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GENERAL ASSEMBLY

PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE TWENTY-THIRD MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Friday, 2 October 1987, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. FLORIN (German Democratic Republic)
later: Mr. SALAH (Jordan)
(Vice-President)

- General debate [9]: (continued)

Statements were made by:

Mr. Sandiford (Barbados)
Mr. Al-Dali (Yemen)
Mr. Kravets (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic)
Mr. Sani Bako (Niger)
Mr. Bassolé (Burkina Faso)

Address by Commander Desire D. Bouterse, Head of Government of the Republic
of Suriname

Statement made by

Mr. Bouterse (Suriname)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 9 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE

ADDRESS BY MR. L. ERSKINE SANDIFORD, PRIME MINISTER OF BARBADOS

The PRESIDENT: The Assembly will first hear an address by the Prime Minister of Barbados.

Mr. Sandiford, Prime Minister of Barbados, was escorted to the rostrum.

The PRESIDENT: I have great pleasure in welcoming the Prime Minister of Barbados, Mr. L. Erskine Sandiford, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. SANDIFORD (Barbados): On behalf of the people and the Government of Barbados I offer you sincerest congratulations, Sir, on your election to the presidency of the United Nations General Assembly at its forty-second session.

We also wish to commend your predecessor, Mr. Humayun Rasheed Choudhury of the Republic of Bangladesh, for his deft and elegant execution of the presidency at the forty-first session. His approach and his success are timely reminders that the effectiveness of this Organization resides not in the size of the material store of its Member States but rather in the quality and capabilities of their citizens.

We must express our appreciation to you, Mr. Secretary-General, for your steadfast stewardship in remaining at your post to steer the United Nations through this period of unprecedented financial and political peril. Yours is not an easy job, but we have every confidence in your commitment to the integrity of multilateralism and to the survival of the United Nations.

Permit me to take this opportunity to pay a brief tribute to a statesman who in the normal course of events would have been standing here today. The late Errol Barrow was a man who had limitless faith in the purpose of this Organization and a clear recognition of its importance for small States.

(Mr. Sandiford, Barbados)

Errol Barrow's was the gift of a comprehensive grasp of history, from which evolved a remarkable foresight. Within five years of his assuming control of government, the foundation of Barbados' independence had been laid. His was a vision nurtured in but not confined to the politics of Barbados. He spent his political life promoting and exhorting others in the Caribbean to pursue the goals of self-reliance and political non-alignment, which he regarded as pre-eminent in a world wracked by ideological conflicts.

His charge to Barbadians that they be "friends of all, satellites of none" underscored a conviction that modern history had given to the new and emerging States of the world a specific role in international relations. Let me express the deep gratitude of all Barbadians for the universal sympathy extended to us on Prime Minister Barrow's passing.

On 1 July this year, I addressed the plenary session of the Caribbean Community Heads of Government meeting in Castries, St. Lucia, and took the opportunity to articulate the principles on which Barbados' foreign policy would be predicated.

They are simply these: recognition of the right to equality of all States in the international community and, in particular, the right of small States to conduct their relations without being bullied or harassed by richer and more powerful States; the preservation and protection of national independence, national sovereignty and national security; the pursuit, protection and development of national resources and national economic interests; resistance to the penetration of our culture and way of life by alien ideologies which do not respect fundamental rights, moral values, the rule of law and a greater measure of equality in social and economic life; collaboration with countries in the region and beyond, in working for peace and justice and for a new social, political and economic order;

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and repudiation of all forms of racism, apartheid, colonialism, hegemonism, tutelage and imperialism.

Having declared these principles, I should like to examine a few questions often raised about the politics of small island States. Why should a tiny island like Barbados, with few resources, enjoy national sovereignty? Can such a small State, having gained its independence, contribute anything to the international community? Will such a small State become a burden to the large and powerful States?

My answer to the first question is both brief and self-evident. Barbados, a mini-State, sought to achieve national sovereignty because, for Barbadians, national sovereignty is the most natural condition of a people's existence. We hold that it is not independence and national sovereignty that need justification. Rather, it is the condition of dependence and subjugation - whether it be colonialism, imperialism, hegemonism or any of the several modern "isms" used to describe a system in which the conditions of existence of one people hinge on those of another.

Therefore, when we assert that no one can manage our own affairs better than we can, we are doing more than voicing an opinion: we are stating a philosophical principle - that freedom to determine their own destiny is the birthright of all people.

On 30 November 1987 Barbados will celebrate the twenty-first anniversary of the attainment of sovereign independence. Our experience during those 21 years has confirmed that what Barbadians believed in principle has proved in practice to be effective.

(Mr. Sandiford, Barbados)

With few resources and a capacity for hard work, we have been able to transform what was a poor, one-crop economy into a thriving centre of diversified economic activity that affords our people a vastly improved standard of living.

We have created a political system of social democracy in which the talents and enterprise of individuals are allowed free play, and in which people are assured of health care, education, housing and working conditions as basic rights not subject to market-place negotiation. Moreover, that system is institutionalized within a legal framework that guarantees the rights and freedoms of all citizens.

But national sovereignty must signify more than the right to manage one's domestic affairs. The exercise of national sovereignty must encompass the right, the capacity and the will to manage one's relations with other nation States, free from all forms of external coercion, inhibition and interference. I am therefore distressed to note that many small States represented in this Organization have frequently found themselves the target of ill-conceived and lightly considered criticism ever since their emergence from colonialism.

This leads me to my second question, Can a small State contribute anything of value to the international community? The answer to that question is equally obvious to Barbadians, for we contend that small States can and do make valuable contributions to the international community. Indeed, the international community as we perceive it today owes its very survival to the small States of this world.

Large and powerful States often succumb to the illusion that they can forgo multilateral diplomacy, that they can dispense with international co-operation, that they can rely on "balance of power", "spheres of influence" and "alliances" to protect and promote their national interests abroad.

Small States, on the other hand, cannot court self-delusion. They must be active participants in the international community. They must be steadfast

(Mr. Sandiford, Barbados)

practitioners of international co-operation. They must be vigorous exponents of multilateral diplomacy and firm supporters of international organizations.

Small States, therefore, have a significant responsibility in this regard. And it is precisely because we are aware of that responsibility that the Government of Barbados rededicates itself to working assiduously for the continued evolution of an international system of multinational diplomacy for peace, development and the security of human rights. For peace cannot be the brokered result of power. While this might have been possible in a pre-democratic age, in today's enlightened world a peace that does not satisfy people's demand for freedom, justice and development will hardly be lasting.

In Barbados we see a logical connection between disarmament and peace. We believe that if resources now devoted to destruction were deployed to meet the real needs of our people many of the causes of conflict and the quest for weaponry would not arise. In this connection, we should like to record our commendation of the efforts of the super-Powers to reach an arms limitation agreement. However, we concur in the dictum of the Brandt Commission that arms limitation arrangements cannot replace disarmament.

Barbados is a vigorous exponent of true and genuine non-alignment and a faithful adherent of that movement and its principles. We believe that the prospects for peace may be enhanced if small States refrain from engaging in conflicts whose origins are often alien to the interests of their peoples or their national priorities. We believe that such prospects would be fortified if major States devoted their influence and capabilities to assisting small States in finding productive avenues for national development. We are convinced that such

(Mr. Sandiford, Barbados)

assistance would substantially reduce those tensions which propel small States into local and fratricidal conflicts which devastate their vital human and material potential.

Accordingly, Barbados was quick to welcome the signing two months ago of a plan designed to bring peace to Central America. This Organization and all peace-loving nations must commend highly the five Central American Presidents who were involved in that initiative. Barbados especially commends the Government of Costa Rica for spearheading this latest development in search of harmony in the region - a process nurtured by the painstaking diplomacy of the Contadora and Support Groups of countries.

It is our wish that similar approaches could prevail in the Middle East, the Korean peninsula, Kampuchea, Afghanistan and elsewhere.

Barbados believes that the concept of development has many components: economic advancement, the attainment of greater human dignity, security, justice and equality. Strategies for development may differ among States, but it is widely agreed that, without appropriate regard for the interdependence which links all States, no strategy, however well-devised, will have much scope for success.

Some small States see multinational co-operation, quite correctly in my view, as the most important means of preserving and enhancing their sovereignty: that is, preserving sovereignty from excessive dependence on powerful bilateral partners and enhancing it by allowing small States to achieve collectively what individually lies beyond their resources. It is for this reason that small States must foster the establishment, growth and continued stability of all forms of multilateral partnership and co-operation.

We in the Caribbean have drawn clear lessons from our efforts at functional integration under the umbrella of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). Now in its

(Mr. Sandiford, Barbados)

thirteenth year, this regional body has given the Caribbean people an efficient mechanism for the expression of their highly developed sense of regional unity and identity and for the attainment of common economic and political goals.

Barbados has derived similar satisfaction from its membership of the Organization of American States, in which our wider loyalties as a hemispheric people are encouraged and strengthened. We welcome the opportunity offered us by the amendment to the Cartagena Protocol to demonstrate further our commitment to sovereignty and solidarity in the region.

The past 21 years have brought with them significant economic transformation in Barbados. We take pride in this achievement, but we are mindful of the fact that our performance might have been far different had it not been for the support and co-operation developed through the United Nations system.

Barbados remains committed to working for the implementation of both North-South and South-South international co-operation. The biggest impediment, in this regard, however, remains the global debt crisis in which the third world is entrapped. We are persuaded that the solution of this crisis may be found in commitment to partnership between developed and developing countries.

(Mr. Sandiford, Barbados)

The long-term solution to the debt problem, as I see it, will require a new orientation to the concept of international trade, bearing in mind that small countries, and especially small States, are heavily dependent on an orderly and fair system of international trade for their economic stability. The Barbados Government will continue to make every effort, both at the regional and at the global levels, to co-operate with other States to ensure that such a system prevails. At stake lies the very survival of our people.

Our efforts will be no less unstinting in the general area of human rights. Barbados stands among States that pledge themselves to the promotion of all human, civil and political rights and freedoms, among them: the right to personal property and protection from slavery and enforced labour; freedom of expression, assembly and association; and freedom of movement and protection from discrimination on the grounds of race, place of origin, political opinion, colour, creed or sex, subject to respect for the rights and freedoms of others and the public interest. We also pledge ourselves, within the limits of our resources, to promote the economic rights of citizens which enhance the quality of life for individuals and families.

The year 1987 carries yet another symbol for the people of Barbados. The social and political foundations of what we may regard as modern Barbados were established by certain events which occurred some 50 years ago, in July 1937.

Barbados was one of several countries in the Caribbean whose inhabitants confronted in the 1930s a declining colonial régime whose modes of governance were not sufficiently responsive to the interests and aspirations of the Caribbean masses. The masses revolted.

It is against this historical background that the people of Barbados repudiate the violations of human rights that continue to besmirch our world.

(Mr. Sandiford, Barbados)

We are aware that there are those who ask: Why does the Government, or indeed the General Assembly of the United Nations itself, make such a fuss about apartheid in South Africa when violations of human rights are committed elsewhere in the world without attracting quite the same attention? The answer is simple: We condemn apartheid and its perpetrators because it is a systematized, institutionalized and governmentally sanctioned abomination, and just as the United Nations was formed out of the tumult and bloody conflict of the Second World War to ensure that such an abomination may not be repeated, so too the United Nations must have as its highest priority the elimination of apartheid.

