



General Assembly

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A/42/PV.24

7 October 1987

1987 E57

ENGLISH

UNITED NATIONS

Forty-second session

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE TWENTY-FOURTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 5 October 1987, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. FLORIN (German Democratic Republic)

- Adoption of the agenda and organization of work [8]: (continued)
- General debate [9]: (continued)

Statements were made by:

Mr. Lopez Contreras (Honduras)
Mr. Cabral (Guinea-Bissau)

Address by Mr. Arthur N. R. Robinson, Prime Minister of the Republic of
Trinidad and Tobago

Mr. Abdoun (Sudan)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 8 (continued)

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK: SECOND REPORT OF THE GENERAL COMMITTEE (A/42/250/Add.1)

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Russian): In paragraphs 1 (a) and (b) of its report the General Committee recommends the inclusion in the agenda of an additional sub-item entitled "Appointment of members of the International Civil Service Commission" and its allocation to the Fifth Committee.

May I take it that the General Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Russian): The Chairman of the Fifth Committee will be informed of the decision just taken.

We now turn to paragraph 2 of the General Committee's report.

On the basis of the recommendation of the Committee on Conferences, the General Committee recommends that the General Assembly should authorize the Committee on Applications for Review of Administrative Tribunal Judgements to meet during the forty-second session of the Assembly.

May I take it that the General Assembly approves that recommendation of the General Committee?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Russian): We have thus concluded consideration of the second report of the General Committee.

AGENDA ITEM 9 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. LOPEZ CONTRERAS (Honduras) (interpretation from Spanish): On behalf of the Government of Honduras I extend to you, Sir, sincere congratulations on your election as President of the forty-second session of the General Assembly. Your personal qualities and your knowledge of this world Organization guarantee wise and successful guidance of the Assembly's work. We should also like to express our appreciation to Mr. Humayun Rasheed Choudhury, the representative of Bangladesh, who preceded you in your important functions.

To the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, I wish once again to express my Government's great appreciation for his outstanding work in charge of the Organization.

The democratic Government of Honduras, presided over by José Azcona, constantly reaffirms its commitment to peace, development and democracy.

It should be seen as an encouraging sign that in Central America, torn by violence and political radicalization, my country is fighting resolutely for political freedom and economic and social well-being. This is so because the Honduran Government has set as its primary objectives improved living standards for the people and the consolidation and development of democracy as a system of life and of Government.

These goals are faithfully reflected in the foreign policy of Honduras. Just as domestically, at the governmental and the private levels, we are endeavouring by peaceful means to overcome the obstacles of underdevelopment, internationally, we are endeavouring to resolve our differences with other countries by resorting to the peaceful means of settling disputes contained in international law.

(Mr. Lopez Contreras, Honduras)

President José Azcona, in his annual message to the National Congress of the Republic, at the beginning of this year stated the following:

"I reaffirm to you that peaceful goals are the standards by which our Government operates. Hence we proclaim that dialogue and the means of international law must prevail for settling disputes among nations. This is how we resolved our border disputes with Guatemala and Nicaragua in the past, and that is why at the present time we have placed our trust in the International Court of Justice in its consideration of the border problem that is pending with the Republic of El Salvador.

"My Government is entirely willing to support any peaceful settlement for the political, ideological and military crisis in Central America. It is for this reason that we have offered and continue to offer full support for negotiations being conducted by the Contadora Group sponsored by Panama, Venezuela, Colombia and Mexico, with its Support Group made up of Argentina, Uruguay, Brazil and Peru."

The Government of Honduras is convinced that resort to the peaceful means of settling disputes is the best guarantee for the maintenance of peace and harmony in the international arena.

My Government notes with just concern that, rather than diminishing, international crises are increasing, emerging one after the other and lasting longer. The use of violence and force seems to be encouraged by certain States with hegemonistic designs, thus diminishing the goal of peace to a simple balance of power.

(Mr. Lopez Contreras, Honduras)

International tension continues to challenge the ability of the United Nations to give effect to the purposes and principles of the Charter. Failure to resolve pending conflicts and the alarming shift of those conflicts to and polarization of the developing countries are true tests of the machinery for world peace and security. It is therefore necessary to strengthen the United Nations in order to strengthen international peace and security.

My Government reaffirms its faith in the world legal order and believes that it provides the best way of putting international standards above the particular interests of each State.

