussion in the Assembly are serious and difficult. There is no doubt, however, that the threat of a nuclear conflagration and the use of force are the central concerns of all nations, all realistic and far-sighted statesmen and peace-loving circles of the globe. Solution of these problems requires a new way of political thinking.

My Government believes that no exceptional security can ever exist for any individual Power unless durable and genuine peace, founded on general and complete disarmament, is established for all. Not a single country can ever breathe freely under the shadows of nuclear missiles and the Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI) project of the United States of America.

(Mr. Wakil, Afghanistan)

All the possibilities existing in contemporary international relations and all the potentialities of the United Nations should be deployed for the solving of world problems and towards the establishment of a universally acceptable political and legal mechanism to regulate international relations.

We warmly welcome the possibility of the signing of an agreement on the elimination of medium- and short-range nuclear missiles in Europe created during recent talks in Washington between the Foreign Ministers of the Soviet Union and the United States of America. It is our hope that the experience gained during those talks will be utilized towards banning nuclear tests and reducing and finally eliminating strategic nuclear weapons.

The Government of Afghanistan follows with increasing concern dangerous regional developments in various parts of the world. In the strategic Gulf region, expansionist and neo-globalistic imperialist policies have created an explosive situation. The concentration of huge naval forces of the United States of America and its allies has posed the serious threat of a new flare-up of uncontrollable dimensions. We favour implementation of the proposal for the withdrawal of foreign naval forces from that region.

The senseless war between Iran and Iraq has claimed the lives of hundreds of thousands and has inflicted heavy material losses on both sides. We support resolution 598 (1987) of the Security Council, which calls for an immediate cease-fire.

The powder-keg tension in the Middle East, which is on the verge of explosion, remains unchanged because of the continued Israeli occupation of Arab lands and denial of the Palestinian people's legitimate right to self-determination and statehood.

(Mr. Wakil, Afghanistan)

The convening of an international conference with the participation of all parties concerned is the only reasonable way for the solution of this issue. It is imperative to search for a viable and comprehensive solution to the Cyprus problem and thus to eliminate a dangerous centre of tension in the Eastern Mediterranean region through the convocation of an international conference within the framework of the United Nations. In this region, again, provocations from across the ocean has further escalated discord and conflict in Lebanon.

The Pretoria régime continues its policy of apartheid in South Africa through the violent oppression of the people, in spite of the unanimous demand for its termination by the entire world.

The noble efforts of the United Nations for securing the independence of the people of Namibia is being obstructed and aggression is still being carried by the apartheid régime against Angola and other front-line States. Here, too, the interventionist hand of the United States is clearly involved.

The United States armed threats against Latin America have clearly surfaced, with the scandalous military and financial aid to the Nicaraguan contras. The recent accord reached in Guatemala among the leaders of the five Central American nations once again revealed the practical nature of the Contadora peace process as well as the need for putting an end to foreign interventions in the affairs of the region.

We express our solidarity with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea for the unification of North and South Korea and for the denuclearization of the Korea peninsula. The reconciliation process initiated in the People's Republic of Kampuchea deserves appreciation and support. It is our hope that all sides concerned will welcome this meaningful and positive process.

(Mr. Wakil, Afghanistan)

I should like to express high appreciation and support for the role of the constructive peace proposals and initiatives offered by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and other socialist countries, peace efforts initiated by the United Nations, member countries of the Non-Aligned Movement, reflected in the Harare Declaration and the Delhi Six proposals, as well as for endeavours of the national liberation and progressive movements.

The world economic situation is still appalling. No doubt this will have grave consequences. The increase in the number of the least developed countries from 31 in 1981 to 40 in 1986 indicates the sad reality of the prevailing international economic life.

The present world economic situation is not unrelated to the arms race. Only checking the arms race can release the necessary resources to improve the world economic situation.

Unless international economic security becomes an integral part of the overall global security and is strictly observed, a rapid and stable harmonious growth rate and the establishment of a new international economic order will not be achieved.

The debt crisis, debt servicing and high interest rates along with protectionist policies have led to the retardation or total suspension of development programmes in the developing and least developing countries.

Concerning the objective realities in my country, I should like to state that with the victory of the April Revolution, our people rose only to fight against backwardness, illiteracy, ignorance, disease, poverty and unemployment in our society.

For nine years, however, an undeclared war has been continuing against our country by the enemies of Afghanistan. From its very inception this war, waged through some neighbouring countries, has been increasingly intensified and has

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assumed new dimensions every year. Billions of dollars have been poured in by the Washington Administration and other imperialist and reactionary circles for fuelling this war. As a result, thousands of Afghans have either been martyred or crippled, and hundreds of thousands of others have been displaced and now live pathetic lives in exile.

The war has also ruined our national economy. For instance, 2,000 schools, 350 bridges, 50 cultural centres, 131 hospitals, 224 mosques and holy places of worship, 258 production institutions, thousands of kilometres of highways and communication lines, and thousands of trucks have been destroyed or burned. Total damage to our national economy has reached billions of afghanis, amounting to three fourths of all the total development investment in the past 50 years in Afghanistan. Huge defence expenditures, which otherwise could have brought about an improvement in the living conditions of the people, have burdened our fragile economy.

This situation has made it imperative for every Afghan to think about how to overcome this state of affairs. This necessary determination, new political thinking and the common endeavour of every patriot is directed towards putting an end to fratricide and establishing peace and tranquillity in the country. This determination and new political thinking found reflection in the policy of national reconciliation which came into effect on 25 January 1987. This policy is in total conformity with the principles of humanism, Islam, Afghan traditions, the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The proclamation of a unilateral cease-fire and its further extension; the proclamation of a general amnesty, including the release of prisoners; the endorsement of new legislation regarding better regulation of agrarian issues; the exemption of interest on debts and tariffs of the peasants; the returning of

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confiscated properties to the returnees; the encouragement and development of private investment; the adoption of new and suitable terms for conscription to the national service; and other such steps have recently been taken for the public welfare.

More than 3,200 commissions for national reconciliation have been established throughout the country. About 83,000 of our refugee compatriots have returned, despite obstacles created by neighbouring countries. More than 30,000 members of the armed opposition groups have laid down their weapons inside the country and are co-operating with the Government in preserving peace and security in their localities. Nearly 600 armed opposition groups encompassing 53,000 people are in contact and negotiating with the Government.

The new Law of Political Parties which guarantees the activity of various parties has been endorsed. This is the first of its kind in the entire history of the country. The draft of the new constitution has been prepared and published for public debate by the people of Afghanistan both in and outside the country. In line with its history and traditions, Afghanistan has been proclaimed, in the constitution, as an independent, sovereign and non-aligned country, which shall enter into no military pacts and shall allow no foreign military bases on its territory. It is enshrined in the new constitution that Islam is the religion of the people of Afghanistan. Comrade Najib, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan, has rightly stated that "the new constitution is the constitution of conciliation".

The achievement of national reconciliation would have been much greater if some of the countries had not adopted a hostile stand towards it. Yes, it is not proceeding without difficulty. However, no alternative exists for putting an end to war and bloodshed.

(Mr. Wakil, Afghanistan)

To realize the policy of national reconciliation, the practical participation of all the political parties and groups, together with the clergymen, patriotic personalities and social organizations is required. Consistent efforts have been made to establish a national unity coalition government with the participation of the representatives of all sects and strata of society. These include the several Islamic parties, supporters of the former King, and other groups and individuals who are ready to join the process of national reconciliation. In this regard, various specific high posts of State in the legislative, judicial and executive organs have also been proposed to them.

(Mr. Wakil, Afghanistan)

The policy of national reconciliation has not only been welcomed in the country but also enjoys international support. The socialist countries, the majority of the countries of the Non-Aligned Movement and some of the countries members of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), as well as international organizations, political parties and peace-loving and progressive forces, have welcomed this bold and courageous peace initiative of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan and given it various kinds of support. The resolute support of the Soviet Union for national reconciliation, and its economic assistance, once again refute the charges from some quarters against Afghan-Soviet friendship.

Goodwill delegations from the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan recently paid visits to various countries of the world. The purpose behind these visits was to inform those countries about the realities of Afghan society and invite their delegations to visit Afghanistan to acquaint themselves with developments in our country. I should like to express my gratitude for the goodwill of those countries and their support for the noble and humane cause of my country.