We believe that apartheid owes its survival in part to the weakening of international commitment to clear concepts of the rights of mankind. We have wavered when we ought to have been forthright. Too often have the issues of human rights been viewed through the screen of ideological concern. Too often have they been subordinated to perceived national interests.

I have sought to indicate some of the principles which underpin the foreign policy of the Government of Barbados. We are a small nation, but our size has in no way impinged upon our capacity to differentiate between human rights and human wrongs.

As we in Barbados prepare to mark our coming of age as a member of this body, we look forward to even greater participation in its several councils and agencies. And as I conclude, I wish to suggest that greater participation by small States in the management of the Organization will not be an achievement for small States only, it will be, above all, an accomplishment for the United Nations. It is only when such participation becomes commonplace that the United Nations will have reached its own maturity and the promise of San Francisco will have been fulfilled.

(Mr. Sandiford, Barbados)

We in Barbados look forward to continuing the excellent relations we have enjoyed with the United Nations. We pledge ourselves to continue to uphold the principles of the United Nations Charter. We affirm our belief that men and institutions are free only when freedom is founded upon respect for the rule of law and respect for moral and spiritual values. We declare our intention to assist in maintaining a society and an international community in which all persons and nations, great and small, may make their just contribution to the welfare of all mankind.

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

Mr. L. Erskine Sandiford, Prime Minister of Barbados, was escorted from the rostrum.

Mr. AL-DALI (Democratic Yemen) (interpretation from Arabic): We feel very proud, Sir, that you are presiding over the General Assembly. Your qualities and qualifications affirm your ability to handle the responsibility. You also come from a friendly country, one with which my own enjoys cordial relations. Our common endeavour to achieve peace increases our confidence that this session will achieve positive results to that end. Allow me to congratulate you on commanding such confidence and to wish you every success in your task.

We would be remiss if we did not on this occasion express our high appreciation to the Foreign Minister of Bangladesh, who conducted the business of the forty-first session of the General Assembly with success.

We should also like to pay tribute to the continued and constructive efforts of the Secretary-General to help achieve political and just solutions to so many of the conflicts in different areas of the world.*

* Mr. Salah (Jordan), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Al-Dali, Democratic Yemen)

We feel very proud that this session is taking place simultaneously with our Yemeni people's celebration of the twentieth anniversary of our national independence, which crowned the bitter struggle of our people to end colonialization, in which thousands of martyrs gave their lives.

(Mr. Al-Dali, Democratic Yemen)

We are proud, too, that over the past 20 years, in spite of all the difficulties and conspiracies that we have had to face, we have been able to bolster our political and economic independence and make tangible progress in the political, economic and social spheres. Our happiness is increased by the fact that this important occasion comes at the same time as our Yemeni people's celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the 26 September revolution, which ended the isolation imposed by the tyrannical régime of the Imam over our people and signalled a new dawn, opening up for them prospects of progress and development.

In keeping with our profound faith in the interdependence of the principles and objectives of the 26 September and 14 October revolutions, we have spared no effort at the national level in continuing to work with our brothers in the northern part of the nation to take steps towards unified action by the two Yemens and to give meaning to that interdependence. There is no doubt that the meeting held in Sana in the last half of July 1987 between Ali Salem Al-Beedh, Secretary-General of the Central Committee of the Yemeni Socialist Party, and President Ali Abdulla Saleh was a new approach in the course of joint action by the leadership of the two Yemens towards reunification of the nation, its territory and its people by peaceful and democratic means.

On the regional level, too, our relations with our brothers in neighbouring countries have been developed on the basis of mutual respect, independence, sovereignty, non-interference in the internal affairs of others and constructive co-operation in our own interests and those of other peoples.

Similarly, our foreign policy embodies certain principles that have promoted relations of co-operation and friendship with many countries of the world and intensified our activities within the context of the Non-Aligned Movement.

(Mr. Al-Dali, Democratic Yemen)

The continued escalation of the Iran-Iraq war and the prospects of its expansion to the territories of other countries not parties to the conflict double the risks faced by our region. Those risks include the stepping up of the military presence and imperialist intervention in the area, thus increasing the tension. An example of this is the presence in the area of forces and fleets and the United States "Bright Star" military manoeuvres there. While we reaffirm our position that the countries of the area bear the responsibility for the security and safety of the region, we are also anxious to remove those risks and promote efforts by those countries to bring security, stability and peace to their peoples.

We also reaffirm that the war, which is so destructive of the potential of two sister countries, Iraq and Iran, must end immediately to avoid further loss of property and life, for its continuance will serve only the interests and designs of imperialism and Zionism, while jeopardizing the stability, security and sovereignty of the peoples of the area.

We therefore welcomed the efforts that culminated in the adoption by the Security Council of resolution 598 (1987). In that context, we pay tribute to the Secretary-General's efforts to ensure implementation of that resolution and we express the hope that they will receive a positive response so that the conflict between the two neighbouring countries may be settled by peaceful means.

Our support for Security Council resolution 598 (1987) is based on our belief that it represents a serious collective step by the Council to carry out the responsibility assigned to it by the Charter for the maintenance of international peace and security and demonstrates the Council's ability to work in a constructive manner to achieve and maintain a peaceful settlement of that conflict. However, we believe that this action should not be taken in isolation and applied to that case

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only; it should be followed by other similar steps, with the Council assuming similar responsibility in various parts of the world, thus reaffirming its credibility as the organ charged with finding just and lasting political solutions to international problems, especially those that threaten international peace and security.

Regarding the Middle East, there is international agreement to convene an international conference on peace in the Middle East, and it is only the opposition of the United States and Israel that has prevented it. We call for the adoption of urgent measures to ensure the convening of that conference, to reach a just, comprehensive solution to the problem based on the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to establish an independent State on its national territory. All the parties concerned should take part in that conference, including the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, and the permanent members of the Security Council. The credibility of the Security Council and the international community will be established only when rights are restored to those that have been deprived of them.

Is it not high time for the historical tragedy that befell the Palestinian people 40 years ago to be remedied? Is it not high time for a just and permanent solution to be found to the Palestinian problem, the core of the Middle East crisis and the main reason for the continued conflict there? Is it not high time for Israeli occupation of Palestinian Arab territories to be ended? Is it not high time for practical steps to be taken to implement the resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council on Palestine and the Middle East, to reject the processes of the annexation of Jerusalem and the Golan Heights and to end the Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon?

(Mr. Al-Dali, Democratic Yemen)

We call also for an end to Israeli policies and practices based on aggression, occupation and expansion in the area. We feel that some permanent members of the Security Council - in particular the United States of America, which adopts a thoroughly partial attitude in its position towards Israel - should take a position consonant with that body's responsibility and the provisions of the Charter instead of obstructing efforts to give effect to the will of the international community.

At the same time, with regard to the tragic situation in Lebanon, we believe that every effort should be made to restore security and stability to that country and its people and to guarantee its unity and territorial integrity.

In southern Africa, we face a litmus test of our determination to match words with deeds. Credibility would be enhanced if some Western States ended their opposition and some practical measures were taken to implement the United Nations plan for the independence of Namibia, approved in Security Council resolution 435 (1978). That resolution attracted international unanimity nine years ago and was rejected only by the racist régime illegally occupying Namibia, which has found encouragement in the policies adopted by some Western countries.

(Mr. Al-Dali, Democratic Yemen)

No matter what we may call those policies, they are all aimed at obstructing implementation of the resolution and circumventing some of its provisions by linking Namibian independence to extraneous conditions such as the withdrawal of the Cuban forces from Angola. Again, credibility would be affirmed through the adoption of comprehensive measures against the racist régime of South Africa in accordance with Chapter VII of the Charter, particularly since recent developments in southern Africa have made it clear that there is no alternative to sanctions if there is any seriousness in the attempts to eliminate the policy of apartheid practiced by that régime, which the international community considers to be a crime against humanity.

Here we pay tribute to the struggle of the people of Namibia under its sole, legitimate leadership, the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO). We pay tribute also to the struggle of the people of Azania and its liberation movement, and we call for the immediate and unconditional release of all political prisoners, foremost among whom is the African hero Nelson Mandela. At the same time we affirm that the struggle of the peoples of southern Africa cannot be crushed by the racist, military war machine.

To play a positive role we must provide more support to the struggle of those peoples and the front-line African States as they face the aggression perpetrated against them by the racist Pretoria régime. We are in duty bound to face up to the close collaboration between the two racist régimes in Israel and South Africa, particularly in the military and nuclear fields, in view of the gravity of that collaboration for the Arab and African peoples.

We are pleased that this session's agenda includes a new item calling for the convening, under the auspices of the United Nations, of an international conference to define terrorism and distinguish it from the struggle of peoples for national

(Mr. Al-Dali, Democratic Yemen)

liberation. My country has had the honour of supporting that idea from its inception since it would respond to the importance the international community attaches to the question of terrorism. At the same time, it would counter the attempts of some Western countries and some racist countries, to label as terroristic the legitimate struggles being waged by countries enduring colonialist and racist occupation - in particular the peoples of Palestine, South Africa and Namibia - and by their liberation movements.

In that context we should like to state that we condemn terrorism, which claims the lives of innocent people. We also condemn the State terrorism practiced by the racist régimes in Palestine, South Africa and Namibia and by some countries to undermine independent national régimes. At the same time, we caution against the confusion deliberately created by some countries that wish to discourage international unanimity and use "combatting terrorism" in an attempt to eliminate the legitimate struggle of peoples to determine their own political, economic and social destinies.

We turn now to problems facing different parts of the world.

We hope that the question of Western Sahara will be resolved in a way that guarantees the right of its people to self-determination. To that end, we call for direct negotiations between the parties concerned.

We also call for a political solution to the question of Cyprus that guarantees the island's independence, territorial integrity and non-aligned status.

We support the efforts being made by Democratic Kampuchea as well as the efforts to achieve the reunification of the two Koreas by peaceful and democratic means. We call for the Olympic Games scheduled for 1988 to be hosted jointly by the two Koreas.

(Mr. Al-Dali, Democratic Yemen)

We support the struggles of the peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean to promote their political and economic independence; in particular, we support the struggle of the people and leadership of Cuba to defend the revolution, and we call for an end to the economic blockade against it.

We are optimistic that there can be a political settlement and national reconciliation in Afghanistan and continued dialogue among the countries of Indo-China and members of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), and we hope that security, peace and stability will prevail in South-East Asia.

We welcome the peace plan adopted by the Heads of State of Central America in Guatemala, and we hope that it will be a first step towards more positive relations in that area that will lead the peoples of its countries to security, stability and economic progress. There is no doubt that peace and stability in that area would be more readily achieved if the Peace Plan were supported by the international community, if obstacles to it were removed and if an end were put to all designs and aggressive actions aimed at undermining the sovereignty of Nicaragua and its national system.