Honduras notes with concern the lack of progress with regard to disarmament and the reduction of arsenals. The possession of large amounts of nuclear arms, on which the present balance of power - or terror - is based, has not provided security, but rather brought us ever closer to the destruction of mankind. Therefore arms limitation cannot be thought of in unilateral terms. It requires verifiable agreements, since in the world in which we live the survival of freedom must no longer be based on the nuclear monopoly or nuclear hegemony of a super-Power.

Great-Power confrontation is an unending drama. The nuclear-arms race continues, despite the hundreds of resolutions on disarmament adopted by the General Assembly. However, a ray of hope has recently appeared on the horizon. Just as last session we expressed our satisfaction at the Reykjavik summit, which took place in October 1986, so today we express our satisfaction at encouraging signs regarding world peace. The United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics are moving nearer to agreement on the elimination of short-range and medium-range missiles in Europe.

(Mr. Lopez Contreras, Honduras)

Other continuing conflicts threaten the system of world peace and security. We reaffirm our conviction that the question of Korea must be resolved peacefully through dialogue and negotiations between South Korea and North Korea. We reiterate that, in accordance with the principle of universality set out in the United Nations Charter, all nations that so desire must be a part of that universality and assume the obligations set forth in the Charter. There must be an end to the legacy of the cold war that persists in the Korean peninsula and in no way contributes to the attainment of international peace and security.

My Government supports the General Assembly resolutions on Kampuchea, which call for the withdrawal of all occupying forces and the restoration of the country's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. In this connection, we strongly support the eight-point proposal for a political settlement presented by the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea to the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam.

The Government of Honduras condemns the armed occupation of Afghanistan and urges all States to reach a political solution based on the unconditional and total withdrawal of foreign forces from Afghanistan, full respect for Afghanistan's political independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, and the adoption of measures guaranteeing the right of the Afghan people to decide its own future without foreign interference, as well as on the return of Afghan refugees to their homes.

In view of the unfortunate events recently experienced by the Government of the Philippines, we express our hope that peace and harmony will return to that country so that it can pursue its development in the framework of freedom, justice and democracy.

(Mr. Lopez Contreras, Honduras)

The persistence of the conflict in the Middle East makes it even more essential to find a lasting solution through the peaceful means of negotiations. Honduras views with satisfaction the efforts of the State of Israel and the Arab Republic of Egypt to promote peace in the region, strengthen the peace treaty between them and resolve outstanding problems. We believe those efforts are important for the prospects of peace with other Arab States.

The armed confrontation that has continued for seven years between Iran and Iraq is a very clear example of extreme nationalism compromising world security. That war has not only claimed hundreds of thousands of victims and brought back the use of illegal methods of warfare, but also interfered with freedom of navigation and international maritime trade. My Government hopes that the belligerent States will heed the appeals of the international community for agreement on a peaceful settlement of their conflict.

The Government of Honduras takes this opportunity to reiterate its condemnation of the policy of apartheid of the Government of South Africa, which is a clear violation of human rights.

Once again the Government of Honduras states its sincere hope that the Governments of Argentina and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, countries with which we have traditionally maintained the best of relations, will settle their differences on the highest level of justice, understanding and peace. The Government of Honduras would be most willing to co-operate - if its efforts might prove useful - in the attainment of a speedy settlement of the dispute.

(Mr. Lopez Contreras, Honduras)

One of the objectives of this Organization is the promotion of its purposes and principles through regional co-operation, which finds its reflection in various kinds of co-operation with other intergovernmental organization. We are pleased that an item has been included in the agenda of the present session relating to co-operation between the United Nations and the Organization of American States. This is the result of an initiative by Honduras, with the support of many other Latin American States. It will surely contribute to the common search for solutions to the many economic, social, cultural and humanitarian problems that beset the international community.

(Mr. Lopez Contreras, Honduras)

Another purpose of the United Nations system is to promote technical co-operation for development, and that is particularly important for my country. In this regard, the Government of Honduras appreciates the many co-operative efforts being made by organs and bodies within the United Nations system; in particular we appreciate what has been done so effectively in Latin America by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

My Government is pleased that the fourth UNDP programme of co-operation for Honduras has been adopted and will support the activities of those organizations in the area of forestry and agriculture, public enterprises working in this area and technical co-operation among developing countries. The fourth programme will make it possible for Honduras to give attention to environmental problems and the protection of natural resources as a matter of priority.

We should like to emphasize that the adoption by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) of the support programme for the new period is important to Honduras. It will make possible the adoption of a number of basic programmes protecting mothers and children in Honduras.

We also welcome the design for the new five-year programme covering population activities.