I also express my appreciation to those international organizations - including the International Committee of the Red Cross, the United Nations Commission on Human Rights and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees - which have begun visiting and communicating and co-operating with Afghanistan.

It is precisely since the announcement of the programme for national reconciliation that the flow of modern weapons supplied to the opposition by their supporters abroad has sharply increased. The United States of America has increased its financial aid for the continuation of the undeclared war from \$530 million last year to \$630 million in the current year, and it will reach \$1,000 million next year. The United States has also increased the dispatch of modern Stinger missiles

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to the extremists from 60 units last year to 600 units this year and has started to supply them with 120 mm long-range mortars. The United Kingdom, too, has further increased the dispatch of Blowpipe missiles to the extremists. These weapons have been used to shell cities and villages, carry out terrorist acts and shoot down civilian aircraft, murdering innocent passengers, including children, women and old people. It is clear that our enemies have not abandoned the policy of "war to the last Afghan".

Our people firmly believe that with the full realization of the policy of national reconciliation, nationwide peace will inevitably be ensured in the country. Unfortunately, however, in the course of the general debate at this session of the General Assembly, there have been some speeches in which attempts have been made to distort the substance of the processes going on in and around Afghanistan and to cast doubts on the policy of national reconciliation.

I should like to emphasize another very significant development which is at variance with the allegations of those who want to transform the constructive discussion going on in the General Assembly into a battleground of confrontation. I have in mind the fact that it is precisely since the last session of the General Assembly that there has been radical progress at the Geneva talks between Afghanistan and Pakistan, with the participation of the representative of the Secretary-General.

The negotiating sides have been able to prepare the main documents comprising a political settlement, and these are virtually complete. The gap between the positions of the two sides on the time-frame for the return of troops has been narrowed down to only eight months. We appeal to the Pakistani side to adopt a constructive stand and demonstrate political realism. This will enable us to solve

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remaining differences, including those concerning the time-frame, and the next round of talks will prove conclusive.

The policy of national reconciliation and the Geneva talks are contributing as two separate processes to the achievement of a single objective. That objective is to ensure peace inside the country and achieve a political settlement of the situation around Afghanistan.

In this connection, I wish to point to the ineffective nature of the resolutions on Afghanistan adopted by this Assembly over some years now. They have failed to bring about a guaranteed cessation of interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan as the root cause of the tense situation there. The removal of that root cause could rapidly make possible a comprehensive settlement. I therefore appeal to all in this Assembly to embark upon a move which instead of impeding will facilitate a settlement.

I assure representatives that the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan is fully prepared to take a constructive position and participate actively in the preparation of a truly balanced draft resolution that would contribute to the speediest possible political solution of the situation around Afghanistan.

It is our conviction that the General Assembly can help bring about a favourable international atmosphere conducive to the political settlement of the situation around Afghanistan and to the process of national reconciliation in the country. Both processes have recently gained considerable momentum. Afghanistan is on the threshold of a crucial historical change. We believe that a political settlement of the situation around Afghanistan is in full accord with the interests of both our people and all the nations of the region. It will ensure peace and security in the region and in the world and in no way prove contrary to the national interest of any other country.

Mr. da LUZ (Cape Verde) (spoke in Portuguese; interpretation from French text furnished by the delegation): We should like first of all, Sir, to say how pleased we were to welcome your election to the presidency of the forty-second session of the General Assembly. We are convinced that your personal qualifications and professional experience will contribute to proper consideration of the complex issues which the General Assembly must tackle at this session.

We also congratulate the President of the last session, Mr. Choudhury, on his invaluable contribution to the work on important issues during his term of office. We take pleasure, in particular, in expressing our appreciation of and gratitude for the serious and responsible manner in which he directed delicate negotiations in difficult circumstances in the life of the United Nations.

We reiterate our confidence in the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, and thank him for the work he has done and for the prompt, resolute and intelligent action that has characterized his administration. At difficult periods in the life of the Organization, Mr. Perez de Cuellar's efforts to preserve this essential international forum have been truly valuable.

Every year since the Republic of Cape Verde became independent we have addressed the General Assembly to express the views of our country and its Government on the international political situation and make our modest but committed contribution to the collective analysis of the questions affecting the community of nations.

Throughout all these years we have particularly appreciated the achievements of the international community that have contributed to the progress, dignity and well-being of peoples. We have stressed with concern the negative factors and the demonstrations of force still in evidence in international conduct, sacrificing lives on the altar of violence or hunger, destroying homes and hopes and sowing or increasing injustice, poverty and desolation.

(Mr. da Luz, Cape Verde)

We have put forward suggestions and ideas in keeping with the feelings of the overwhelming majority of other countries represented here in an attempt to contribute in some way to the search for joint solutions to the problems that scourge us and hamper the creation of a better, more just world.

In spite of some encouraging signs, the international situation continues basically to be as complex as ever; certain matters and problems confronting the international community have grown graver. We still see the systematic use or threat of use of force in relations among States and the denial of the fundamental rights of peoples still under the yoke of colonial domination or the victims of racism. Moreover, poverty, hunger, the deterioration of the environment, desertification and natural disasters and their harmful consequences strike millions of human beings with increasing intensity.

Every year crucial and less crucial problems are discussed in depth by distinguished speakers who, on behalf of their respective countries, express here their concern at the current situation, analyse the problems and make recommendations for their rapid and satisfactory solution. The well-being and happiness of mankind constitute the goal put forward by all.

Everyone agrees that justice, dignity and respect for law are factors to guide the action of States in their task of building a better and more balanced world in which dialogue would replace intolerance, in which co-operation and human solidarity would triumph over narrow-minded nationalism, and in which joint solutions would prevail. But that concern, which is universal among statesmen and politicians the world over, has not been followed up with actions and measures for the effective solution of the global problems of our day.

(Mr. da Luz, Cape Verde)

In the final analysis, we are frustrated at our collective inability to resolve effectively the questions affecting the entire international community. That frustration is all the greater because of our knowledge that we now possess the means to resolve these problems.

Respect for the principles and attainment of the purposes set out in the Charter of the United Nations nearly half a century ago demands the firm and unequivocal commitment of us all to the enlightened humanistic vision of those who, having experienced the harmful and destructive effects of heightened nationalism, decided to lay the foundation of a new era in the history of relations among nations, based on peace, co-operation, justice and dignity for all.

The Republic of Cape Verde advocates universal dialogue and solidarity in relations between States, and firmly believes that political resolve and respect for law in international relations can help build the world so long awaited by our peoples. Independence of thought and action, freedom of choice and autonomy in decision-making - in a word, independence - are thus historical requirements.

In keeping with that deep conviction, we are striving at home to promote the development and well-being of our people, at the same time strengthening the climate of peace and trust in which we live.

In our region, we highlight among our immediate goals that of contributing to a valid solution to the conflict in southern Africa and that of resolving the economic crisis that is stifling the continent. These are two of the major obstacles to the liberation and progress of Africa.

In the United Nations we try to co-operate with all other Member States in the creation of an international atmosphere conducive to the preservation and strengthening of international stability and security.

(Mr. da Luz, Cape Verde)

In that context, we follow with concern the armed conflicts that continue to sow disarray and desolation in several parts of the world; these conflicts are true hindrances to human development and progress. From Central America to Asia, from the Persian Gulf to southern Africa, every day we feel the climate of tension and destruction in those regions. There are other disputes whose persistence harshly punishes the affected populations.

For decades, the apartheid system has unquestionably been the greatest cause for instability in Africa. Because of its very nature, its persistence and the widening contradictions within it, that system of ongoing institutionalized violence, maintained at the cost of repression and ignominy, can only render the situation even more explosive. The bloody events of recent years testify to the fact that the apartheid régime has reached the boiling point.

We are convinced that the present situation requires fundamental changes, not mere temporary changes or changes rendered obsolete by the internal political situation. Changes of that nature have not broken the resolve of the majority of the population of South Africa in its irreversible and legitimate struggle for dignity, justice and equality. Thus, a just and lasting solution cannot be found until the apartheid system is rooted out, yielding to another society in which all South Africans will enjoy the same rights and the respect due to every human being, irrespective of social origin or colour. The eradication of apartheid is therefore not only a moral imperative for all mankind, but a political necessity for peace and development throughout the region.