There is no doubt that the imminent declaration of an agreement between the Soviet Union and the United States to eliminate intermediate-range nuclear missiles has given international efforts fresh momentum towards progress in the only option open to us: nuclear disarmament or the inevitable extinction of all humanity. Such an agreement would represent the first possibility of eliminating a category of nuclear weapons, and would be a historic event reflecting a new and increasing awareness of the realities of our nuclear age and a step towards meeting the will of the international community to achieve general and complete disarmament under effective international control. That agreement, as also the prospective summit meeting between the Soviet Union and the United States, could also be considered

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the embodiment of a new realistic attitude in dealing with international problems of our time. This approach, initiated by the Soviet Union, and deserving of our high appreciation, is based on relations of good-neighbourliness and co-operation in international affairs and on replacing lack of trust and confrontation with mutual co-operation and common interest. It is a living expression of the new way of thinking that is needed in our interdependent world and indispensable to common peace efforts. We hope that that meeting will be crowned with success, and we look forward to its outcome prevailing among all the peoples of the world in all fields and contributing to international efforts to find just solutions to complicated problems.

We also look forward to new, effective and fruitful measures to halt the spread of the arms race to outer space, to the elimination of all weapons of mass destruction, to the conclusion of a treaty banning the use of chemical weapons, and, in particular, to early agreement on a nuclear-test ban.

With regard to the Indian Ocean, to which we belong, we look forward to new developments that will contribute to international efforts to convene the Conference on the Indian Ocean in Colombo as a necessary step towards implementing the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace.

The magnitude of the challenges faced by developing countries and the lack of progress in establishing a new international economic order are matters of grave concern, especially for the least-developed countries. The international community recently affirmed the indissoluble link between disarmament and development. This affirmation requires new practical measures to increase international co-operation in all technical, scientific and economic fields, measures that contribute towards ending backwardness in development - particularly in developing countries facing economic problems, financial questions and the world debt crisis - and make

(Mr. Al-Dali, Democratic Yemen)

possible international economic co-operation based on mutual benefit and equality, thus enabling all mankind to use its potential to work for development, and making it possible to deal with international economic problems in a way that responds to the economic and social requirements of our peoples.

(Mr. Al-Dali, Democratic Yemen)

When we speak of lessening the effects of the economic crisis, we should like to see tangible measures taken to free international trade, improve the loans extended to developing countries and alleviate the debt problem being borne by the developing countries. That is the way to deal with the crisis which, if left unchecked, will halt the development process in several developing countries. We need such solutions if we are to restructure international economic relations and give new impetus to global negotiations aimed at establishing a new international economic order. At the same time, we call upon the international community to take urgent action to achieve the official-development-assistance target agreed upon during the Third Development Decade, together with measures within the Substantial New Programme of Action for the 1980s for the Least Developed Countries, to enable those countries to overcome the effects of the economic crisis and to promote development efforts. We feel that this historic turn requires us to make serious collective efforts if we are to assume our common responsibility.

We affirm that multilateralism provides the ideal international framework to deal with those problems and is a sound basis for international peace and security. In a world characterized by increasing interdependence among States and by common issues, a collective approach is indispensable to meet the challenges before us. In this respect we believe that the United Nations can play a major, central role in achieving our objectives and that there is adequate machinery in the United Nations system. The problem lies in the obstacles imposed by some countries to hinder the progress that could be made through the use of that machinery.

We wish to place on record our support for the administrative and financial reform of the United Nations, so long as that reform is not used to achieve political ends prejudicial to the United Nations Charter, which declares that the

(Mr. Al-Dali, Democratic Yemen)

Organization is based on the principles of the sovereign equality of all its Members.

This session has begun in hope and optimism. We look forward to a fruitful outcome translating that optimistic outlook into a new reality on which we can congratulate ourselves at the next session, one that will inspire us to work in the same collective spirit and take new, positive steps for the preservation of human civilization and the creation of a better world for succeeding generations of which we can all be justly proud.

Mr. KRAVETS (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) (interpretation from Russian): We should like you, Sir, to convey our greetings to comrade Peter Florin on his unanimous election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its forty-second session. We wish him every success in the discharge of his lofty and responsible functions.

The forty-second session of the General Assembly is taking place at a crucial turning-point. It is called upon to make use of all its authority in order to consolidate the positive changes in world affairs, overcome confrontational stereotypes and put into practice the new political thinking in international relations.

There has emerged in international affairs a certain encouraging movement towards the realization of the aspirations of the peoples of the world for the preservation of peace and the strengthening of security. These hopes have not been brought about by unfounded optimism or by wishful thinking. There has appeared on the political horizon a real prospect for achieving agreements on the most pressing problem of reducing nuclear arms and improving the international atmosphere as a whole.

What exactly do we have in mind?

(Mr. Kravets, Ukrainian SSR)

Above all, what we have in mind is the agreement in principle between the USSR and the United States to conclude a treaty on the complete elimination of two classes of nuclear missiles: shorter-range and medium-range. For the first time in history the idea of nuclear disarmament is close to fruition. Should this very first - and hence especially difficult - step be accomplished, international relations would be placed on an entirely new footing. Such agreement would have not only a major political and military significance, but would also change the whole situation psychologically. After all, up to now there has been only a process of building up nuclear arsenals.

Secondly, Reykjavik and the Soviet-United States talks in Washington have shown that, given political will, it is possible, in principle, to cut back substantially the strategic offensive arms of the two biggest nuclear Powers, provided that the Treaty on anti-ballistic missiles (ABM) is strictly complied with. Given a mutual desire, agreement on a 50-per-cent reduction in their strategic offensive arms could become a reality as early as the first half of 1988.

Our optimism is bolstered by the progress made at the Geneva talks in the framework of the Conference on Disarmament, where the representatives of 40 countries are on the verge of concluding a convention on banning chemical weapons and destroying stockpiles of such weapons.

Favourable conditions for such a change of course have been created as a result of the deliberate choice made by States in favour of restraint and self-imposed limitations.

"The sphere of the sensible, responsible and rational organization of international affairs is expanding, albeit timidly, before our very eyes". That is the conclusion reached by Mikhail S. Gorbachev, General Secretary of the

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Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, in his article "The reality and the guarantees of a secure world", which has been perceived by world public opinion as a doctrine of a world free from nuclear weapons and violence.

The article, which was timed to coincide with the opening of the session of the United Nations General Assembly, contains some anxious thoughts on what could be done, and how, by the community of nations to make peace a political reality even before the end of this century. It emphasizes that natural processes are spontaneously creating a situation where our complex and diverse world is becoming increasingly interrelated and interdependent, and this world is increasingly in need of machinery to enable us to discuss together - in a responsible fashion and at a representative level - and deal together with its common problems; and it is the United Nations that was intended to constitute such machinery.

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The Ukrainian SSR has always supported, and continues to support, the idea of enhancing the role of the United Nations as an irreplaceable instrument of peace and harmonization of the efforts of States, as well as the idea of strengthening the political, legal and moral status of the United Nations and making its activities more democratic. Our commitment to this Organization was reaffirmed once again with the utmost clarity during the recent visit to the Ukrainian SSR by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Perez de Cuellar.

Today, international relations cannot be built if the interests of all States are not taken into account. The balance of interests should be observed, for it alone produces sensible policies. To that end, we must therefore learn to harness our national interests to purposes common to all mankind. All this is felt especially keenly here at the United Nations.

In the kaleidoscope of problems posed by our times, one task stands out: to ensure the survival of mankind and save it from nuclear self-annihilation.

The arms race, produced by the wrong-headed strategy of nuclear deterrence and containment, is crippling the life of civilization on Earth; it consumes annually nearly \$1 trillion - funds so badly needed to ease the plight of hundreds of millions of people suffering from poverty, hunger and disease.

Is it possible that, at the end of the twentieth century, we will allow the clangour of the anvils that are forging the weapons to drown out the voice of reason and warning? Is it really possible that we are incapable of combining the capabilities and the will of States and peoples in order to rid mankind of the prospect of total destruction?

For the sake of the survival of mankind, for the sake of its salvation and development, for the sake of the life of present and succeeding generations, it is

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imperative that all the strength, authority and influence of the United Nations be devoted to the cause of creating a nuclear-free and non-violent world.

Outside the movement towards a nuclear-free and non-violent world - and this is our profound conviction - there is not and cannot be any path to the progress of mankind. This conclusion underlies the new political thinking, which we believe is meeting with the understanding of all sensible men and women. The looming danger of the destruction of civilization makes it imperative, indeed vital, for diverse social and political forces to unite and create a coalition of political realism, reason and good will.

The new political thinking and the foreign policy that goes with it, which is based on an objective analysis of the world of today, presuppose a sober and judicious view of the diversity of forces that make up world politics, and emanate from the awareness of the responsibility for the survival of mankind. They are oriented towards the development and building of trust among nations, towards the actual implementation of the principle of the peaceful coexistence of States as the supreme universal norm in relations between nations. An important step in that direction would be the adoption by the forty-second session of the General Assembly of a declaration on the renunciation of the threat or use of force in international relations.

It was the criterion of common human values that guided the socialist States, including the Ukrainian SSR, when they proposed in the United Nations the initiative to establish a comprehensive system of international peace and security. The co-sponsors of the proposal proceeded from the principle of the indivisibility of international security, which cannot but be global and equal for all and which must encompass the military, political, economic, environmental and humanitarian spheres. Such a security system would lead to the building of a

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nuclear-free world, where the threat or the use of force would be ruled out and relations among nations would be built in a spirit of mutual respect, friendship and co-operation. The ongoing broad exchange of views in the United Nations on these matters confirms the fact that the socialist countries' initiative is aimed at surmounting confrontational approaches and establishing civilized norms of relations and an atmosphere of mutual understanding and trust in the practice of international affairs.

The delegation of the Ukrainian SSR is in favour of continuing and developing constructive international dialogue, for the purpose of jointly searching for ways and means of shaping a comprehensive system of international peace and security and adopting concrete measures to provide material, political, legal, moral and psychological safeguards for a world free from the nuclear threat. What the socialist countries are proposing to the world community is not a short-term concept but a long-term, rational programme that invites everyone to strive for peaceful and mutually beneficial international relations. The Ukrainian SSR expresses the hope that the United Nations will make a substantial contribution to the establishment of a comprehensive system of international peace and security, in strict compliance with the Organization's purposes and principles and on the basis of its Charter, and will act as that system's effective and authoritative guarantor.

Thus, the concept of security, as we see it, is both a new political and philosophic vision of the age which mankind has entered and a programme of concrete actions to ensure practical movement towards a nuclear-free and non-violent world and - from the historical standpoint - towards a demilitarized world.

Arms limitation and disarmament undoubtedly form a foundation for the edifice of general security. On 15 January 1986 the Soviet Union proposed a programme to rid the world of nuclear weapons. This document contains clear-cut stages

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stretching to the year 2000 - a world without means of mass destruction, a peaceful outer space, the restriction of the military potentials of States to the limits of reasonable sufficiency. Its significance lies in the fact that it marks the beginning of the process of merging new political thinking with practice.