In keeping with its humanitarian traditions, since 1979 about 200,000 persons have sought refuge in Honduras. They have been drawn there by a climate of peace and freedom, having fled from political and social violence in their countries. About 47,000 of those refugees have been receiving assistance from the international community - they deserve its recognition - and from other organizations.

My country has also received much assistance at the international level from other friendly countries to help refugees. But the flow of refugees continues and will continue until a climate propitious to their return home has been created.

(Mr. Lopez Contreras, Honduras)

The promotion and respect of human rights is one of the primary purposes of the United Nations. However, the international community continues to witness barbaric acts violating human rights, freedoms, man's dignity and fundamental rights. It is therefore urgent that the international community take concerted action and wage a broad campaign against terrorism, which threatens domestic and international peace and can by no means be justified.

My Government is convinced that those nations professing faith in human rights have a legal and moral obligation to protect them and to condemn the countries which inexcusably and repeatedly violate them.

Once again in the United Nations we shall consider the item entitled "The situation in Central America: threats to international peace and security and peace initiatives", which has already been the subject of a number of General Assembly resolutions. We believe that to carry out a proper analysis of the crisis in Central America it is important to understand its origins and political and social development. It is necessary to understand the colonial, federal and republican backgrounds of Central America which have led to the present economic, social, political and security situation. The accumulation of those events in the history of Central America has led to the social tension and internal struggles besetting the countries of the region today, and now the crisis has come to the periphery of East-West confrontation.

Internal conflicts in certain countries have led to a massive exodus of refugees, whose repatriation must be undertaken in keeping with the commitments to national reconciliation. This cannot be delayed, lest economic and social problems become more acute. Of late, one of the primary receiving countries of refugees has been Honduras.

The persistence of these internal conflicts has caused irreparable harm to economies, productive investments, and the social and security balance in

(Mr. Lopez Contreras, Honduras)

neighbouring countries; armed opposition movements have tried to use border areas as sanctuaries and all too frequently those actions have led to claims, protests, tensions and even armed raids such as those suffered by Honduras in March and December 1986. Those raids have prompted the Honduran army to expel aggressor forces from our national territory.

The arms race is another force disruptive to peace in Central America; it too has led to growing insecurity in the region. The Government of Honduras has insisted that the arms race be halted, that armaments be limited and military forces reduced - all under effective international control.

Given the abnormal situation now prevailing in Central America, Honduras has endeavoured to assume a dispassionate and thoughtful position in its relations with neighbouring countries. Our foreign policy has been realistic, forthright and free of undue passion.

In January 1987 the countries of Central America were honoured by the visit of the Secretaries-General of the United Nations and the Organization of American States (OAS), who met with the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the countries of the Contadora and Support Groups.

(Mr. Lopez Contreras, Honduras)

Those distinguished visitors informed the Central American Heads of State of their concern at the crisis afflicting Central America. The Honduran Government, which fully appreciated the visit, expressed its willingness to maintain and consolidate peace by all legal means.

On that occasion, the Secretaries-General indicated that their organizations would co-operate in the settlement of internal disputes and accompanying regional tensions. Their offer was greatly appreciated and proved to be an important contribution towards regional normalization.

When the President of Costa Rica proposed a new peace initiative in February 1987, my Government supported it as a suitable and timely method for maintaining peace in Central America through political negotiation. We also recommended that the peace initiative be implemented in two stages - at the national level, in relation to agreements concerning national reconciliation, that is, on a cease-fire, amnesty, democratization, supervision and control; and at the international level with the participation of the Contadora Group and the Support Group, to seek agreement on the following: the cessation of military assistance to insurgents; the non-use of territory for the launching of acts of aggression against other States; disarmament and the relocation of insurgents; limits on and control and reduction of weapons and military advisers; the arms trade; international verification and control; and co-operation on political, economic and security questions.

On 1 August, at the initiative of Honduras, the Foreign Ministers of Central America and the Contadora Group met once again, this time in Tegucigalpa, in order to continue efforts to normalize the situation in the region. We considered the Arias plan, modifications suggested by the Governments and the document entitled "Proposals by Honduras regarding peace initiatives for Central America", which attempted to harmonize the political objectives of democratization included in the

(Mr. Lopez Contreras, Honduras)

plan with a Honduran recommendation that mediation by the Contadora Group be reactivated so that agreements on problems of security could be reached.

That meeting, which represented a milestone in the peace process, culminated in the signing by the Central American Presidents, on 7 August of this year in Guatemala City, of the document entitled "Procedures for the establishment of a firm and lasting peace in Central America". We are pleased that many of the proposals by Honduras regarding peace initiatives in Central America have been included in the Esquipulas II agreement, including that for active mediation by the Contadora Group in security matters.