The Pretoria régime is also a threat to the peoples and countries of southern Africa, whose security, stability and well-being continue to be systematically disturbed either through direct military intervention or through the intermediary of armed bands trained, financed and directed by that régime for carrying out

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obviously terrorist activities such as the recent massacre at Homoine in the People's Republic of Mozambique.

The enormous damage the war has caused in the front-line countries, especially the People's Republic of Angola and the People's Republic of Mozambique, and the constant manoeuvres of political and military destabilization against those countries by South Africa gravely jeopardize their economic development and seriously damage the progress and social well-being of the affected populations.

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In this context it is urgent to increase assistance to the front-line countries. We continue to believe that the international community can and must adopt effective measures against the Pretoria régime. It is within this framework that we welcome with optimism the recent proposals by the People's Republic of Angola, which, in their flexibility and scope, demonstrate once again the openness and political will of the Angolan authorities to arrive at a peaceful solution in the region. We reiterate, however, our belief that the international community can and must adopt effective measures against the Pretoria régime for the urgent elimination of the system of apartheid, and thus contribute to a peaceful transition towards a multiracial society and ensure a future of dignity for all the peoples and countries of the region.

The situation in Namibia constitutes a hotbed of tension in the southern part of the continent as South Africa persists in its illegal occupation of the Territory despite the repeated condemnations of the international community and the decisions of the United Nations.

We believe that the Territory's independence must be achieved on an urgent basis through strict implementation of Security Council resolution 435 (1978).

In Chad and in Western Sahara, conflicts persist for which solutions must be found on the basis of dialogue and the relevant decisions of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). In this connection we wish to stress the importance of the initiatives undertaken by the OAU's ad hoc committee on the situation in Chad, as well as the joint initiatives of the United Nations Secretary-General and the President of the OAU with a view to a negotiated solution to the conflict in Western Sahara.

In the Middle East, the injustice confronting the Palestinian people persists. Those of us who at some time in our history have been victims of colonial violence or of the humiliation of foreign occupation know the real

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dimensions of the suffering that people has faced over the past four decades. Massacres and mass violations of human rights committed against the people of Palestine, as well as the continued denial of their right to form their own sovereign State, certainly do not promote an atmosphere of peace in the Middle East, a region where political and military stability cannot be achieved without a solution to the Palestinian question.

In this context, the international conference on peace in the Middle East, with the presence of all parties concerned, which has been approved by the General Assembly, seems to us an excellent framework for the search for a peaceful solution for the region. Efforts to achieve its convening must therefore be continued.

In the Gulf region we are witnessing with concern the armed conflict between the fraternal peoples of Iran and Iraq. That conflict, which has in recent years assumed alarming proportions and caused immense suffering and damage to the population, is now becoming internationalized and is thus seriously endangering peace not only in the region but throughout the world. We reiterate our urgent appeal to the two parties to put an end to their hostilities and to seek a negotiated solution.

The recent Security Council resolution on a cease-fire was the result of long and careful thought and awareness of the dangers to the world inherent in the conflict. It is to be hoped that in the serious and highly sensitive situation now prevailing in the region the military forces there will demonstrate restraint. The common sense essential to the establishment of an atmosphere of détente and dialogue must replace force and attempts to use force.

The territory of East Timor remains illegally occupied by foreign forces, which denies the Maubere people its legitimate and inalienable right to self-determination and independence. We appeal to the international community and

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in particular, to Portugal, the administering Power, to persist in their efforts to establish the conditions necessary for the people of East Timor to exercise its inalienable right to choose its own destiny. The process of decolonization, one of the important and noble achievements in the annals of our Organization, will not be complete as long as East Timor and other territories remain under the yoke of foreign occupation.

We are following the events in Central America with utmost attention. The violence that has prevailed in the region in recent years has demonstrated the need to take urgent measures to establish a climate conducive to the realization of the legitimate aspirations of the peoples of the region to peace and social justice. We greatly appreciate the efforts made by the Heads of State of the region that have led to the adoption of an agreement on the establishment of lasting peace in Central America. We are convinced that if that agreement is implemented by all the parties and respected by all States it will certainly help to bring peace to our Latin American brothers of the region.

In South-East Asia, we regret that the initiatives and efforts made thus far have not succeeded as we had hoped, in decreasing tension and bringing about respect for the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of all the States of the region, including Kampuchea. It is high time for a solution to be found to the situation in that country. It is time for the Kampuchean people, free of foreign interference and in full freedom, to decide their own destiny.

We remain firmly convinced that in Korea dialogue and co-operation between the two parties are prerequisites for the happiness, well-being and progress of the Korean people and the peaceful reunification of their homeland.

We are following with great interest diplomatic initiatives towards a peaceful settlement of the conflict in Afghanistan. We encourage any solution that respects

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that country's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, as well as its non-aligned status, and the right of the Afghan people to choose their destiny without foreign interference and in freedom.

While armed conflicts and tension in international relations still characterize the international political situation, the deterioration of the economic situation prevailing in many third-world countries seriously endangers the survival and well-being of their peoples.

(Mr. da Luz, Cape Verde)

The situation of those countries has been thoroughly studied on many occasions. Its causes have been identified and the ways and means of redressing them have been recommended from the rostrum of this body and others, such as the Organization of African Unity and the Movement of Non-aligned Countries. None the less, we must note that the situation is worsening day by day.

The foreign debt, which has now reached proportions that have disastrous effects mainly on African and Latin American economies, the stagnation in official development aid and investments in the developing countries, and the decline - sometimes staggering - in the prices of raw materials on the international market: all those elements have contributed to the difficult economic situation in those countries.

For many years the majority of States have been repeatedly stating that substantive change in international economic relations is the only way to resolve the economic crisis, which has particularly affected the African countries. The economy of the African countries south of the Sahara over the past 10 years has suffered the negative effects of the adverse trends in the terms of trade and the disturbances caused by external factors familiar to everyone. In this context, they have also suffered the negative effects of the increasing difficulty faced by those countries in attracting capital from the industrialized world, as well as the growth of the debt-servicing burden to unbearable proportions.

The economic difficulties of the continent now have devastating social impacts. Thus, the decline in food production has caused a great increase in undernourishment among the peoples.

It is in that economic context that Africa has confronted the worst drought of this century. That drought has already cost the lives of hundreds of thousands of persons. The international community has generally recognized that the drought in Africa has caused great hunger. It has reacted by adopting emergency programmes,

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but, since they are temporary, they do not meet the development needs. Hence, it is necessary to tackle the problem by structural methods that can reverse the present trends.

Africa today is examining all the problems related to its development. This question has been increasingly at the center of our concerns and thoughts in recent years. The Monrovia Colloquium, the Lagos Summit and the twenty-second Summit Conference of the Organization of African Unity in Addis Ababa, inter alia, have been significant forums for deeper reflection about the problem.

There is an ever-increasing awareness among Africans of the need for a new dynamic of regional integration and self-focused development geared towards the realization of the vast potentials of our continent and the constant improvement of the well-being of the African peoples. We are aware that the problems of development are complex, that their solutions are difficult and that the energies and resources required are vast. We are also aware that in the process of the region's development the driving force must basically be the Africans themselves. But they will confront difficulties and their efforts will be seriously compromised if they are not supported by international co-operation and by significant, diversified external assistance. In fact, the ever-increasing interdependence of today's world makes a region's development difficult without the interaction resulting from co-operation with other regions.

We are deeply convinced that a peaceful solution to the conflict in southern Africa would give a new dimension to the legitimate aspirations of the African people in the North and the South of the continent. We are deeply convinced, furthermore, that economic, technical and financial co-operation between a South Africa freed of racism - a democratic South Africa - and the other African countries would enormously benefit the development of the entire region.

(Mr. da Luz, Cape Verde)

At a time when hundreds of thousands of human beings are dying of hunger in Africa and in other parts of our planet, we are witnessing a proliferation of weapons which consumes vast human and material resources and threatens the very survival of mankind. The recent Conference on the Relationship Between Disarmament and Development demonstrated the impact on developing countries that the transfer of part of the resources now used for weapons production to development programmes could have. In a world with limited resources, any investment in weapons and similar activities has an impact on disarmament. Progress in that field would release resources that could contribute to the attainment of the economic and social objectives of all countries and to the narrowing of the gap between the developed and the developing countries.

In this respect, recent progress in the negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union in the nuclear sphere strengthens our hopes. It would be desirable for this important step to be followed by others that could eliminate forever the risk of a nuclear war posed by research on and deployment and accumulation of nuclear weapons.