We proceed from the belief that it is impossible to resolve completely the questions of nuclear disarmament within the sole framework of relations between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States of America. Here, the United Nations - which, I must say, plays a unique role in the movement towards a nuclear-weapon-free world - can and should make an important contribution. The Ukrainian SSR would like to see the most made of the Organization's potential for that purpose, putting to use all existing negotiating mechanisms, including such an important body as the Security Council.

The question of banning nuclear tests occupies a special place in the whole range of nuclear disarmament problems. The critical need to resolve that question is explained by the fact that the reduction of nuclear arsenals cannot in itself, without the banning of nuclear-weapon tests, solve the problem, since it leaves open the possibility of modernizing the remaining part of such weapons - that is, of developing ever-more-sophisticated and deadly nuclear weapons. Hence, a nuclear-test ban is a concrete step towards the genuine elimination of nuclear arms.

The document entitled "Basic Provisions of a Treaty on the General and Complete Prohibition of Nuclear Tests", submitted by the socialist countries at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, provides good opportunities for constructive talks on this subject. The delegation of the Ukrainian SSR believes that dealing with this question in practical terms as soon as possible would be in keeping with the will of the overwhelming majority of States.

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We hail the agreement between the Soviet Union and the United States to start before 1 December full-scale negotiations on the limitation and, ultimately, the total cessation of nuclear tests.

The agreement signed between the Soviet Union and the United States on the establishment of nuclear-risk-reduction centres deserves our approval. The Ukrainian SSR supports the Secretary-General's proposal for the establishment of a multilateral centre to reduce the threat of war. In our view, a direct communication line linking United Nations Headquarters with the capitals of the permanent members of the Security Council and the place where the Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement is located could serve the same purpose.

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The socialist States propose a peaceful alternative to counter irrational bids for nuclear supremacy. The Ukrainian SSR calls upon all countries to take an active part in implementing the programme to establish an international régime for the safe development of nuclear energy production, which provides for a whole series of material, scientific and technological measures, supplemented by international legal norms and agreements. The programme could prevent people from making errors and from incurring incidents fraught with dire consequences for their life and health.

The prevention of an arms race in outer space is yet another concern for all mankind. Preparations for "Star Wars" should not be allowed to become irreversible and to create insurmountable obstacles to disarmament. We are convinced that the strategic defence initiative programme is disastrous. This is recognized by many people, including people in the United States. The strategic defence initiative is an exclusively militaristic programme designed to gain military superiority and undermine strategic stability in the world.

In this key area the lack of realistic policies is particularly severe. Concrete actions are needed. First, the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems, which is the corner-stone of strategic stability, should be strictly complied with.

It is time for the talks on concluding an agreement or agreements to prevent an arms race in outer space to begin at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. The objective of the talks could be agreements on such problems as the prohibition of weapons systems of the space-to-space and space-to-Earth type, the non-development of new anti-satellite weapons and the elimination of existing weapons of this type, and guarantees of the immunity of man-made Earth satellites.

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It is also necessary to concentrate efforts on solving as soon as possible another urgent problem - ridding the world of chemical weapons. I have already said that promising progress has been made at the talks within the framework of the Geneva Conference on Disarmament. The proposals put forward there recently by various States clear the way to agreement. The proposal to proceed on the basis of the need to make legally binding the principle of mandatory challenge inspections without the right of denial is a concrete contribution to the success of the talks.

We reiterate our support for the initiatives taken by the German Democratic Republic, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria and Romania to establish zones free from chemical weapons in Central Europe and the Balkans.

The movement towards genuine security through disarmament presupposes, in addition to the elimination of the weapons of mass destruction, urgent agreed on reductions in conventional arms and armed forces. The socialist countries have repeatedly stated their readiness to go as far as other countries are prepared to go on this question. As will be recalled, to confirm their readiness they made specific proposals in June 1986 on a substantial reduction of armed forces and armaments in Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals, subject to far-reaching verification.

The co-ordination and implementation of exhaustive measures for international control over disarmament and permitted military activities, including verification at foreign military bases, and the adoption by all nuclear Powers of defensive military doctrines would make it possible radically to consolidate confidence among States.

The Ukrainian SSR supports the initiative of the Polish People's Republic for a reduction of armaments and a strengthening of trust in Central Europe, known as the Jaruzelski plan.

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I emphasize our conviction that the release of financial resources and intellectual potential for the purposes of social and economic development, including that of developing countries, should form an integral part of all disarmament measures. We believe that every step on the way to arms reduction should not only increase the security of nations but also provide more resources for raising the standards of living of the peoples. Our position was clearly reflected in the memorandum "Disarmament for development" submitted by the socialist countries at the recent International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development.

The edifice of peace cannot be solid if any part of it is not covered by the security system. That is why the Ukrainian SSR is firmly in favour of settling conflict situations and eliminating regional focuses of tension.

Particularly prominent among them is the Middle East conflict, one of the oldest and most explosive hotbeds of international tension. The development of the situation in the Middle East has made abundantly clear the failure of reliance on military force, confrontation or separate deals. Genuine settlement is possible only through the withdrawal of Israeli troops from all Arab territories occupied since 1967, the exercise by the people of Palestine of their inalienable right to self-determination and to the establishment of their own independent State, and a guarantee of the right of all countries in the region to secure existence and development. The convening, under United Nations auspices, of a plenipotentiary international Middle East conference, with the participation, on an equal footing, of all the parties concerned, including the PLO as the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, and the permanent members of the Security Council, would be a reasonable and correct way to bring about a just peace

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in the region. A broad international consensus has emerged in favour of convening such a conference. The position of the present Israeli Government is the only stumbling-block.

It is at the negotiating table that political solutions to the issues between Iran and Iraq and an end to the fratricidal war between them should be sought.

The build-up by the United States and some other North Atlantic Treaty Organization countries of a massive naval presence in the relatively confined area in which the war is raging is fraught with unpredictable grave consequences.

The Ukrainian SSR supports implementing Security Council resolution 598 (1987) in full, maintaining and consolidating on that basis the unity of action of its permanent members. We attach particular significance to political efforts within the United Nations framework to switch the Iran-Iraq conflict onto the track of a peaceful solution. We believe that the Secretary-General can play a big part in finding a just settlement acceptable to both sides.

The interests of universal security, like the vital interests of the Cypriot people, urgently require collective international efforts to remedy the crisis situation in Cyprus. The proper way to resolve this problem, as we see it, would be to call, within the United Nations framework, a representative international conference which would be in a position to work out essential components of a settlement, such as the demilitarization of the island and the establishment of a system of effective international guarantees of the independence, sovereignty, unity, and territorial integrity of the Republic of Cyprus. We support the good offices mission of the Secretary-General and the active role of our Organization in this matter.

The Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic shares the anxiety of the world community about the explosive situation in Central America. We strongly demand

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that an end be put to the United States Administration's interference in the affairs of Nicaragua, and declare our firm solidarity with the just struggle of the Nicaraguan people. It is possible to attain mutually acceptable solutions in that region, as is conclusively borne out by the agreements reached by the Central American States concerning ways of securing lasting peace in the region.

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It would be in the interests of international peace and security to settle promptly the conflict in southern Africa, which continues to be a dangerous hotbed of tension. The apartheid régime in South Africa is stepping up its repression of the country's indigenous population, pursuing its strategic course of destabilizing the front-line States, bringing military and political pressure to bear upon them, and is continuing its occupation of Namibia. It is not merely changes by way of so-called reforms but rather a complete and definitive elimination of apartheid that is the indispensable condition for achieving peace and security in the region. The Ukrainian SSR strongly supports the call by African States for the introduction of all-embracing mandatory sanctions against the racist régime of South Africa, in accordance with the United Nations Charter.

A good basis for normalizing the situation in South-East Asia is the realistic proposal by Viet Nam, Laos and Kampuchea for the establishment of a zone of lasting peace, stability and co-operation in the region. The national reconciliation policy launched by the Government of the People's Republic of Kampuchea would facilitate the early and real attainment of those goals.

The Ukrainian SSR associates itself with the course advocated by the People's Democratic Republic of Korea, namely the withdrawal of United States troops from South Korea and the reunification of the country on a democratic basis, without outside interference. We fully support the proposal by the People's Democratic Republic of Korea to turn the Korean peninsula into a nuclear-free zone.

We have dwelt on just a few hotbeds of tension. Their elimination and the prevention of new crises and conflicts at the regional and global levels is part and parcel of efforts to shape a comprehensive system of international peace and security. An important part of that concept relates to the economic aspects. Changes in the world economy and in international economic relations, like changes

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in the political sphere, are characterized by their growing interrelationship. This is where the interdependence of States is likely to manifest itself most conspicuously; yet, given the existing international economic order, the consequences of that interrelationship affect various countries in a hideously lopsided way, grossly infringing the elementary notions of equality, justice and honesty. Some reap billion-dollar profits while others are slipping further into the abyss of economic and financial collapse. All this is fraught with the most serious political implications.

The existence in international economic relations of such potentially explosive elements as non-equivalent exchanges, the bondage of debt and other forms of neo-colonialist plundering of the developing nations involves a real danger of upheavals that could jeopardize universal peace.

We believe that an important contribution to the ensuring of international security could be made by measures designed to bring under control the process of economic interdependence of States, measures that would ensure predictability and stability in inter-State relations and ultimately ensure the safe and mutually beneficial character of world economic exchanges. To fulfil that task, all countries of the world, big and small, industrialized and developing, irrespective of their social systems and levels of development, should unite their efforts and work together.

The co-operation of States in the environmental and humanitarian spheres is an integral part of the process of moulding a comprehensive system of security. It is inadmissible to extend ideological differences to international relations or to use the problem of human rights and social development for the purposes of fomenting confrontation, just as it is inadmissible to apply double standards.

We call on all States Members of the United Nations to be guided in their policies by the primacy of common human values and international law, to resolve

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disputes through negotiation, and to rid themselves of the burden of confrontation and suspicion.

The Ukrainian SSR intends to co-operative actively with other States in ensuring world peace and security, in a spirit of good will and in the awareness of the joint responsibility for the future of human civilization. That position is fully in conformity with the historic purposes and principles of the foreign policy of the Soviet State, whose seventieth anniversary will be celebrated on 7 November this year.

In our minds, in our hearts, the socialist Revolution of 1917 is a matter of supreme national pride for the Soviet people. The Revolution gave rise to unprecedented enthusiasm and a creative vigour on the part of the broad masses of people and became the finest hour for the victorious people who had done away, once and for all, with the exploitation of man by man. Scores of years have gone by since unemployment was eliminated in our land. We have no oppression of ethnic minorities, no poverty, no illiteracy. The working people live in confidence that they are protected by society; they live in confidence about their future.

The Great October Revolution continues even today in our deeds. In the Ukrainian SSR, as throughout the Soviet Union, a splendid process of perestroika is under way in all fields of life, for the purpose of accelerating the economic and social development of our socialist society.

It is highly symbolic that the first legislative act of the Soviet State was the Decree of Peace. Our new political thinking as applied to foreign policy and our conduct in the international arena are linked integrally with Lenin's behest about a democratic and just world. As the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Ukraine, Vladimir V. Shcherbitsky, stressed:

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"In carrying out that behest, our party and the Soviet State do everything they can to preserve and strengthen peace and to improve the complex and often explosive international situation."