Three important meetings have been held regarding execution of the commitments embodied in the Guatemala accord - the first in San Salvador, where an executive committee was set up; the second in Caracas, where the International Committee on Verification and Follow-up was created; and the third in Managua, where a framework for action by both committees was decided.

The Executive Committee, composed of the Presidents of Central America and invested with the power to regulate, implement and enforce compliance with the commitments entered into under the Guatemala agreement at the recent meeting in Managua, endeavoured to define principles, guidelines and orientation for the work of the International Committee on Verification and Follow-up, which was assigned the task of enforcing the various commitments entered into by the Governments. Consequently, the Executive Committee will see to it that the International Committee on Verification will have the support and facilities it needs to carry out its task.

Indeed, it is up to the Committee on Verification to ensure the simultaneous implementation of the agreements on amnesty, including those on irregular forces and political prisoners, a cease-fire, democratization, cessation of assistance to

(Mr. Lopez Contreras, Honduras)

insurgent forces and the non-use of territory to carry out acts of aggression against other States.

The number and nature of commitments entered into are not the same for all the parties, for these depend on the political and social situation of each country. Some Governments are called upon to implement all the commitments. Others, such as Honduras, which has avoided much of the social unrest affecting its neighbours, have entered into those parts of the agreement that apply specifically to them.

Central America, by means of the Executive Committee, now has within its control the process of a return to normalcy in countries suffering from civil war and bilateral and multilateral tension.

In order to ensure the success of the process of peace and detente in the region, it is essential that irregular forces fully accept the Guatemala agreement and act in accordance with it. This applies to those forces operating in Nicaragua and El Salvador. After irregular forces publicly accept the agreement, the Governments of Nicaragua and El Salvador must take all necessary action to agree on and implement an effective cease-fire within a constitutional framework.

All the Central American countries must ensure that their territory not be used for acts of aggression against other countries, in regard to material aid as well as to moral and propaganda considerations. Again, this is an obligation that must be fulfilled by States members of the International Committee on Verification and Follow-up and by those States expressing an interest in efforts to normalize the situation in Central America.

The Central American countries having made an international appeal for the cessation of military assistance to irregular forces and insurgents, we trust that it will be accepted and complied with, in good faith, by all the States involved in that type of activity, including those which have stubbornly denied their involvement despite proof to the contrary.

(Mr. Lopez Contreras, Honduras)

The restoration of the equilibrium of security in Central America depends upon our ability to keep out of the East-West conflict. We must recognize that if the regional crisis were not so complex it would not have taken five years of patient negotiations and the contribution of 13 countries and 2 international organizations, 1 regional and 1 world-wide, to bring about its return to normalcy.

Honduras is participating in good faith in the process agreed to in Guatemala, a process based on mutual trust, arising from the premise that all Governments will abide by the commitments they have entered into, as agreed.

The Central American homeland demands democratic peace. For that reason, we trust that the principles of good faith and mutual trust underlying the Guatemala agreement will be strengthened. That can be done by putting an end to certain international juridical situations that represent an unjustifiable threat to such principles and that are incompatible with certain international treaties provided for in the agreement.

An essential part of Esquipulas II is an appeal for the cessation of hostilities. Those Governments of the States that are at present the victims of activities carried out by irregular or insurgent groups have committed themselves to whatever action is necessary to implement a cease-fire within a constitutional framework.

An effective cease-fire is essential for the attainment of peace in those countries suffering from civil war. Once the hostilities are over citizens will, as an inevitable result of socio-political realities, return to normal civil life and take an active part in the democratization of their countries.

Once the hostilities are over, refugees will return to their countries of origin and their homes and give their families the fruit of their work, and the quiet home life that is the cement required to build national tranquillity. Once

(Mr. Lopez Contreras, Honduras)

the hostilities are over, the tensions among neighbouring countries produced by such refugee movements will come to an end. Once the hostilities are over, there will no longer be any need for external assistance provided for the purpose of destabilizing Governments.

The situation in Central America is quite unlike the situation anywhere else in the world. The crisis there should not be viewed as an international conflict in the sense of hostilities among nations. Its essential characteristic is the existence of long-drawn-out civil wars in the region that have given rise to tensions among Governments. Those civil wars must therefore be brought to an end, for they are a threat to peace and security in the region.

May God enlighten the leaders of our countries and the leaders of the irregular forces now involved in those civil wars. May they enter into a patriotic dialogue, and may they reach agreement on an effective cease-fire that will lead to national reconciliation.