The arms race has contributed to worsening the climate of tension and fostering international conflicts. For peoples that, in one way or another, have been the victims of the destructive force of military conflicts, nothing is more valuable than peace. Peace should be cherished by all, carefully preserved and encouraged at the international level.

Regional demilitarization is an important component of the building of peace. In this connection, it should be stressed that the decision taken by the General Assembly last year to declare the South Atlantic a zone of peace and co-operation has had a very positive effect on the strengthening of peace. The preservation of that region from any militarization, from the arms race, from the presence of

foreign military bases, and from nuclear weapons will no doubt contribute to the well-being, co-operation and progress of the peoples of the region and to the strengthening of international peace.

Over the past three years the Republic of Cape Verde has in its statements in the general debate emphasized its support for the multilateral process as the privileged tool in the quest for collective solutions to global problems. As we have said earlier in this statement, we are living today in a world that is increasingly interdependent at all levels. That can be seen between rich and poor, small and large, developed and developing countries alike. Recently, however, we have seen a trend among certain sectors towards relying on political, military and economic force in order to draw away from the universal values of multilateralism, in opposition to the views of the majority. Such behavior, which is without any doubt negative, in a world which claims to be democratic, constitutes regression which can only fuel distrust.

The crisis in multilateralism has become clear basically in institutions such as the United Nations which are the most developed tools in the multilateral process. Some have termed this an institutional crisis, since it has been reflected in a lack of trust in international institutions. The origin of this crisis, it seems to us, resides in a recent trend towards weakening international democratic gatherings. In fact, institutions are what their members want them to be.

(Mr. da Luz, Cape Verde)

The strength and effectiveness of institutions depend largely on the strength, trust and effectiveness their members wish to place in them. Negotiations which, last year, led to the adoption of a series of measures and recommendations for the administrative and financial reform of the Organization have highlighted the role the United Nations must play in the world today if we want to live in peace and security. We fervently hope that once the administrative and financial difficulties of the United Nations are overcome, all countries will seriously dedicate themselves to respect for the principles and pursuit of the objectives of the United Nations in the edifying task of building our great family - the human family.

The Republic of Cape Verde attaches the utmost importance to the United Nations as a privileged forum where all countries of the world, regardless of their size, the number of their inhabitants, and the level of their development, can together find peaceful solutions to all conflicts, and where all countries, representing the entire human race, can, in complete sovereignty, find collective solutions to global problems.

We come from a small country which is virtually barren of material resources and which must, therefore, deal with difficult and complex problems in order to ensure its economic survival and its development. By an accident of nature we are, therefore, in a position to grasp the immense difficulties confronted by most of the countries represented here in the struggle for economic development in order to ensure a more dignified existence for their people.

Our struggle for development and for the dignity of our peoples is our way of making an important contribution to the age-old struggle of man to overcome physical difficulties and to build a world in which spiritual values reign supreme in human conduct and action. We are involved in a shared endeavour and we, the

(Mr. da Luz, Cape Verde)

developing and developed countries, will be able successfully to achieve our task only if we are united and sincere in our mutual relations.

We are living in a century in which scientific and technical accomplishments have increased the powers of man to fulfil his desire to know and master the universe. We fervently hope that before the beginning of the twenty-first century these scientific and technical achievements will be directed above all towards the well-being, progress and happiness of all peoples on earth.

Mr. MALILE (Albania) (interpretation from French): Allow me, Sir, on behalf of the Albanian delegation, to extend to you my warm congratulations on your election to the high post of President of the General Assembly of the United Nations at its forty-second session and to wish you success in the performance of your task.

Although more than four decades have elapsed since the founding of the United Nations, the international community is still very far from achieving those objectives and goals pertaining to peace that are clearly stipulated in the Charter and constitute the fundamental purpose for which this Organization was founded. The political situation in the world today presents a grave picture. Various peoples and countries continue to be threatened with aggression by imperialist forces or have been the victims of declared and undeclared imperialist wars - wars in which a number of States and millions of troops are involved, with resultant huge human losses and colossal material damage, and with serious consequences for international peace and security.

In fact, the stationing of military troops by the United States of America and the Soviet Union indefinitely in the territory of many States has been legitimized under various pretexts, such as the threat from the East or the West, and so on. Indeed, repeated meetings have been held, where there is talk about the maintenance

(Mr. Malile, Albania)

of the balance of forces and military manoeuvres conducted alternately by one bloc or the other, but the most that is ever heard is satisfaction at the participation in them of observers from the two blocs, and there is never any talk of the complete withdrawal of American and Soviet troops from foreign territories where they are stationed. For the sake of co-ordinating policies in the context of blocs, even the taking of independent decisions has been restricted, and made virtually impossible. All the political activity of the two super-Powers, whether in the bilateral talks between blocs or in a broader framework, has concentrated on maintaining, and indeed extending, their respective spheres of influence. This impermissible situation of undeclared occupation in modern times cannot but remind us of the long-drawn-out invasions of past centuries and the lessons of history.

We hear a lot of talk at present about the United States and the Soviet Union reaching an agreement on the removal of medium-range missiles from Europe. From the very outset the Albanian Government has expressed its opposition to the deployment of these missiles in Europe, just as it has always been and still is in favour of the complete prohibition of nuclear weapons, and against the militarization of space and the arms race in general. It is a well-known fact that when the two super-Powers installed those missiles, they paid no attention to the strong opposition of the peoples of Europe. Now they are talking about dismantling and removing them from Europe, and are trying to present this as an important step in the field of disarmament. It is abundantly clear that in this whole business the super-Powers have made their calculations. When they speak about international security, they are in fact talking only about their own security, which means insecurity for the others. Even after such an agreement, thousands of nuclear weapons, regardless of type, will still remain in and around Europe and hundreds of military bases established in a number of European States will still be there.

(Mr. Malile, Albania)

Hence, the factors that threaten peace on the continent and in the world remain. Thus an agreement on the removal of short- and medium-range missiles must absolutely be accompanied by other steps in the field of disarmament, and that would constitute a victory for the peoples and democratic States that are continuing to fight against the arms race as they have been fighting for years.

(Mr. Malile, Albania)

For some time, especially in recent years, much has been said about summit meetings between the United States and the Soviet Union in the hope that they would solve the problems of safeguarding peace and assuring the future of mankind. For the super-Powers to meet and hold talks is their right and business, but what is unacceptable is that they should discuss and take decisions for others. It would be dangerous if peoples were to accept the institutionalization of summit meetings between the super-Powers as a forum empowered to take decisions for third parties. The super-Powers would like to be given a free hand and have other States welcome and accept as faits accomplis everything they decide.

The Albanian delegation believes that on issues connected with the destinies of peoples, with world peace and security, every sovereign State must have its say.

The problems of Europe and European security are of direct concern to socialist Albania. Peace on the continent, friendly relations among European peoples and countries signify peace and normal development also for the People's Socialist Republic of Albania. Our people, which throughout the centuries have suffered from wars and foreign invasions, have been and continue to be in the vanguard of those fighting for peace and friendship among peoples.

But who and what threatens European security? Who and what jeopardizes peace on this continent? Europe has been shackled hand and foot with heavy fetters. It is the military pacts of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and of the Warsaw Treaty, the military bases and arsenals of nuclear and conventional weapons deployed in so many countries, the armies of the United States and of the Soviet Union which, for more than the 40 years that have elapsed since the Second World War, continue to make themselves at home in Europe; it is the warships, cruisers and aircraft carriers of the super-Powers which criss-cross the Mediterranean and European waters like sea serpents; it is imperialist economic and political

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pressure and cultural aggression which is stifling the continent. It is precisely this that is undermining the sovereignty of various countries, affecting their personalities and independence and endangering peace and security in Europe.

Albania does not participate in the meetings of the Conference on European Security and Co-operation, for we are convinced that these meetings, which are manipulated by the two super-Powers, cannot lead to any fruitful results unless one believes that the United States and the Soviet Union are going to frustrate their own ends. The People's Socialist Republic of Albania, which under its Constitution prohibits foreign military bases and troops on its territory and which has solemnly declared that no harm will ever come to any of its neighbours from Albanian territory, appreciates the genuine aspirations of peoples, honest men and progressive personalities in Europe to peace and security in our continent, and we welcome their efforts in that direction.