The delegation of the Ukrainian SSR is convinced that the participants in this forty-second session of the United Nations General Assembly will raise their voices in favour of such a way of acting and that the General Assembly itself will become a place and a school for co-operation and collaboration on the part of States in devising a concept of security for all, security in keeping with the realities of the nuclear and space age.

Mr. SANI BAKO (Niger) (interpretation from French): For the community of nations, for the peoples of the United Nations and for our Governments, the annual session of the General Assembly is a source of annually renewed hope and a yearly reaffirmation of faith in the enduring validity of the ideals and principles of the Charter of San Francisco. Those ideals and principles reflect the deep-seated and legitimate aspirations of mankind for peace and harmony among nations, for freedom and for economic and social progress for all peoples and all individuals, without distinction.

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The election of Ambassador Peter Florin of the German Democratic Republic to the presidency of the forty-second session of the General Assembly is a symbol of that powerful and energizing faith shared in our brotherhood by all the peoples of the earth in our humanity and our common destiny. It is a symbol of the long road travelled since the end of the Second World War, giving true meaning to the uniqueness of our world and the universality of mankind.

This election honours him and also recognizes the positive contribution of his country, the German Democratic Republic, in the progress of world affairs. I should like to join my tribute to those already paid him and once again convey my delegation's compliments to Mr. Humayun Rasheed Choudhury, the Foreign Minister of Bangladesh, who conducted the work of our last session with flair, competence and a high sense of responsibility.

I would be remiss were I to fail to convey here and now to the United Nations Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, our praise and appreciation for the very useful job he is doing as head of the Organization. He is an attentive and skilful observer of the international scene, and we have seen him, whenever peace is at stake, travelling throughout the world and working actively, with patience and tenacity, to promote the dialogue that is so indispensable to the achievement of understanding among all parties. On behalf of Niger, I commend him for this.

In spite of the slow improvement to be seen here and there, the international political situation is still in many areas of the world the cause of grave concern for our Governments and peoples.

This is true of the southern part of the African continent, which the racist minority régime of Pretoria has transformed, through its stubbornness and arrogance, into a smouldering hotbed that imperils the security of the entire region, and indeed, world peace. The situation created and maintained in that part of the

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African continent by the racist minority régime of Pretoria is one of the most serious challenges to the authority of the United Nations and an intolerable affront to the conscience of mankind.

How can we accept the fact that, despite repeated calls by the General Assembly and the Security Council, South Africa continues illegally to occupy the Territory of Namibia, plunder its natural resources and systematically murder or imprison all those Namibians who reject the colonial status being imposed on them and struggle to regain their rights? How can we tolerate a situation in which South Africa is constantly carrying out acts of aggression against the front-line States and, with the assistance of armed bands created and financed for its own evil purposes, is continuing to organize assaults, assassinations, abductions and acts of sabotage? How can we accept the persistence of the loathsome system of apartheid, which is a negation of the very values that form the bedrock of peace and that this Organization was established to defend?

No, there can be no compromise with apartheid and its masters. There can be no compromise with that policy under which man denies man and through which all the values that millions of men sacrificed their lives to defend are trampled underfoot, values the international community ardently champions. No one that desires progress, no one with a conscience, can sleep peacefully while that hateful system persists in that part of the world, a system under which men deny other men the mere right to exist.

In the light of the ineffectiveness of verbal censure and condemnations, the General Assembly and other international bodies have recommended comprehensive mandatory economic sanctions against South Africa. The purpose of such sanctions would be to force the minority racist régime of Pretoria to abandon its inhuman

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policy of apartheid and implement the United Nations peace plan for Namibia's accession to independence. We have to note that all such actions have so far been thwarted by South Africa, which, strengthened by those that overtly or covertly aid and abet it, continues to defy the United Nations and the international community.

I should like at this juncture to reaffirm Niger's and its people's support for and solidarity with the peoples of Namibia and South Africa in their liberation struggle and with the front-line States, the victims of repeated acts of aggression by the minority racist régime of Pretoria. Niger calls for determined action by the international community to speed Namibia's attainment of independence in accordance with Security Council resolution 435 (1978) and for the dismantling of the system of apartheid.

Of course, on the African continent Chad is another dangerous hotbed of tension that must be promptly eliminated. It calls for vigilant attention on the part of the Assembly, in conjunction with initiatives already undertaken within the framework of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). As a watchful neighbour, ready to help wherever possible, Niger has associated itself with many of the initiatives undertaken to restore peace to Chad. The return of peace to that country presupposes peace among all the people of Chad, in keeping with the ideals and principles of the charter of African unity, non-interference in that country's internal affairs and respect for its independence and the unity and integrity of its territory. There is no other possible path towards peace.

Niger welcomes the significant progress that has been made in the process of national reconciliation initiated and patiently pursued by the Chad Government. Similarly, we support the action undertaken by the Organization of African Unity through its Ad Hoc Committee under the chairmanship of El-Madji Oman Bongo, President of the Republic of Gabon.

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In a new approach designed to find a solution to the problem of Chad, the recent summit meeting of the Organization of African Unity, held at Addis Ababa in July of this year, upgraded the membership of the OAU Ad Hoc Committee on the Chad-Libyan conflict to Head-of-State level and urged all parties to co-operate with it. It is heartening that at the recent meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee at Lusaka there was for the first time effective participation by the two parties, thus consolidating the cease-fire declared on 11 September 1987 at the request of the then Chairman of the OAU. The Lusaka meeting also drew up and adopted a precise working timetable, including, inter alia, another meeting of Heads of States members of the Ad Hoc Committee with the Heads of State of Chad and Libya.

In our view, it is important for all of us to support and recognize the efforts of the OAU.

In the final communiqué issued at the conclusion of the Lusaka meeting the members of the Ad Hoc Committee expressed their concern at "the risks of the internationalization" of the Chad-Libyan conflict. Such risks exist and must be averted at any cost. The international community must see to it that they are.

Chad and Libya, for their part, must understand that they cannot live in mutual exclusivity; they cannot remake geographical facts or redraw the map of the world to suit themselves. They are condemned to live together. As neighbours, they have a duty to respect each other, accommodate each other and live in harmony. They must ensure that their relations comply with the inescapable demands of good-neighbourliness.

The problem of Western Sahara, too, continues to maintain a regrettable level of tension in the north-western part of the African continent. In a profound desire to see peace and understanding once again prevail among the countries of the Maghreb, Niger has resolutely supported all the efforts undertaken so far to achieve a just and lasting settlement of that problem.

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In this connection we welcome the recent attempts to reach understanding at the meeting in Oujda, and we warmly congratulate His Majesty King Fahd Ibn Abdel-Aziz of Saudi Arabia on his tireless efforts to ease the tension in that part of our continent. At the same time, I must commend the Secretary-General for his discreet, patient and useful work. We encourage him to persist in his activities in order to establish in the Organization favourable conditions for a referendum on self-determination in the Sahara, which is the only way to find a lasting solution to that difficult question.

Elsewhere in the world other hotbeds of tension are causing anguish and concern and call for concerted action by the international community.

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One of these is the fratricidal war between Iran and Iraq, two members of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, of the Non-Aligned Movement and of the United Nations that would normally have every reason to be in close association. That war, now in its eighth year, has in recent weeks undergone an escalation that has increased the danger and threat to the whole of the Arab-Persian Gulf. Only the cessation of hostilities and the acceptance of dialogue can lead to a just and lasting peace. Niger welcomes the adoption by the Security Council on 20 July of resolution 598 (1987) and urgently appeals to both parties to the conflict to accept its terms and co-operate with the Secretary-General in its implementation.

The chances for a negotiated, comprehensive and lasting settlement of the Middle East problem still seem remote. The fundamental and inalienable rights of the Palestinian people continue to be disregarded and denied. Israel persists in occupying Arab territories and, as part of its plan to present the international community with a fait accompli, is actively changing the demographic structure and the legal, cultural and religious status of the Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem. International opinion has often spoken out against these practices and demanded that Israel withdraw from all the occupied Arab territories, put an end to the mistreatment meted out to the populations of those territories and cease exploiting their resources.

At the same time, the Lebanese tragedy drags on amid a kind of general indifference on the part of the international community.

In both cases, Israel must understand that its own existence cannot forever be guaranteed by means of force but that it can be guaranteed by a peaceful, comprehensive and lasting solution of the Palestinian problem and, more generally, the Middle East question. It must accept that the question of Palestine is at the hub of the conflict in the Middle East and that peace in the region involves giving

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the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, the right to participate on an equal footing in any negotiation process aimed at finding a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the problem of the Middle East.

Central America, also, is a constantly troubled region, and the General Assembly should continue to give it close attention. For many years that region has been caught up in a grave crisis marked by military confrontation, social instability and manifold and complex inter-State tensions. There are now fresh grounds for hope with the drafting of the Guatemala peace plan by the States of the region, which Niger warmly welcomes.

We also continue to follow closely developments in the Korean peninsula, where the situation remains extremely tense. We encourage the efforts undertaken by the two Koreas to bring about the peaceful reunification of their great nation.

With respect to the situations in Kampuchea and in Afghanistan, Niger wishes once again to reaffirm the unacceptability of occupation by force of territories belonging to other countries in contravention of the norms of international law and the principles of the United Nations Charter. The international community must continue to strive to make it possible for each of those countries to decide on its political orientation fully and of its own free will and for its population freely to choose its future. It must also ensure that their status as non-aligned countries is safeguarded and respected.

It is generally accepted that the uncontrolled arms race is one of the most serious and daunting challenges facing our world.

Everyone is aware that a nuclear conflagration would imperil the whole of human civilization and would annihilate all forms of life on Earth. It is

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therefore vital that the great Powers and all countries concerned abandon their nuclear programmes and embark on a bold and courageous policy of total disarmament. We are witnessing a historic moment for mankind - historic because it is crucial for the future of mankind on Earth. History would record the wise decision of countries possessing nuclear capability to abandon their programmes and destroy the apparatus of destruction installed in many areas of the world. Such a decision would enhance man's stature and bring him into harmony with his environment and with himself because it would prove he is capable of reason and knows how to stop something when he must.

We, the developing countries, close observers of this state of affairs, feel despair and revulsion at seeing colossal sums amounting to billions of dollars being swallowed up in this mad adventure whose sole aim, ultimately, is the annihilation of mankind, while in vast regions of the world millions of men and women barely subsist amid total destitution, struggling day to day merely to stay alive.

The agreement in principle reached just two weeks ago by the United States and the Soviet Union on the elimination of intermediate-range missiles is encouraging in this respect because it gives us some ground to hope for the advent of a world less ridden with uncertainty.

The political concerns I have just mentioned must be seen together with other pressing anxieties bound up in the grave, deep and prolonged crisis in the world economy.

The economic situation of the countries of the third world continues to be difficult - indeed it is more difficult than ever, and its most critical aspect is the mounting burden of debt.