Mr. CABRAL (Guinea-Bissau) (interpretation from French): It is a great honour for me to speak in this Assembly on behalf of my country, the Republic of Guinea-Bissau.

Sir, the delegation of Guinea-Bissau, which is familiar with your many qualities and talents, takes special pleasure in congratulating you on your unanimous election to the presidency of the forty-second session of the United Nations General Assembly. This is particularly the case because your country, the German Democratic Republic, with which Guinea-Bissau enjoys relations of friendship and co-operation, has always made a positive contribution to the strengthening and consolidation of the role of the Organization. You may rest assured, therefore, that our delegation will not spare its efforts to co-operate with you.

(Mr. Cabral, Guinea-Bissau)

I should also like to extend to your predecessor, Mr. Choudhury, the Foreign Minister of Bangladesh, my country's gratitude for his distinguished services to the international community during his term of office.

On behalf of the Government of Guinea-Bissau, I should also like to pay a tribute to Mr. Perez de Cuellar and to express to him our gratitude for his vigorous and tireless work at the head of the Organization. Since his election six years ago the Secretary-General has accustomed us to concrete, courageous and intelligent deeds. Our delegation would like to extend to him once again its support in the restructuring of the Secretariat with a view to strengthening the Organization's ability better to respond to the problems facing it.

In this connection, I welcome the appointment of Ambassador Reed as Under-Secretary-General for Political and General Assembly Affairs, and I should like to express to him once again my feelings of friendship and to extend to him my warm wishes for success.

The agreement in principle with regard to the elimination of intermediate-range missiles reached by the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, as well as the announcement of an autumn summit meeting, have raised fresh hopes within the international community.

All of us regard this as the fruit of an earnest desire on the part of the super-Powers to pursue their negotiations successfully and to find grounds therein to encourage them to continue their efforts to arrive at a better understanding and enable them, sooner rather than later, to engage in additional, concrete, complementary and necessary actions to achieve general and complete disarmament. Indeed, disarmament remains the paramount objective, an absolute imperative towards which all States, large, medium-sized or small, must strive with conviction and determination.

(Mr. Cabral, Guinea-Bissau)

The International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development, which concluded its work here only a few weeks ago, highlighted the advantages of more rational utilization of the planet's resources. Indeed, while it is true that every State has the right to take the measures needed to ensure its own defence, nothing can justify over-armament, the cost of which is matched only by its absurdity.

(Mr. Cabral, Guinea-Bissau)

In a world in which the interdependence of peoples is a tangible reality and we all feel both its good and its ill effects, it would be wrong, even harmful, for any country, large or small, to disregard the existence and conditions of life of other peoples, because security is a collective concept which embraces both individual and collective responsibilities.

Most of the problems facing mankind stem from existing disparities, the injustice that still prevails in the world, the intolerance regarding certain cultures and religious beliefs and the failure to respect individual and collective freedoms in many countries.

Today we can only watch helplessly the decline in moral values, which are, however, the very basis of all human society. The use of drugs by a growing number of young people is one of the most tragic aspects of this. My country welcomes the results of the International Conference on Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, held recently in Vienna, and is determined to play its part in the great international offensive against that scourge.

Many countries are now facing such difficulties that their peoples have to struggle furiously simply to survive. The adoption by the Governments concerned of sometimes draconian measures to contain and control the situation has not yet yielded the desired improvements.

The world economy continues to be characterized by an unprecedented structural crisis. With rare exceptions, growth has remained slow in developing countries, where the volume of exports remains limited if indeed it has not fallen dramatically.

Thus, in Africa, a continent assailed by drought and prey to other natural calamities as unforeseeable as they are disastrous, tremendous efforts have been made to improve the standard of living of the peoples. Important reforms

(Mr. Cabral, Guinea-Bissau)

have been undertaken in most African States, including Guinea-Bissau, where vast restructuring has been completed with a view to stabilizing the macro-economic environment. A programme of structural adjustment is under way which embraces, among other things, trade reforms to balance incentives in favour of exports, the adoption of a more realistic rate of exchange and appropriate measures to reduce the budget deficit.

But all these reforms, the success of which requires additional sacrifices on the part of our peoples, may be in vain if the international economic situation does not change. The developing countries are now facing the progressive decline in the prices of commodities and the rise of protectionism. This situation has caused them considerable losses and seriously jeopardizes their development efforts. If international trade prospects do not improve, stagnation, if not actual economic decline, is liable to ensue in those countries. We must therefore prevent the multilateral trade system from continuing to decline. But existing imbalances can be eliminated only if current financial flows are reversed to take into account the real ability of developing countries to face the difficult problem of indebtedness.