However, the Albanian Government has always been firmly convinced that European security cannot be achieved through such meetings and conferences where the super-Powers impose their will. European security can be achieved only by getting rid of the chains with which the two super-Powers have shackled it and by opposing their presence and interference in the internal affairs of European States. Only thus can their freedom, independence and sovereignty be guaranteed.

Also, the Balkan region does not enjoy tranquillity; neither is it without problems. In addition to interference by the super-Powers, there are a number of negative regional elements that have increased tension. It is common knowledge that history has intermingled the peoples of the Balkans and that there are many ethnic minorities. Regrettably, in recent years chauvinistic feuds and passions have been incited in one way or another. The People's Socialist Republic of Albania is opposed to these dangerous trends. It cannot reconcile itself to acts

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and deeds that restrict the national rights of the peoples of the Balkans, or that divide them and sow hostility among them. It advocates respect for the rights of every people and each ethnic minority.

The Albanian Government believes that minorities should be viewed as a bridge to unity and friendship among the peoples of the peninsula and not as a source of discord. Acceptance and recognition of their identities, cultures and national traditions and respect for their own languages and their spiritual bonds with their own nation would greatly contribute to strengthening an atmosphere of understanding and sincere co-operation.

From time to time initiatives are taken regarding various political activities and meetings at the Balkan level. The Albanian Government appreciates every sincere and constructive step aimed at serving peace and stability in the region. Hence we support in principle the holding of bilateral and multilateral meetings and talks. At the same time we believe that it is necessary first to create the kind of atmosphere that will ensure their making a contribution towards genuine solutions of the problems of our region and not their becoming a source of further exacerbation of the situation.

For its part Albania has acted with a high sense of its responsibility and has never been the cause for any exacerbation of the situation. It favours the removal of nuclear and chemical weapons and so on, not only from the Balkans but also from other regions and countries. That is in keeping with its political line. Also, Albania has realized in practice what the Balkans need to ensure peace and understanding.

Friendly Balkan co-operation is the hope and aspiration of the peoples of the region, but to achieve this it is necessary to face up realistically to the problems of the peninsula. We believe that at present it would be advantageous to

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each country and to the region as a whole to settle existing differences by means of bilateral negotiations, just as it would be equally necessary to develop bilateral relations. We believe also that inter-Balkan activities in the fields of trade, transport, culture, science and technology, ecology and so on help to develop co-operation and strengthen trust and understanding, which are so indispensable for the concerted consideration of the major political problems of the Balkans.

The problems of security in the Balkans and in Europe are closely connected with those of security in the Mediterranean. For years this basin has been transformed into an arena of rivalry between the super-Powers, which have deployed their fleets there thousands of kilometres from their own borders and are threatening the peoples and the peace of the region. Their growing presence and activities keep the Mediterranean peoples and countries in a state of continuous tension. The anchoring of American and Soviet cruisers and other warships, which in the guise of "friendly" or "tourist" visits have secured permanent access to port services and facilities in various countries, also constitutes a real danger to neighbouring countries.

The worsening of the situation and the continuation of the crisis in the Middle East and the repeated American military operations in the western Mediterranean and so forth is eloquent evidence of the urgent need to oppose the military presence of the super-Powers in the Mediterranean with their bases and fleets. Albania continues to maintain the view that their removal constitutes the primary and decisive pre-condition for turning the Mediterranean into a sea of peace.

(Mr. Malile, Albania)

For years now the tense situation in the Middle East, with its almost regular flare-ups, has been a constant threat to international relations.

To the terrible tragedy of the Palestinian people, who have long been the victims of genocide like that carried out by the Nazis against the Jews during the Second World War, has now been added the drama and the tragic events in Lebanon, which has been turned into an arena of fratricidal strife whipped up by the imperialist Powers and Israel, and all those that are playing their game. Irrespective of the political groupings or religious sects of those engaged in the present fighting, it is Arab blood that continues to be shed in Lebanon and it is the Arab cause in general and the Palestinian cause in particular that are constantly under attack.

The People's Socialist Republic of Albania and the Albanian people, sincere friends of the Arab peoples, with whom they are linked by traditional bonds, are saddened by the events in Lebanon, which we follow with concern, just as we follow the overall developments and crisis in the Middle East. We rejoice at every step towards Arab unity, just as we welcome whole-heartedly any positive development towards the strengthening of the unity in the ranks of the Palestinian movement, of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).

Recently there has been talk, which continues, of convening an international conference on the Middle East. We believe that no conference on this question can yield results if it ignores or seeks a substitute for the PLO. Still less can be expected from such a conference if it fails to deal with the very heart of the Middle East problem, the Palestinian problem.

The Middle East and Gulf areas have been transformed into permanent hotbeds of war, and the imperialist Powers bear a grave responsibility for this.

(Mr. Malile, Albania)

The continuance of the Iran-Iraq war has caused incalculable human losses and material damage to the peoples of the two countries. The war benefits only the enemies of those countries and of peace, who one day may use it as a pretext to fan the flames of war not just throughout the Gulf but beyond. The United States and other Powers have now sent their battle fleets to the Gulf on the pretext of guaranteeing freedom of navigation and clearing the waters of mines. This sets an extremely dangerous precedent. The guns in the Straits of Hormuz have made the situation even more explosive. Battle fleets were sent there before the ink was even dry on resolution 598 (1987) which the Security Council adopted unanimously calling on all other States to refrain from any act which might lead to further escalation and widening of the Iran-Iraq conflict.

It is now more essential than ever for the sincere appeals of democratic and peace-loving States, which represent the voice of reason and sound international opinion, for an immediate end to the war to be heeded. This would be in the interest of both Iraq and Iran and of the peace and stability of the region and the world.

A number of hotbeds of tension are being kept alight and fanned by imperialism and reaction in other areas of the world, such as Africa, Central America and South-East Asia.

Contrary to the will of the Korean people, Korea continues to be divided. The Albanian Government supports the right of the Korean people to the independent reunification of its country without any outside interference.

The People's Republic of Kampuchea is not being left in peace to build a free and independent life, and is still denied its lawful place in the United Nations.

(Mr. Malile, Albania)

Peoples everywhere - whether in the occupied Arab territories, Nicaragua, Afghanistan, Namibia or South Africa - are stepping up their patriotic resistance to foreign aggression and interference. They are intensifying the anti-imperialist struggle, along with the struggle against racial discrimination and apartheid, for their democratic and national rights.

Current political developments cannot be viewed in isolation from the effects of the prolonged economic and financial crisis and the intensification of neo-colonial exploitation. An indication of the degree of exploitation and injustice in existing international economic relations is the fact that 50 per cent of our planet's raw material resources are utilized by the industrialized countries, although, of course, they make up only 15 per cent of the population of the world. The developing countries are up to their necks in debt and the repayment conditions imposed have become impossible to meet; in fact, the economies of many States are being stifled. International trade is encountering difficulties of many kinds, as was clearly confirmed at the seventh session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). Similarly, the International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development brought to light new facts about the paradoxical and tragic situation of the world today. The colossal sum expended on arms is equal to the total debt. Yet the production of all types of weapons continues unabated, as does the arms trade.

The peoples and the developing countries are exerting every effort to fight the system of neo-colonial relations imposed by the imperialist Powers. We associate ourselves with the efforts to change the inequality of international economic relations.

(Mr. Malile, Albania)

The People's Socialist Republic of Albania has always been and remains in favour of the development of international relations on a basis of justice and mutual advantage. In the future, too, we shall continue to participate actively in these relations. This we consider to be both a right deriving from our status as an independent and sovereign State and a duty deriving from the policy of a truly socialist country. The Albanian Government believes that development and international co-operation in various fields must contribute to the strengthening of friendship among peoples and strengthening of peace and security.

The Albanian people and Government, as in the past, will continue in the future to give its unreserved support to the struggle of peoples for freedom and national independence, which is one of the fundamental trends of world development at the present time and a contribution to the cause of peace, freedom and democracy.

Mr. LONDOÑO PAREDES (Colombia) (interpretation from Spanish):

Mr. President, on behalf of my country, Colombia, one of the oldest and most robust democracies on earth, I wish to congratulate you on the honour conferred on you, which is no more than the recognition due to your eminent personal and intellectual gifts.