Thus, although the overall debt of Africa is quantitatively far less than that of other continents - and even of certain individual countries - it has become

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intolerable for most of the countries of Africa because of the economic crisis prevailing on the continent. For most of those countries debt servicing has reached 30 per cent of total export earnings, the level regarded as the maximum tolerable for any one country. For some of them, debt servicing is equivalent to 60 per cent of export earnings, while for others it simply equals 100 per cent.

The Assembly will agree with me that to pay debt servicing at such a level is economic madness. It is simply impossible. Thus, despite their sincere desire to honour their contractual commitments, many African States are today finding themselves unable to do so because of their economic situation.

The means that have been explored up to now have not been promising in terms of finding satisfactory solutions to this problem. These range from unilateral measures taken by debtors to rescheduling policies advocated by creditors. Niger takes the view that only dialogue and concerted action will enable us to find a solution to the debt problem. Creditors and debtors must get together to think about and discuss bold and innovative initiatives that might be taken in this regard.

In addition to the question of debt there arises the whole problem of the recovery of the African economies severely hit by the crisis. At the special session devoted to the economic situation on the continent, the international community recognized the reality, depth and gravity of this crisis. It acknowledged that Africa, despite its enormous potential, remains the least developed of all the continents. All the economic indicators set Africa far behind other continents. The crisis has led to a marked fall in per capita income and to stagnant or even negative rates of growth in many countries.

After all the forecasts, the prospects for recovery, growth and development remain extremely precarious, unless the efforts now being undertaken by African

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countries receive full support from the international community. Africa received that support in May 1986 at the special session of the General Assembly. However, nearly a year and a half after adoption of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development, we are bound to note that Africa's partners are at a standstill when it comes to meeting their commitments.

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Meanwhile, Africa, in the framework of this undertaking of joint responsibility, has adopted structural adjustment programmes and recovery measures at the cost of incalculable sacrifices. Despite the already encouraging results, African countries have not received from the industrialized countries the aid and assistance necessary for them to achieve true economic recovery.

This continent, which is filled with life and hope, deserves a more positive response from the international community. Africa, which was the cradle of mankind and has contributed very significantly to the development and flourishing of major civilizations, has also, at critical moments in their history, stood at the side of certain now major nations, which it helped to defend and preserve. It is thus only right and just that those nations should now help Africa to overcome its difficulties.

Africa urgently needs assistance, in particular to deal with the most critical agricultural and food situation that it has ever had to face. The recovery of African agriculture is a pre-condition of the development of the continent. Thus, for countries of the Sahel, such as my own, the development strategy is based primarily on agricultural development. This option is clearly reaffirmed in Niger's five-year economic and social development plan for 1987 to 1991, concerning which a round-table meeting of donors was held in Geneva last July. Niger's major partners welcomed the relevance and seriousness of the policies and strategies underlying the economic and social development programmes of my Government. A commitment was made to support them and help give effect to them. I reaffirm the deep gratitude of the people and leaders of Niger to all our partners.

In this key sector, agriculture, we have to face the adverse natural conditions, struggle against the disastrous consequences of drought and desertification in the Sahel and establish the hydro-agricultural infrastructures

(Mr. Sani Bako, Niger)

which are indispensable if we are to become self-sufficient in food. The effort we have to make is therefore considerable, but we are determined to make it. Among the many initiatives taken by the Government, which all reflect this determination, I have already mentioned the Maradi commitment, which marked the birth of the master plan for combating desertification and drought of the countries members of the Permanent Inter-State Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS) and the organization of genuine mobilization of the people to combat the phenomena of degradation of the environment.

Niger welcomes, in this respect, the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development, under the chairmanship of Mrs. Brundtland, the Prime Minister of Norway. This report rightly notes the indissoluble link between protection of the environment and the well-being of mankind. It is impossible to divorce the problems of the environment from economic and development questions. We endorse the conclusions of the World Commission which are in keeping with those of the "Silva" conference held in February 1986 in Paris. It must be admitted that if we do not draw up here and now a really sustained policy of protection of the environment covering both agricultural production and livestock and action to combat desertification, we shall be endangering the very basis of the future of all of us. The tragic effects of desertification in the Sahel, and particularly in Niger, prove that every time the balance between man and his natural environment is disrupted the vicious cycle of drought and hunger become a constant fact of life.

It is in this context that we must consider the farming season this year in Niger, which is causing us great concern and giving us very little cause for hope. A very late rainy season and rainfall which was badly distributed both in area and in time have made it impossible for us to meet our food needs for the coming year. According to the estimates of our technical services, we shall have a

(Mr. Sani Bako, Niger)

deficit in cereals of approximately 350,000 tons at the end of the current farming season. However, provision to meet this deficit has already been made by my Government both using its own resources and through the generous support of the international community.

Thus, we need to buy seed, fertilizer and ploughing and irrigation equipment. Above all, in a country where more than half the land is desert, we need to mobilize all available energies to halt the advance of the desert, prevent sand storms from covering over the few oases that exist or destroying the scarce layers of fertile or cultivable soil.

These are the concerns of the people of Niger. It is clear from all the speeches that I have heard since the opening of this session that they are also the concerns of many other nations of the world hungry for peace, freedom and progress. These hopes give particular value to the activities that we are pursuing here.

President Seyni Kountche said from this rostrum:

"Together with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the United Nations Charter is certainly the finest, the most noble and the most relevant resolution that mankind has ever adopted." (A/36/PV.25, p.27)

It is all this because it embodies all our hopes and makes this forum the irreplaceable setting within which to achieve them.

Mr. BASSOLE (Burkina Faso) (interpretation from French): I wish first, Sir, to congratulate you on your election to the vice-presidency of the forty-second session of the General Assembly. I should be grateful if you would be good enough to convey to Ambassador Peter Florin the congratulations of our delegation on his election to the presidency of the forty-second session of the General Assembly. That election is a tribute both to his talents as a veteran

(Mr. Bassolé, Burkina Faso)

diplomat and to his country, the German Democratic Republic, with which Burkina Faso enjoys the best possible relations. It is with genuine pleasure that I thus offer you both my congratulations and those of my delegation.

Furthermore, I wish to pay a sincere and well-deserved tribute to Mr. Humayun Rasheed Choudhury, who presided so successfully over the forty-first session.

I take this opportunity to reaffirm our active support and encouragement for the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, and an appreciation of his ceaseless and tireless efforts to defend the noble ideals of our Organization.

We meet here each year to exchange views and consider together international problems and matters of common interest. We meet to seek together solutions to our problems, not only those that divide us but also those faced by each of our States individually.

Unfortunately, year after year, we have gradually found ourselves in a Tower of Babel, in which the most varied languages mingle: the voice of the West, the voice of the East, the voice of the Non-Aligned, the voice of the aligned of the non-aligned - all are heard in the ensuing cacophony.

(Mr. Bassolé, Burkina Faso)

Feelings of fraternity and friendship are long since dead. They have given way to the arguments of force and the language of material interests. The conduct of the economically and militarily powerful nations convinces us more and more finally each day that in the court of the international community one is guilty or innocent depending on whether one is powerful or weak. Equality, sovereignty and independence are more and more becoming words devoid of meaning.

I should like to make some simple observations to illustrate this point: first, let us take participation in the general debate at the annual sessions. At these we see that the General Assembly Hall is crammed when certain delegations speak and empties with deplorable rapidity when their statements are over. To listen to these same speakers our various delegations attend in force with as many people as possible; but how many of those same delegations will be represented in this Hall by the Minister, or even by the Permanent Representative, when it comes the turn of Burkina Faso or any of the small States to make their contribution to our debate? This conduct is not without significance. It is actually the deliberate assertion of the superiority of some over others. What else could it be, when luncheons and dinners are organized in honour of African, Asian and Latin American delegations, to which they are actually invited by those who have not even bothered to come and listen to them?

Africa is indeed suffering from hunger, as are Asia and Latin America. This is a grim reality on which we cannot turn our backs and of which we are trying to rid ourselves, but what our different continents are really suffering from is hunger for justice, liberty, independence and dignity. The sessions of the General Assembly should constitute special opportunities where a mutually enriching exchange takes place, not a jungle where might is right.

(Mr. Bassolé, Burkina Faso)

Rhetorical hurly-burly, the cut-and-thrust debate, are very far from reflecting the vigorous and dynamic give-and-take which should be the form our discussions take. And this testifies to the burning desire we all share, to transform our world to serve the well-being of our peoples.

Our Organization can be effective and work for peace in the world only when it is agreed in this very place to give each of our States, particularly the most underprivileged of them, the consideration they merit, not on account of what they wish they could be, but on account of what they are.

I have chosen to open my statement with these somewhat, as it may appear to some, unusual words, because the inability to produce appropriate solutions to the problems besetting our world is nothing more than a true reflection of the state of our morale. As sessions succeed sessions, as statements follow statements, the chaotic situation of the world shows no visible sign of improvement: there are the same hotbeds of tension; the same crying imbalances; the same injustices; the same fears continue to weigh upon us.*

In spite of all we have said, President Samora Machel fell victim to our irresolution and inconsistency. Glory and honour to his memory! This dastardly and barbarous crime will not even have touched the consciences of those who set themselves up as the policemen of the world.

In southern Africa there persists a situation which is an offence to human dignity, to the rules of international law, and to our Organization. The abominable Pretoria régime has succeeded in numbing the conscience of the international community and in reducing it to apathy in the face of the indescribable sufferings caused by apartheid and the odious crimes which it commits.

* The President returned to the Chair.

(Mr. Bassolé, Burkina Faso)

every day. Otherwise, how to explain the fact that apartheid, a crime against humanity, as it has been branded here, cannot be punished as such?

While some handle the situation with kid gloves, or refuse to get involved, the minority, because it is white, oppresses and does violence to, and even slaughters without scruple the majority, whose sole crime is that they are black. In this hell, the freedom fighters and the martyred black people of South Africa continue their stoic struggle.

The recent strikes, which led to the foreseeable consequence of the firing of many workers, the murder of women and children and of members of the black opposition, are the latest testimony to the determination of the majority to triumph over apartheid at whatever price.

The Burkinabe revolution, for its part, is resolutely committed to the support of those fighting for freedom and dignity. Thus our people has channelled its assistance to its South African brothers through an anti-apartheid struggle fund made up of voluntary contributions. Furthermore, arrangements have been made to convene in Ouagadougou, from 8 to 11 October 1987 - in just a few days, in fact - an anti-apartheid forum. The organizing committee for this international forum is known as Bambata, in memory of the valiant South African fighter so basely murdered by the Pretoria criminals. This international meeting will we hope help to awaken the peoples of the world to the relentless struggle being waged so valiantly by the African National Congress and other liberation movements in South Africa to put an end to the heinous system of apartheid.

Burkina Faso, which shares the ideals of the freedom fighters in their bid to establish a multiracial and democratic society, believes, for its part, that a South Africa freed from apartheid will be of invaluable assistance for the rehabilitation and enhancement of human dignity.

(Mr. Bassolé, Burkina Faso)

In this regard, permit me, as we have done in the past with regard to other countries, to welcome the decision of Canada to apply sanctions and if necessary to go so far as to break off diplomatic relations with the racist régime of South Africa.