The seventh session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) enabled the international community to make progress on a number of the items that we have mentioned. The Final Act of that Conference, which was adopted by consensus, takes into account both the complexity of the debt crisis and the need for the reforms undertaken by debtor countries to be accompanied by an additional input of financial resources on liberal terms. The proposals made by the African Governors at the annual assembly of the International

(Mr. Cabral, Guinea-Bissau)

Monetary Fund and the World Bank, which concluded its work last week in Washington, stem from the same analysis and are designed to meet the same concerns.

As economic theory and the facts show, merely balancing the books does not necessarily mean progress in terms of development. The social and cultural aspect of development must be at the very centre of our concerns, dominate our analyses and underlie the adoption of appropriate measures to promote the progress of our peoples. The interdependence of various world problems from the economic and political standpoint make it incumbent upon us to avoid confrontation and seek harmony through dialogue and common endeavour.

Our delegation shares the concern expressed by the Secretary-General in his masterly report and endorses his conclusions as to the grave risks inherent in the current conflicts.

All the countries represented recognize that there has been no substantial progress towards solving many of the problems affecting the international community. Indeed, in spite of declarations of intent and the many protestations of good faith, the international situation remains precarious and millions of human beings throughout the world continue to be victims of the horrors of war and repression.

In southern Africa, the apartheid régime persists in its policy of domination and racial discrimination, in spite of universal condemnation. The majority of the South African people remain victims of an abominable political system and are exiles in their own country, where the right to exist and live in full dignity is denied them.

The racist régime of South Africa has become a master of the art of evasiveness and provocation and is stepping up its delaying tactics and acts of

(Mr. Cabral, Guinea-Bissau)

intimidation against its neighbours to delay the independence of Namibia. It has resorted to a whole range of subterfuges and promulgated a series of repressive laws with the cynical idea of breaking the ranks of the South African militants and weakening their liberation movement. The South African people who continue to languish in the apartheid gaols expect practical action from the international community that will bring about the necessary changes more rapidly. They demand the immediate and unconditional release of all political prisoners, and in particular Nelson Mandela.

There are countries among us that have the necessary political power, the essential economic and cultural influence and the clear historical moral obligation to play without further delay the role incumbent upon them to achieve the desired end. My country urges them to do this and follows with interest the positive developments under way in some of those countries.

Apartheid must be combated by all. On this question more than on any other, the international community must unite, organize and take action to wipe that odious system from the face of the earth.

The southern African liberation movements must be supported and encouraged in their legitimate struggle, as must the front-line countries, Angola and Mozambique in particular, which are the victims of continuous acts of aggression and destabilization by South Africa. The African National Congress (ANC) has demonstrated to those that might still have doubts its maturity and political intentions and that it is led by responsible people who are aware of and anxious to preserve the equality in law of all South Africans without distinction.

(Mr. Cabral, Guinea-Bissau)

The independence of Namibia can be brought about within the desired time-frame only if the necessary pressures are exerted on South Africa and if all Member States give the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) the constant, resolute support merited by the justice of its cause.

Guinea-Bissau, faithful to its recent past and to the principles of freedom and democracy, will continue to support actively and in solidarity the struggle of the peoples of southern Africa for their right to dignity.

(Mr. Cabral, Guinea-Bissau)

Still in Africa, but closer to Guinea-Bissau, there is the question of Western Sahara and the conflict between Chad and Libya. The persistence of these two crisis situations is a cause of concern to all Africans, who for many years now have spared no effort to bring about peaceful solutions on the basis of the principles in the charter of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the United Nations Charter and other relevant international juridical instruments.

Guinea-Bissau, which has always made dialogue one of the instruments of its foreign policy, will continue to support the efforts of the OAU to bring about a settlement of the conflict between Chad and Libya, two countries which we regard as brothers and friends. As in the past, we shall fully support the joint initiatives of the Secretary-General and the current Chairman of the OAU to organize as soon as possible, on the basis of the relevant resolutions of the two Organizations, a referendum on self-determination in Western Sahara.

For many years now, we have deplored the persistence of the conflict in the Middle East, the consequences of which are not any longer confined to that region. We therefore believe that the convening of an international conference on the Middle East is necessary and could help to promote the establishment of peace and justice in the area. However, if it is to succeed, that conference must take into account the interests of all the parties concerned, and in particular, the participation on an equal footing of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the sole, authentic representative of the Palestinian people.