The Assembly, as it convenes at its forty-second session, is an affirmation once again of the vital importance of coexistence as a binding force among sovereign nations. This league of States in voluntary association has demonstrated that there is a minimum set of common rules for the harmonious regulation of their relations, and that the foundation for such regulation is to be found in international law.

Among the concerns being debated by the international community there are three central elements which most urgently demand concerted action. I refer to peace, our overriding aspiration, and hand in hand with it, the concept of human dignity and the need for a just and equitable international order.

Colombia, which was well represented in the League of Nations and is a founding Member of the United Nations, has always endeavoured to model its international policy on these principles, and has striven for the necessary coherence between foreign affairs and domestic policy.

I wish today to reaffirm before the world Colombia's unwavering commitment to peace. Its armies have never crossed the borders of their homeland except to contribute with their blood to the great work of liberation undertaken by the heroes of the independence of the Americas or, in response to an appeal from this Organization or friendly countries, to help by their presence to preserve peace and democracy. This line of conduct will not change. We shall remain committed to the objective of striving together for prosperity, development and peace.

(Mr. Londoño Paredes, Colombia)

We strongly repudiate the arms race mentality: not only the kind that means rushing headlong towards world confrontation and nuclear annihilation, but also that of some States which, in spite of the enormous economic and social difficulties they face, employ force or coercion in an attempt to advance claims which, if valid, should be settled by means of peaceful solutions based on the rule of law.

It is for this reason that my country firmly supports the affirmation by the Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development of the need to check the unbridled expansion of the arms race, the heavy economic cost of which has to be met by diverting resources that could be used to eliminate the inequalities that undermine the stability of societies. The Assembly should continue to study measures directed towards effective disarmament and the elimination of nuclear weapons, which today jeopardize the very survival of mankind.

My country sees an encouraging sign for mankind as a whole in the coming together of the great nuclear Powers and the success that they are achieving in their negotiations, and hopes that the prospects of death and destruction through armed conflict may be averted once and for all.

We endorse most firmly and resolutely the solution of disputes by peaceful means, including recourse to conciliation, arbitration and judicial settlement, especially when extremely lengthy direct negotiations fail to result in agreement. The international community may rest assured that Colombia, adhering faithfully to the principles which have guided its international policy, will not resort to force to resolve any differences with other States.

(Mr. Londoño Paredes, Colombia)

Happily for the Americas and for world peace, recently there have been signs of hope for a solution to the Central American conflict, following the agreements arrived at in Guatemala by the five Central American Presidents and the establishment of the International Verification and Follow-up Commission, made up of the Foreign Ministers of the Contadora Group, the Support Group and Central America together with the Secretaries-General of the United Nations and the Organization of American States. Similarly encouraging are the first steps taken towards devising an emergency plan of technical and economic co-operation for Central America. It is clear that the regional conflict is caused to a large extent by economic and social problems which it is essential that we overcome. The time has come for all the parties concerned, with the vital co-operation of countries having ties or interests in the region, to establish lasting peace.

My country, together with the other States of the Contadora Group and the Support Group, will spare no effort to promote this goal, for peace in Central America is also our peace.

We welcome the effective work being done by Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar and his representatives in all those parts of the world where conflicts have arisen, in the diligent fulfilment of the responsibilities for the preservation of international peace and security laid down in the Charter. We hope to be able to continue to rely at all times on the Secretary-General's constant and effective co-operation.

Colombia is a whole-hearted believer in dialogue and wishes the dialogue in the Korean peninsula to be reopened as promptly as possible with a view to bringing about peaceful reunification.

(Mr. Londoño Paredes, Colombia)

We also hope that dialogue will continue to be a useful implement in the negotiations on the question of the sovereignty of the Malvinas Islands, in keeping with the spirit of the resolution of which we were a sponsor at the last session of the Assembly.

The Government of Colombia is convinced that respect for and the promotion of human rights go beyond mere exercises in rhetoric in international forums. They are a moral obligation borne by all States that must be faithfully fulfilled in all its aspects, ranging from the treatment accorded to minorities settled within a country's own territory to truly authentic freedom of expression.

It should be kept in mind that the peoples of the developing world have yet to attain the minimum conditions for well-being: the benefits of health care, proper nutrition, housing, education and employment, as the necessary foundation for individual freedoms. Provision for these needs, truly the bedrock of democracy, is bound up on the world level with the establishment of a more just international economic order based on co-operation among States.

Although my country is not as hard-pressed as other sister nations in Latin America by the problem of the repayment of external debt, we should not lose sight of the fact that this is a problem which, if not adequately resolved, will bring social disorder and oppression in its wake.

(Mr. Londoño Paredes, Colombia)

Colombia has participated with interest in many international forums in discussion of the world financial problem. We particularly welcomed the consensus achieved at the last session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). We hope that the Assembly will make further progress on this matter.

Today more than ever before the community of nations is duty-bound to take a joint approach to problems which cannot be tackled otherwise than in a global manner. I am thinking especially of the phenomenon of narcotic drug trafficking, which has exacted a heavy toll in pain and blood from my country. Colombia remains steadfast in its battle against that problem, as it reaffirmed in Vienna at the International Conference on Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking.

This crusade, affecting as it does the whole of mankind, cannot be an isolated one; nor can it be carried out successfully by a single country or group of countries. Concerted international action is necessary to tackle the problem in its entirety and in its various phases of production, consumption and control of the financial resources stemming from this destructive traffic.

In this regard, we recognize the importance of the efforts of the United Nations and, in particular, of the United Nations Fund for Drug Abuse Control.

Addressing this Assembly a year ago the Colombian Head of State spoke of the urgent need for concerted action to combat the extreme poverty which afflicts vast sections of the earth's population. In response to that appeal, the United Nations Development Programme has been engaged in effective work in Latin America, with the initiation of the regional project designed to foster and provide advisory services for programmes to assist the marginalized sectors of our continent. Many countries of the region are now benefiting from this support.

(Mr. Londoño Paredes, Colombia)

Colombia has resolved to take up as a national priority the challenge of eradicating poverty, while at the same time working for concerted action on the international level to combat this scourge. It has offered to host a regional conference on the question, with the support of the United Nations Development Programme and the participation and backing of the Latin American community, which shares Colombia's anguish over the plight of the marginalized populations.

Colombia looks forward with optimism to the results of the debate in the Assembly on the recommendations contained in the report, entitled "Our Common Future", of the Commission of eminent persons presided over by the Prime Minister of Norway, Dr. Gro Harlem Brundtland. It is evident that the future of this earth is closely tied to the success we achieve in confronting the challenges involved in managing the environment.

My country hopes that the ideals of harmonious coexistence, human dignity and international co-operation will be reinforced during these deliberations by the political will of the States represented in the Assembly and that the pact among nations may be translated into reality through the establishment of an order of equity and peace for all peoples, based on the full effectiveness of the principles of international law and the lofty values which are the underpinning of the Charter of our world Organization.

Mr. AKINYEMI (Nigeria): On behalf of the Nigerian delegation, I should like to offer our congratulations, Sir, on your unanimous and well-deserved election to the presidency of the forty-second session of the General Assembly. My delegation joins previous speakers in expressing our sentiments on your distinguished personal merits, which have eminently qualified you for this high office. I have no doubt that under your able leadership this session will achieve great success. I therefore have great pleasure in pledging to you the full support and co-operation of my delegation in the performance of your onerous task.

(Mr. Akinyemi, Nigeria)

We approach the work of the current session of this Assembly with a sense of objective realism. The original aims and objectives of the Charter hold even more true today in the quest for a peaceful world order and an enhanced process of economic development. It falls to the present members of this world Assembly to ensure the realization of those lofty ideals. The Charter, as applied from the inception of this Organization and strengthened by decisions and resolutions that reflect a preponderance of shared views and aspirations, remains sufficiently flexible to make possible the current effort to reform the structure of the United Nations system.

The reform measures put in place by the Secretary-General reflect a determined attempt to implement General Assembly resolution 41/213. This is admittedly a daunting task which we once again insist must remain faithful to the main purposes and objectives towards which the United Nations has directed its efforts for so many years. The world can ill afford to strip this Organization of its effectiveness and the universalist principles that have lent themselves to the aspirations of all member States, big and small, rich and poor. The need to reduce staff and costs must never obscure the need for the efficacy of collaborative efforts which the Organization has come to represent.