In spite of all we have said, South Africa has remained deaf to our words. In Namibia, the symbol of the powerlessness of our Organization, South Africa, with the aid of its imperialist allies and flouting Security Council resolution 435 (1978), continues to plunder the wealth and trample under foot the rights of the peoples to self-determination. Burkina Faso reiterates its support for the South West Africa People's Organization, the sole representative of the valiant Namibian people. Similarly, Burkina Faso reaffirms its support and active solidarity with the African brothers in the front line who, every day, are suffering from the destabilizing attacks of the Pretoria racist régime launched from Namibian territory, without those who dominate us and believe they have a world mission, even deigning to lift a finger.

In spite of all we have said, we have been unable to prevent the explosion of the situation in Chad. This situation is of the greatest concern to my country, because, without doubt, it constitutes a threat to peace and security in Africa. All peace-loving nations, particularly the members of the Organization of African Unity, must do everything in their power to create the necessary conditions for national unity in Chad, by the withdrawal of foreign troops and by the halting of all forms of foreign intervention.

It is, in any case, from this standpoint, that Burkina Faso is making mediation efforts between the fraternal States of Libya and Chad, and also among the various opposing factions in the Chadian political arena.

(Mr. Bassolé, Burkina Faso)

At a time when all of us are striving to do our very best to serve peace wherever it is threatened or breached, to do the work of reconciliation and to ensure that the Chadians and Libyans choose the force of argument over the argument of brutal and blind force, it is simply regrettable that - here in this very Hall - certain delegations are still exploiting the sufferings of these two countries by making unconstructive statements.

(Mr. Bassolé, Burkina Faso)

I say that because, if it had been that easy to decide between two States facing a frontier problem inherited from colonialism, Burkina Faso and Mali would have avoided a fratricidal war.

Let us therefore leave it to the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and give them time to pursue their efforts. The results reached by our organization at Lusaka show, if evidence is needed, that to restore confidence and peace between those two fraternal States is not beyond Africa's power, only provided that there is a will to put an end to external interference.

On the question of Western Sahara, Burkina Faso's position has not changed. Here again, more than a decade of discussion has done nothing to bring about the necessary solutions. My country hopes that Morocco will do everything necessary to make possible the success of the Secretary-General's endeavour.

We have for many years now spoken of the Middle East, in particular of the occupied Arab and Palestinian territories where the same misery persists. Yet we continue to watch, powerless or passive, or perhaps both, the application of the principle that might is right - in this case the might belongs to the Israeli occupier. Here, again, our Organization has not succeeded in granting the Palestinian people its inalienable right to an independent and sovereign State. Here, too, the powerful countries of the world have never felt it necessary to try to bring Israel to its senses by any kind of constraint.

Lebanon is dying slowly - and that in spite of all we have said. More than ever we have grounds for fearing that external interference will jeopardize the very existence of the Lebanese State and the sovereignty of its people. Burkina Faso hopes that President Gemayel's appeal, made here last September, will be heeded and that, consequently, there will be as soon as possible the withdrawal of all foreign troops - with the exception, of course, of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL).

(Mr. Bassolé, Burkina Faso)

We have been speaking for nine years now about the hotbed of tension created by the fratricidal war between Iran and Iraq; today it is the focus of attention. The world is preoccupied by it. People are talking, without the slightest embarrassment, of an embargo. No one seems to be worried or to take into account what we have said. The argument of force has become a necessity to which my country has resolutely refused to subscribe, because the motive behind this attitude is not to put an end to the loss of human life and economic damage caused by nine years of armed confrontation, nor to preserve peace in the region, but to protect certain interests. I should like to remind representatives that when the question of mining Nicaraguan ports was raised there were not too many persons around who wanted to put matters right.

However, we can only reiterate our urgent appeals to those two countries, to which we are bound by our common membership of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Organization of the Islamic Conference, to halt hostilities and prevent others from exploiting them to lead the world into an irretrievable situation.

We take this opportunity to welcome the Secretary-General's efforts to bring peace to that part of the world. The contribution my country has always attempted to make to the search for a final solution to this conflict is aimed, first and above all, at preserving our Organization's credibility. Halting hostilities - something my country earnestly hopes for - is not and cannot be exclusive of the objective establishment of the responsibilities of the parties to the conflict.

Peace in Asia remains seriously jeopardized owing to the situation in Kampuchea. We can only hope for the rapid establishment of an honourable peace for all.

(Mr. Bassolé, Burkina Faso)

The peaceful reunification of Korea has not yet come about, although we have been talking about it every year. The efforts undertaken to transform our quest into reality have been undermined by divisive forces emanating from outside Korea.

In Afghanistan recent manifestations of national reconciliation give us grounds for hoping that that hotbed of tension will soon be extinguished. That process can only be helped by the withdrawal of Soviet troops.

We have been speaking out for many years. But because we are small and have no means of coercion the arms race has been going full steam ahead. Today it has reached pinnacles which are indeed frightening to those who yesterday were undertaking it with relish. Now the need is to disarm.

As I stressed here last year, mankind's greatest tragedy at the end of the twentieth century is what superarmament, particularly with nuclear weapons, has wrought. Indeed, apart from the fear caused in those who are able to measure its consequences, there is the grim reality that the arms race has devoured vast human and material resources - the very resources we should be devoting to general and complete disarmament. In this context, our hopes of seeing these resources placed at the service of development are becoming rather slim.

Among the problems that this year are still undermining our world is the international economic crisis resulting from the imbalance in relations between industrialized and developing countries. Its main factors are: a hostile international environment, ever worsening terms of trade, continued decline in commodity prices, an alarming reduction in the flow of financial resources, and problems of external debt and its servicing. This last factor is without doubt the key to the crisis, because its solution, owing to a chain effect, would lead to the solution of the other factors.

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(Mr. Bassolé, Burkina Faso)

Burkina Faso, whose position on this is well known, nevertheless believes that if the debt problem is to be the subject of a compromise in view of the present tendency of the debtor countries this problem will be solved by an indexation of repayments pegged to export earnings, an indexation that would take account of both the capacity to repay and the development effort of the debtor.

It is clear that the current context of crisis and imbalance in the world economy make even more difficult the task of development of countries like Burkina Faso.

The process of intensive development laid down two years ago to give our country an economic infrastructure still remains at the mercy of natural calamities, in spite of efforts and sacrifices made at the national level. For example, a drought is always possible, as is an invasion of locusts; and we are also at the mercy of international financing. In spite of those difficulties we have every hope of achieving certain objectives, including the creation of a communications infrastructure to help in opening up the country, and food self-sufficiency by a consistent water-supply policy and by placing emphasis on the modernization the agriculture and livestock sectors, setting up an agro-industry and, above all, fighting desertification.

With regard to the last point, it is worth pointing out that for two years now our people have been waging an intensive struggle to restore the equilibrium of the ecosystem. That action has been undertaken on three fronts and has been known as "the three struggles". The first is a series of measures to put an end to a traditional practice which is eroding the vegetation cover: these are bush fires usually caused by peasants in the course of hunting or clearing fields. The second is an attempt to regulate the uncontrolled collecting of fire-wood in order to protect trees and forests. The third struggle concerns the moving around of

(Mr. Bassolé, Burkina Faso)

animals which, owing to the effect of unorganized pasturing, is causing the destruction of the flora.

Furthermore, and still in the area of the struggle against desertification, Burkina Faso envisages a vast programme of reafforestation. This is a green-belt project, because it consists of "ringing" the zone most heavily affected by drought with a wooded strip that could be as broad as 25 kilometres to prevent the advance of the desert.

(Mr. Bassolé, Burkina Faso)

In view of its scope, such a programme will require vast resources for its implementation and these are not fully available to my country. It remains our hope that the international community will participate, effectively and efficiently, in implementing this project, the importance of which is, I am sure, clear to everyone.

In the implementation of our development process there is a factor to which Burkina Faso gives absolute priority, namely, the integration of women into all sectors.

On 8 March 1987 in Ouagadougou we celebrated the International Day of Women. On that occasion the President of the National Council of Revolution, the President of our country, Comrade Thomas Sankara, announced the forthcoming adoption of a national action plan for the Burkinabe woman. This plan of action, and I quote the President:

"far from being a catalogue of pious wishes, has to be the lightening conductor for the intensification of revolutionary action".

This will testify once again to the great importance which our people intends in future to attach to the full and total integration of women into the development process of our country.

In order to ensure effective respect for this commitment, statistics will be drawn up which will necessarily indicate the part of the actions undertaken which are of benefit or concern to women. To do so - and again I quote our President:

"the question of women must be borne in mind by all decision makers at all times at all stages of the conception and execution of development action, because to conceive of a development project without the participation of women is to make use of only four fingers when you have ten, and is courting failure."

(Mr. Bassolé, Burkina Faso)

We therefore hope that very soon, Burkinabe women, finally freed from the constraints and shackles of traditional society, will be able to take any job, practise any profession, except of course the "oldest profession in the world" - prostitution. Indeed, in the face of the degradation of women involved in prostitution, a campaign has been begun for the rehabilitation of prostitutes.

This same concern for rehabilitation inspired the campaign and accompanying measures with regard to the problem of begging. Solidarity courses have been organized in the principal towns of Burkina to take in beggars, and action has been undertaken to give those of them in a position to make use of it a minimum of job training.

Both in the fight against prostitution and in the fight against begging, our aim is to improve our social habits and build for the future a new society in which men and women on an equal footing, healthy in body and mind, will live happy and dignified lives.

In this new society that is being built, we should like men and women to have a healthy attitude with regard to our state of underdevelopment. Some have denigrated our decision to make use in our wearing apparel of our traditional home-grown cotton instead of the usual imported cloth. This, like the decision to consume as little as possible of imported foods and replace them by national substitutes, is something that is covered by the watchwords "Buy Burkinabe".

Apart from the fact that this reflex is aimed essentially at awakening in the conscience of each of us a duty to protect a fragile economy because we consume too many imported products, to the detriment of national products, such conduct, if it is undertaken, cannot but have an impact on our agricultural production and our industrial production. So "buying Burkinabe" will go hand-in-hand with "producing Burkinabe". What could be more natural in the normal process of development?

(Mr. Bassolé, Burkina Faso)

We have spoken, and this despite the fact that the virtue of words has not sufficed to teach us wisdom or to inculcate in us a desire for action. It has been thus because our words have rarely been accompanied by the necessary weight to translate them into concrete action. It has been thus because very often we have spoken one way and acted just the opposite.

It has been thus because, hypocritically, we have left to a Secretary-General, beset and overwhelmed by all the problems I have just described, the difficult task of ensuring the implementation of our decisions and resolutions, which we seem often to be busily undermining.

It has been thus because those who have mastered science and technology have more often than not placed man at the service of progress rather than progress at the service of man.

This gloomy finding should not, however, lead us into inaction. For our part, we feel that the opposite is true, because in revolution is action. It is on behalf of our revolutionary faith, on behalf of our unshakeable faith in the qualitative transformation of man that we have come and tried to communicate here with the utmost candour what we feel about the problems confronting mankind and how we view the current problems facing humanity.