The Middle East conflict has assumed such proportions that it has now engulfed Lebanon, whose very existence is now threatened. On behalf of my country, I reiterate our support for the Lebanese people in its struggle to defend its independence, national sovereignty, territorial integrity and cultural and religious heritage.

(Mr. Cabral, Guinea-Bissau)

In spite of the persistent efforts of the international community, the conflict between Iran and Iraq continues to worsen. Several leading personalities, Governments and international organizations, including the Organization of the Islamic Conference, have tried in vain to use their good offices to help bring to an end that fratricidal war, which is becoming increasingly internationalized. The Persian Gulf has become a veritable powder keg where any mistake could lead to a conflagration with, to say the least, unforeseeable consequences. Understanding of this fact by the members of the Security Council led to the unanimous adoption of resolution 598 (1987), which constitutes an important step towards a negotiated solution to the conflict.

On behalf of Guinea-Bissau and in a brotherly spirit, I reiterate our appeal to Iran and Iraq to co-operate fully in this endeavour.

With regard to Central America, we are encouraged by the positive development of the situation, particularly through the signing of the Guatemala agreement between the Heads of State of the region. This new and important achievement, while confirming the virtues of dialogue inherent in the peoples of Latin America, clearly demonstrates their determination and ability to resolve their problems for themselves. So we must encourage them to persevere in total independence in the wise direction that they have taken, which is in keeping with their aspirations.

The right to self-determination is a hallowed principle of our Organization. That is why I invoke it to defend the right of the people of East Timor to live in freedom and in the way it wishes. For more than a decade now it has been denied that right, in the tragic circumstances with which we are all familiar. East Timor cannot and must not be an exception to the cardinal principles laid down in the Charter. The United Nations and, in particular, Portugal, the legal Administering Authority, can and must discharge their responsibilities so as to bring that Territory, in the conditions provided for in the relevant United Nations

(Mr. Cabral, Guinea-Bissau)

resolutions, to the full exercise of its right to self-determination and independence.

Similarly, we wish to see the Korean people realize by means of constructive dialogue and in full independence its aspiration to reunification of its country. We hope that the two parties concerned will show the political will necessary to achieve this and we encourage them to continue their efforts.

In Kampuchea and Afghanistan, the initiatives taken so far have not yet yielded the desired results. We hope that the efforts of the Secretary-General will be met with a sincere desire on the part of the countries of the region to solve their disputes by negotiation. My country will continue to support the efforts of the international community to bring about a solution that takes account of the principles of the Charter and respect the non-aligned status of the two countries and their sovereign right freely to choose their political system and their course of social and economic development.

Similarly, we support the efforts of the international community to preserve the independence, national sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-aligned status of Cyprus, where the two communities must be able to live in peace and harmony.

The rapid survey that I have just undertaken, although it has taken in many parts of the world, is not exhaustive and the list of questions that I have mentioned is far from complete. Nevertheless, I shall bring my statement to an end.

The international political situation remains precarious because little progress has been made towards achieving respect for the right of peoples to live in freedom, with full enjoyment of their civil and political rights. This is particularly true in Namibia and South Africa, where the inhuman apartheid régime persists.

(Mr. Cabral, Guinea-Bissau)

In spite of the efforts of the international community and the good offices of the Secretary-General, serious conflicts continue to threaten international peace and security. The war between Iran and Iraq is assuming ever more alarming proportions. In the Middle East, the peoples concerned have not yet seen their hopes fulfilled and the prospects of peace are still remote. The questions of Western Sahara, Kampuchea, Afghanistan and Cyprus, among others, remain items on our agenda, no solutions having been found.

The world economic situation remains critical and the debt crisis is threatening the development of many countries, particularly in Africa and Latin America.

Tensions, conflicts, terrorism, the economic crisis, the moral and political crisis and indebtedness are among the major obstacles to the establishment of world peace and the major challenges facing the international community. Solution of the grave problems facing humanity is in many cases difficult. Many attempts are made to achieve settlement but they are constantly frustrated by misunderstanding and intransigence. As we have said, dialogue and trust among nations must be restored if today we want to succeed where confrontation and distrust caused us to fail yesterday. The peoples of the world are entitled to hope that their dreams will come true and it is the duty of the Governments that we represent here to act to that end.

My country, Guinea-Bissau, on the basis of the fundamental principles which have always guided its non-aligned policy of friendship and co-operation with all States, will do everything in its power to make a positive contribution to the efforts of the international community to restore a climate of peace to the world and to strengthen international co-operation, in the real interests of our respective peoples.