The Organization must remain committed to the rigorous pursuit of such laudable ventures as are exemplified by resolution S-13/2, adopted at the thirteenth special session of the General Assembly to assist African economic recovery and development. It is our strong belief that nothing should detract from this Organization's resolve to maintain this programme on a priority list of issues which deserves a higher allocation of resources.

My delegation will support the ongoing process of reform provided it is geared to efficiency without any decrease in the adequate allocation of resources, be they human, financial or material. Unfortunately, however, the politically motivated

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attempt at restructuring the Secretariat that occurred earlier this year is certain to undermine the wide-ranging support originally pledged to that process by member States. The Secretary-General must now focus his attention solely on a reorganization that ensures administrative efficiency. More important, it must be carried out with full cognizance of the tenets of the United Nations Charter regarding the sovereign equality of all member States.

In order to facilitate a smooth reordering of priorities and invigoration of a worth-while institutional framework geared to the achievement of development, the world needs peace. It deserves peace.

(Mr. Akinyemi, Nigeria)

Yet this ideal situation continues to elude us. The African continent, which has most of the world's least developed countries, is unfortunately, plagued by intractable conflicts. Most of these conflicts can be traced to the nefarious activities of the racist minority régime in apartheid South Africa.

My Government has consistently drawn the attention of the international community to the plight of millions of indigenous inhabitants of South Africa. We have collaborated with an ever-widening cycle of concerned nations, which continue to urge those countries whose actions and pronouncements tend to embolden the apartheid régime in its open defiance of world opinion, to be mindful of the enormity of the negative stand they have taken.

More than ever before, the need for the international community to take concrete and effective measures towards the eradication of apartheid, which has been roundly condemned as a crime against humanity, cannot be over-emphasized.

The apartheid régime has torn families apart and destroyed humble places of abode of its largely impoverished African population. It has set Soweto ablaze, brutalized teenage Africans through torture and imprisonment. It dehumanized the indigenous population by relegating it to a state of statelessness. Today, over 100 laws are in place to stifle all shades of opinion, in particular, the media.

Friends of the apartheid régime have, in the past few years, delighted themselves with cosmetic measures, which the racists played up to the world as reforms. While its friends extolled these empty gestures, we have never relented in our steadfast opposition to this palliative political posturing. For, there can be no real peace in South Africa until the whole ignoble edifice of apartheid is completely dismantled.

Yet we cannot deny that in the past few years the majority of ordinary citizens, private organizations, educational institutions, religious and other

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well-meaning organizations in many countries have demonstrated their abhorrence of this unjust rule either by pulling their investments out of South Africa, or by vigorously urging their Governments to apply economic sanctions against the racists. We watch with deep interest and satisfaction the very mature approach of students, businessmen and trade unions in taking concrete action which underlines their commitment to political freedom and economic emancipation for the majority of South Africans. Regrettably, however, certain powerful individuals in high government positions remain unmoved. But the wind of change unleashed in the streets of Sharpeville, and strengthened in the classrooms of Soweto, has become a hurricane, which, as it gathers force, will no doubt sweep away all vestiges of repression and the unjust laws of the apartheid régime.

The process of shaping international opinion towards decisive action has been long and at times frustrating. But the present situation augurs well for 23 million Africans in South Africa. The positive roles of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the Nordic countries, the socialist States and a few Western countries are noteworthy. The groundswell of the anti-apartheid movement in the United States has now assumed such proportions that the Congress has unequivocally demonstrated its desire for positive change in the apartheid enclave. Apartheid is no longer perceived along partisan, ideological or racial lines.

The policy of Nigeria with regard to South Africa is clearly one of honour, but it is also one that holds firmly to the basic principles of the United Nations Charter. We have always stated that our belief in the armed struggle in South Africa and Namibia is predicated on the necessity to wrest, from an unjust order, those basic freedoms that many nations have always fought for in Europe and

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America. In this regard we also support a dialogue, conducted on the basis of true racial equality, to resolve the issue of the total eradication of apartheid. Let the racists talk to the African National Congress (ANC) and the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) with a view to bringing to an end the violence they started, and this Organization can then squarely face other major issues which still promote division in international relations.

The United Nations' failure, so far, to resolve the issue of Namibia's independence is inextricably intertwined with all the problems that call for early resolution in southern Africa. Racism and racial discrimination have always characterized Namibia's subjugation by South Africa. When in 1978 the Security Council agreed on a plan for the independence of Namibia, the world thought that the end of the indigenous population's nightmare was in sight. However, at the prompting of its Western friends, purely extraneous issues were introduced to ensure the denial of freedom to the Namibian people. Nigeria firmly repudiates the infamous linkage concept. We also reject any makeshift political devices that exclude recognition of the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) as the sole legitimate representative of the Namibian people. The encouragement of break-away factions only serves the purposes of apartheid South Africa, and the economic exploitation of the unholy alliance in that territory. The United Nations Council for Namibia must be strengthened to enable it effectively to administer the territory until the plan envisaged under Security Council resolution 435 (1978) has been fully implemented.

Last year, the General Assembly adopted a resolution declaring the South Atlantic a zone of peace and co-operation. This was and still remains, in Nigeria's view, a laudable gesture. It is my delegation's belief that the nations

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contiguous to the South Atlantic remain under an obligation to keep this zone free of super-Power rivalry, thus maintaining its innocent nature.

My country is eager to co-operate with any neighbouring country in any endeavour to achieve this objective. We are prepared to co-operate with all nations bordering the South Atlantic in efforts to guarantee freedom of navigation, weather-forecasting and all plans favourable to environmental protection, thereby ensuring that the interests of all humanity are adequately protected. To our South American friends we offer the vision of the South Atlantic Ocean as an ocean that unites rather than separates us.

The situation that exists between Chad and Libya is, to say the least, unfortunate and highly regrettable. The Organization of African Unity has mediated and continues to seek a peaceful solution to the problem. It is essential therefore that we should all give full support to the cause of peace that is being promoted by the OAU in this matter. We are therefore happy that the General Assembly deferred the inclusion of this matter in its agenda in order to give more time for further consultation.

An opportunity for such consultation took place at the summit level on 24 September 1987, in Lusaka, Zambia. It re-established a climate of dialogue which, we believe, will enhance the process of peaceful resolution of the conflict. In fact, the two parties to the conflict have reaffirmed their commitment and willingness to work towards a negotiated settlement of the dispute. In addition, they have accepted the OAU framework for its resolution.

In this regard the OAU Ad Hoc Committee on the dispute underlined the need to find a peaceful, African solution to it and warned against its internationalization. We, therefore, call on the Assembly and the international

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community to respect Africa's wishes. We call for respect for the OAU peace efforts with regard to the conflict so that there may be a rapid return of peace to the area so that resources may be devoted to the process of development.

My delegation does not believe that the situation in the Middle East is beyond resolution. The fact is that in the absence of the political will to accord to the Palestinians the right to their own homeland, one of the main actors would have been pushed into the background. The main issues in a possible negotiation process would have been ignored. Just as Nigeria would reiterate the right of Israel to exist, my delegation is convinced that the role of peace would be served if all concerned also believed in peaceful coexistence. To this end, my delegation fully supports the convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East, where all the main actors in the protracted dispute would be represented. We do not share the view that the peace process would be served by a denial of the right of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) to be represented at such a conference.

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When, on 20 July 1987, the Security Council unanimously adopted a resolution which called for the cessation of hostilities between Iraq and Iran, the world heaved a sigh of relief. To render Security Council resolution 598 (1987) effective, we call on all those countries whose naval power is currently being flaunted in the Gulf to withdraw. There is no excuse for calling for the cessation of hostilities on the one hand, only shortly after to proceed with amassing an array of sophisticated naval fire-power that can only make it more difficult to achieve peace. It is doubly disappointing that both Iraq and Iran, two friends of Nigeria of long standing, have not yet achieved the peace they need for socio-economic development.

In like manner, the people of Afghanistan deserve peace. To this end, we commend the continuing efforts of the Secretary-General's Special Representative to achieve national reconciliation.

My delegation believes that the time has come to enable the people of Kampuchea to embark on reconstruction and development after such a protracted period of conflict and instability. The chronicle of unfortunate events in a friendly country, a member of the Non-Aligned Movement, is of great concern to my delegation. We urge all sides in this dispute to demonstrate their respect for the territorial integrity and non-aligned status of Kampuchea by implementing the relevant General Assembly resolutions to this effect.