We hope then that at this forty-second session the General Assembly will pay more attention to constructive action than to the formulation of pious wishes and that in so doing our Organization will resolutely set out on a path that will make it possible in the near future for inequalities to be done away with, for injustice to be remedied, for fears to be overcome and for hotbeds of tension to be eliminated.

ADDRESS BY COMMANDER DESIRE D. BOUTERSE, HEAD OF GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SURINAME

The PRESIDENT: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Head of Government of the Republic of Suriname.

Commander Desire D. Bouterse, Head of Government of the Republic of Suriname,
was escorted to the rostrum.

The PRESIDENT: I have great pleasure in welcoming the Head of Government of the Republic of Suriname, His Excellency Commander Desire D. Bouterse, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. BOUTERSE (Suriname): I come before this General Assembly for the third time to complete a story which I began to tell just one year ago.

I come before you today because in my country, as in many countries around the world, the promise of freedom is held sacred.

I come before you today because just two days ago the people of Suriname made their voices heard; they expressed a desire for a new life and a new beginning. I come before you today to tell you that the people of Suriname have just written their own Constitution.

(Mr. Bouterse, Suriname)

I come before you today because the seeds of revolutionary change planted in 1980 are bearing fruit and nourishing the lives of the people of Suriname. The people of Suriname are on the eve of choosing their representatives through free and fair elections, on the basis of their Constitution.

Our history since 1980 has been one of turbulence, of endeavouring to chart a course consistent with the wants and needs of our people. We are a country with a past similar to that of many of you. Suriname was a colony, ruled by a distant Government which viewed our people and our natural wealth as their rightful property. The very diverse cultures which comprise our society were exploited, and the tensions between them deliberately and maliciously cultivated to prevent the development of a unified nation. This delayed our independence and, when self-determination was realized, remnants of our past continued to hinder our growth.

In 1980 steps were taken finally to erase the stains of our colonial subservience. We could no longer sit idle while the fabric of Surinamese society was disintegrating and decaying. So some of us acted, not without provocation, and certainly not for purposes of personal grandeur. Our cause was the sanctity of Suriname, our goal was the betterment and prosperity of its people. At that time, in 1980, the military pledged to return control to a civilian government. We stated then that such a transition would take place when the social, economic, political and educational sectors of society had been reformed to accommodate a new Suriname, one which was capable of addressing the needs of all its citizens, rich and poor, Creole, Amerindian, European, Asian and African.

As I have stated before in this Assembly, the process of nation-building in a country with a colonial past and a multi-ethnic population is a sensitive and difficult task. However, today I will offer no excuses, nor will I speak of

(Mr. Bouterse, Suriname)

obstacles still impeding our progress. For today it is my honour to reaffirm our pledge of seven years ago and introduce to the world a free and democratic Republic of Suriname.

Two days ago, in the presence of international observers, our Constitution was approved. It is a document which was carved from the accumulated history, experiences and knowledge of our people. Several years ago a civil dialogue was begun which tapped the enormous resources of our community. It called upon representatives from a wide variety of political, social and economic interests. The energy we tapped from that body, and our thirst for a true democratic society, were transformed into a National Assembly, adding to the discussion formality and legitimacy. This was not merely a gesture of goodwill on the part of the Government; the creation of that body was an act necessitated by the maturation of Suriname's body-politic; it was an act of love for the land which is Suriname and an act of faith in the hopes and abilities of its people.

The National Assembly set out to draft a document which would form the foundation for a free and open Suriname. The document, which has been ratified by the people, finds its strength and validity in the widest range of political participation in the country's history. It is a law from the people, for the people. And on 25 November, just weeks from today, general elections will be held and an era of civilian control will commence.

The army is ready and willing to accept the results of this process and is committed to defending and securing the national integrity and sovereignty of Suriname against intervention and interference.

These are historic times for the people of Suriname. But they have not been attained without sweat, sacrifice and, unfortunately, the loss of lives. The path to democracy has been laden with numerous and unforeseen obstacles. Through the

(Mr. Bouterse, Suriname)

course of our journey, we have encountered the vagaries of the international economy; we have dealt with the uncertainty of charting a course which diverts from our colonial past; and most regrettably, we have faced the bullets of those who sought to undermine our efforts. It is this last hurdle which proves most distressing for the Surinamese people. For in combating these parasites, innocent men, women, and children have been struck down, caught in the crossfire of a conflict they detested but found themselves powerless to escape.

(Mr. Bouterse, Suriname)

This fighting has exacerbated the economic woes which were unforeseen and unjustly imposed upon our country. When the last vestiges of colonialism saw fit to hold economic stability hostage to the direction of internal policy, they condemned the people of Suriname to a future of uncertainty and hardship. In the wake of this callous action, violence erupted. The perpetrators did not act out of some lofty quest for prosperity, but out of an obsession for personal vengeance and as stooges of colonialism. The people of East Suriname saw no alternative but to flee the country for neighbouring French Guiana, seeking refuge from a war which was fracturing their existence. We should like these people to return to their homes. They are citizens of Suriname and should feel secure in their own country. We have called upon the International Committee of the Red Cross, in consultation with the Government of France, to assist in this process on a permanent basis. But, most importantly, we must demand that those Governments and parties supporting or encouraging the violence in our country immediately stop their actions. The lives being lost are not being lost for any cause at all - our people are dying in vain.

In the name of democracy, external Powers supported and encouraged a continuation of this senseless violence. Behind the barrel of a gun they pretended to bring democracy to Suriname. They have committed themselves to the disruption of the process which is currently under way, a process that is proving so successful and is cherished so much by the people of Suriname. How, then, can democracy be a goal of those who support terrorism in the Republic of Suriname? How, for that matter, can terrorism serve the people anywhere in the world?

At this point I take the opportunity of expressing the gratitude of the Surinamese people to those countries that have variously supported us in our plight; at the same time, we look forward to increasing understanding and support from other nations.

(Mr. Bouterse, Suriname)

I wish to pause here to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to preside over the forty-second session of the United Nations General Assembly. I am sure that under your guidance and leadership many of the crises facing the world will be dealt with in a rational, prudent and effective manner.

I take this opportunity also to congratulate Mr. Choudhury of Bangladesh on the outstanding way in which he presided over the last session of the General Assembly. To our congratulations we want to add our best wishes for his future endeavours.

My friends, there is trouble all around us. Brother is fighting brother in the Middle East, Asia and Central America. Repression continues in its most barbaric forms in southern Africa. And it was inevitable that so far most representatives in the General Assembly should have dealt with these major international crises. And while the scope and nature of these crises would justify lengthy discussion, on this occasion it will suffice for us to refer to our contributions at previous sessions of the Assembly.

The Government of Suriname commends the efforts of the Central American Presidents to bring about a regional peace treaty.

We whole-heartedly endorse the efforts of the Security Council and of Secretary-General Perez de Cuellar to find a peaceful solution to the conflict in the Gulf.

Like the people of the rest of the world, the Surinamese people have welcomed the concrete steps taken by the super-Powers towards the lessening of the nuclear threat. But any form of international peace that is achieved can be sustained only if the resources thus released are used to recreate the international economic order. The suffering part of mankind cannot find relief in the absence of a nuclear threat alone.

(Mr. Bouterse, Suriname)

Now, however, I must return to the question I posed just moments ago: what is democracy, and how can such a noble objective lead to the violence and death which pervade too many of our lands? Democracy can mean many different things to many different people. By strict definition, democracy represents the principles of social equality and respect for the individual. Those are simple-enough concepts. Yet they are so difficult to realize. Democracy is an abstract idea which is not easily grasped. It is a fragile state of being which must be nurtured, cultivated, taught. If stretched to its limits unnaturally, it deteriorates into chaos and lawlessness. But if it is not permitted to blossom and take on characteristics unique to its adherents, it lacks the strength and vitality to be fruitful. There is no monopoly of wisdom in this world; nor is there a monopoly of virtue. Each one of our nations strives to realize a degree of national freedom and dignity consistent with its concept of democracy. It is a system whereby opposing and divergent views may flourish or perish on the merit of their wisdom.

(Mr. Bouterse, Suriname)

To the great Powers of the world I repeat that. There is no monopoly on wisdom; nor is there a monopoly on virtue.

Further, I say the following to them. You possess tremendous attributes and have harnessed the most awesome and fearsome powers on earth. Yet too often you lack the simple capacity for understanding and empathy. You insist that your way is the right way and spurn those who seek to discover truth for themselves. I beseech you not to prejudge, but to permit the developing nations of the world the same opportunities as you had. So many of us in the Non-Aligned Movement want only to venture down a path of our own choosing. Yet too often first steps are marred by the norms established by both sides of the rhetorical battle. If your concern for our future were based on a genuine concern for the welfare of our people, the intrusion might be more palatable.

There is so much we can teach you and, of course, we can learn from you. But for this transfer to take place, for this union to occur, there must be mutual trust and respect. This cannot be fostered in an atmosphere of fear and ideological self-righteousness.

You, the leading members of the international community, can guide the world to a more stable and lasting peace. Your wealth should not be used as a political tool to force compliance with your policies or adherence to your beliefs. If your positions are sound and well-founded, time will bear this out. Aid for development is the key with which to unlock the cultural, historical and, of course, economic riches which so many of our countries possess, but which lie unexplored and unutilized. The misunderstanding which plagues so much of the international arena, the political aggression which manifests itself in violence, and the economic plight which threatens not only the smaller debtor nations but the entire world

(Mr. Bouterse, Suriname)

community are merely symptoms of unwillingness to compromise with peoples of different minds.

In this regard, I make the following appeal to representatives of the international media covering today's proceedings. Their words and perspectives reach millions and shape the opinions of the world's inhabitants. The burdens weighing upon a country and its people can be lessened if the lines of communication are kept open and are kept free of sensational journalism aimed at increasing circulation rather than airing both sides of a controversy. I urge them to realize and accept the awesome responsibility of their position and act in an honourable and just manner.

In Suriname we are embarking on a new phase of our life an important aspect of which is our endeavour really to become an organic part of the Latin American and Caribbean region. I extend my Government's heartfelt appreciation to those who have aided us throughout our struggle. Naturally, we will learn from our trials and tribulations, and in the phase that we have now entered we will, in dealing with both domestic and foreign issues, take chances which can lead to broader understanding and co-operation. Without genuine respect, understanding and co-operation, the future of mankind is destined to be far more difficult than we imagine and we will achieve much less than each of our nations now envisages.

I came before the Assembly, Mr. President, mainly to set the record of my country straight - the record of our past, our present and our future. We know that the expectations of happiness and prosperity of the people of Suriname are the same as those of all the peoples of our world, and that is no wonder, for they reflect the noble goals enshrined in the Charter of our Organization, the United Nations. We, like the rest of the world, are therefore justified in expecting all possible support from this Organization in achieving our goals.

(Mr. Bouterse, Suriname)

While it will take some time to solve all our major problems, we hope that our noble Organization, the United Nations, will before long be in a position to present to the world encouraging beginnings of solutions that are long overdue.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Head of Government of the Republic of Suriname for the important statement he has just made.

Mr. Désiré D. Bouterse, Head of Government of the Republic of Suriname, was escorted from the rostrum.

The meeting rose at 6.20 p.m.