Since 1985 the world has been given reason to believe that the end of the arms race is a little closer. The announcement by the super-Powers that a new round of disarmament talks in Geneva would tackle the reduction of nuclear arms, leading to their eventual elimination, was hailed by my Government as a step in the right direction. My delegation welcomes the 18 September announcement that the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics have agreed in principle to

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treaty to eliminate medium- and short-range missiles. We continue to urge all the nuclear States to devote greater energies to the total elimination of all weapons of mass destruction.

For 26 years the United Nations has urged that a test-ban treaty should be signed by nuclear-power States. A moratorium on testing would therefore seem a very logical approach. Accordingly, my delegation commended the Soviet Union for its bold initiative last year unilaterally to impose a moratorium on weapons testing. Unfortunately, that commendable initiative has been brought to an end. It is even more regrettable that others were unable to reciprocate, thus making the search for a nuclear-weapon-free world that much more difficult.

There is a clear complementarity between disarmament, development and security. For instance, world military expenditure is currently estimated at \$1 trillion, while the combined debt burden of all the developing countries is about the same amount. My delegation firmly supports any move to set aside some of this huge expenditure on armaments for development purposes. Care must be taken not to allow an otherwise praiseworthy idea to become entangled in ideological pretension.

The recently concluded Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development failed to achieve its main objective. Although it agreed on basic definitions, extraneous ideas were adopted which tended to elevate the abstract essence of armed security above that of trade and development. The failure to adopt any categorical plan for the release through financing arrangements of resources that it is hoped would be saved by disarmament may render further progress difficult.

The current world economic situation, particularly for developing countries, leaves much to be desired. While substantial growth has continued in developed

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countries for the fifth consecutive year, the economic prospects for developing countries in general, and those of Africa in particular, continue to remain very bleak. Despite the painstaking efforts of most of the developing countries to attain some appreciable levels of structural adjustment, they continue to be haunted by monetary debt problems, insurmountable debt service problems, falling commodity prices, unjustified protectionism in some developed countries against developing countries' commodities, and high interest rates.

It will be recalled that in May 1986 a special session of the General Assembly was held which resulted in the adoption of a United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990, to be implemented at the national, regional and international levels. In spite of the national measures taken by African countries in the form of structural adjustment, and at the international level in support of the United Nations Programme by way of the \$12.4 billion replenishment of the International Development Association, 45 per cent of which is to be allocated to sub-Saharan Africa, it is still unlikely that an adequate financial flow will be provided to bridge the financing gap which Africa is expected to face until 1990 and beyond.

The Conference sponsored by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa and devoted exclusively to the challenge of economic recovery and accelerated development in Africa met in Abuja, Nigeria, from 15 to 19 June this year. It recommended a comprehensive approach to aid flows to support structural adjustment programmes in Africa and focused particularly on disbursing funds for spare parts and material needed to increase the utilization of existing capacity in industry, agriculture and public infrastructure. The Conference called for an exceptional effort to reduce the debt service burden of African countries, which should include the continuation of measures to convert official development assistance debt into

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grants, longer repayment and grace periods, lower interest rates on existing official debt, and consideration of the possibility of repayment of debts in local currencies by African countries. I whole-heartedly commend these recommendations to the Assembly.

Our concern focuses on the fact that a lot is expected of us by way of sacrifice, but it seems that nothing is being realized in return for the sacrifices we have made and continue to make. In the recent past, certain proposals were made by some developed countries to alleviate Africa's crippling debt crisis. Unfortunately, the promises of the Baker plan, British proposals on rescheduling and low interest rate concessions to developing countries have not been fully implemented.

Despite these efforts, a lot more is still required to meet the expanding resource demands of developing countries, particularly when net private foreign investment has also fallen back substantially, from an estimated \$17.2 billion at the peak in 1981 for all capital importing developing countries to \$7.7 billion in 1985. Thus, the requirement that developing countries finance debt service from trade surpluses rather than from additional capital inflows remains untenable.

I have no doubt that when the Secretary-General reports to the Assembly on his efforts in dealing with the financial crisis of Africa, we shall be well briefed on the practical and politically acceptable proposals put forward by the expert group which he set up in April to deal with debt relief and financial flows to African countries. This Assembly and the international community in general can do a lot to support the Programme of Action and proposals that will provide Africa in particular and developing countries in general with the essential external resource input necessary for their development.

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The seventh session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), which was held in Geneva in July and August of this year, provided the international community with a unique opportunity to negotiate an agreement on the interrelated issues of debt, resource flows, trade and development. That Conference gave recognition to the belief that any resolution of the debt question must be within the context of the need to foster growth and development in the developing world. In Geneva, the international community agreed that while developing nations need to restructure their economies, there is a corresponding obligation on the developed nations to increase resource flows to third-world nations. The seventh session of UNCTAD agreed that since the collapse of commodity prices has accentuated the debt burden of developing nations there is urgent need for producers and consumers of raw materials to work together to strengthen commodity agreements, not only because of the need to restore commodity prices to remunerative and equitable levels, but also to revitalize co-operation between the developed and developing nations. The seventh session of UNCTAD reminded us all that multilateral co-operation is a catalyst for reviving the world economy as a whole.

It cannot be assumed that ideas, or even mechanisms, for furthering solutions to pressing issues concerning the world economy should be pursued only in the North-South context. On the contrary, developing countries not only are keenly aware of but have, through various mechanisms, given concrete expression to the need to exploit the potential for co-operation among themselves in the economic and technical fields.

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Nigeria, in close collaboration with its partners in the Economic Community of West African States, has taken steps to invigorate our subregion's capacity to achieve rapid economic recovery through trade liberalization and the pooling of resources. Yet all joint programmes, worked out with the active co-operation of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, as well as the Organization of African Unity (OAU), can achieve the desired goal only if the problems of debt, stabilization of exchange rates and greater access to the markets of the developed countries are resolved.

The 1972 United Nations Conference on the Environment, held in Stockholm, was an important milestone since it not only sensitized concern for but also helped to fashion a global consensus on issues of the environment. That Conference has generated in its wake a number of initiatives on the environment, culminating in the establishment of the World Commission on Environment and Development, which has issued a report entitled Our Common Future.

My Government welcomes that report. We take particular satisfaction in its basic message that there is a close connection between ecology and economy and a need to ensure that sustainable development does not impair the capacity of future generations to meet their own requirements.

We care very deeply about the issue of the environment, as is demonstrated by the measures we have instituted to safeguard our environment. None the less we are also keenly aware that major environmental problems are often global in character, and we therefore feel that it is unhelpful to ascribe lack of interest in environmental protection largely to developing countries when they are in fact often marginal to the causes of environmental problems.

Furthermore, my Government is of the view that we should guard against translating concern for environmental protection into a new form of conditionality for development assistance by the multilateral development and financial

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institutions, so that the cost of development will not unnecessarily be made even more burdensome for already overburdened developing countries.

The problems of drug abuse and illicit drug trafficking have reached alarming proportions. The United Nations sponsored international conference held in Vienna earlier this year was timely. Apart from the severe sanctions contained in Nigeria's domestic laws against drug abuse and illicit drug trafficking, Nigeria has, at the international level, signed bilateral agreements with some countries to deal with drug-related issues, especially illicit drug trafficking. Nigeria also has national laws and regulations in conformity with the United Nations conventions on psychoactive drugs. While Nigeria supports the idea of an international convention to deal with drug abuse and illicit drug trafficking, it must be stressed that global uniformity in sanctions against illicit drug trafficking is long overdue. It would certainly put a stop to the movement of drug traffickers from countries with severe sanctions to those with more lenient ones.

In conclusion I should like once again to stress my delegation's commitment to the principle of multilateralism in all spheres of activity of the Organization. The United Nations will not be able to achieve a positive role in world events if we stray from the aims and objectives of its Charter. We must therefore be prepared to do more than merely accuse the super-Powers of monopolizing responsibility for and initiatives on the resolution of conflicts.

It is our conviction that the time has come when we must all share the responsibility for conflict management through an active commitment to world peace. We must continuously seek to contribute to the basket of ideas that will facilitate such a process. The issue of peace is so critical that we cannot afford to abdicate that responsibility.

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Ours should be a world of peace; it should be a world of security; and above all it should be a world of justice, where we work together to uphold the principles and tenets of the Charter in order to attain our common future.

The meeting rose at 12.25 p.m.