(Mr. Cabral, Guinea-Bissau)

Our confidence in a better future remains, none the less, unshakeable, for we continue to believe in the genius of man, a genius which has made it possible to bring about the fantastic progress of the world today and the conquest of new domains. We continue to believe, therefore, in the genius of man and in his capacity to overcome all obstacles facing him, provided the will exists. I believe and I trust that we shall succeed in mustering that will, which is still lacking.

ADDRESS BY MR. ARTHUR N. R. ROBINSON, PRIME MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

The PRESIDENT: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Robinson, Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, was escorted to the rostrum.

The PRESIDENT: I have great pleasure in welcoming the Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, His Excellency the Honourable Arthur Robinson, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. ROBINSON (Trinidad and Tobago): My delegation extends to you, Mr. President, our heartiest congratulations on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly of the United Nations at its forty-second session. We have no doubt whatever that the conduct of the business of the Assembly is in capable hands.

I wish also to express our deep appreciation of the firm and skilful manner in which Mr. Humayun Rasheed Choudhury conducted the work of the forty-first session of the General Assembly.

I have the honour to address this Assembly as Head of the new Government which came peacefully and constitutionally to power by the will of the people, overwhelmingly expressed in a general election held in December 1986. A peaceful transition has taken place in my country after 30 years of unbroken rule by the

(Mr. Robinson, Trinidad and Tobago)

previous régime. This has certainly been an extraordinary, if not an unparalleled, event. The mandate given to my Government in that election was reaffirmed only three weeks ago in another election at the local government level. The commitment of our people to government by consent of the governed is abiding and irrevocable.

Nearly 30 years ago I attended the United Nations General Assembly for the first time as an observer and a member of Parliament. It was the year which witnessed the entry into the United Nations of an unprecedented number of new States. It was a time of great hope and promise in the decolonization movement and of a remarkable upsurge of nationalism in what has since come to be known as the third world. It was the era of new, dynamic nationalist leaders whose ideas and personalities ignited the pride and aspirations of millions throughout the developing world.

In the Caribbean we were at the time struggling to weld together a federal State out of ten separate territories with a population of about 5 million and forming an archipelago spread over 1,000 miles of sea, from Jamaica in the north to Trinidad and Tobago in the south. That ideal still remains a dream. Meanwhile, we have been seeking to define and redefine the meaning and limits of independence and sovereignty - not unlike the United Nations itself.

We continue to face the contradiction between formal political independence and the reality of continued economic dependence. We contend with the psychology of dependence, sometimes reinforced by political oligarchies whose narrow interests are served by the time-worn strategy of divide-and-rule. We have come, through long and difficult years, to the hard-won understanding that co-operation among States enhances independence and does not detract from it.

(Mr. Robinson, Trinidad and Tobago)

We have therefore been forging closer economic ties and have progressed from a free trade association to a common market, the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), serviced by a secretariat and a number of regional institutions. Apart from our institutional arrangements, we are in the process of building a network of relationships and contacts among each other at the level of private enterprise organizations, labour bodies and professional groups and associations, as well as intensifying our cultural and sporting contacts.

The Government which I have the honour to lead is deeply committed to the ideal of regional unity. We have cultivated a closer relationship with other CARICOM leaders and have consciously adopted a CARICOM perspective in our dealings with the wider world. We applaud the move towards a political union within the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States, a subgrouping within CARICOM. It is by such incremental steps that we will move towards the realization of our inevitable Caribbean destiny.

We in the Caribbean are the product of the cataclysmic historical forces that fashioned European, African and Asian civilizations. We are the triumphant survivors of the dehumanizing horrors of slavery and indentureship. We have been influenced and inspired by the great revolutions and liberation movements of Europe, America and the third world, whose themes have been the inalienable rights and the quintessential dignity of man. In the Caribbean we cherish passionately the concept of the dignity of the human being. If we oppose war, racism and the iniquitous system of apartheid, as well as terrorism and totalitarianism, if we struggle to eradicate poverty, famine and disease, it is because we consider them to be an offence to human dignity. The struggle against these forms of oppression is deeply rooted in our history.

(Mr. Robinson, Trinidad and Tobago)

The Caribbean region has often been simplistically regarded as a historical backwater, a mere tourist destination whose main offerings are sea, sun and sand, yet the reality is that geographically, historically and culturally the region constitutes a link between North and South and East and West and has played - and continues to play - a part in world affairs out of all proportion to its size and population.

We take pride in our intellectuals and artists who have become world figures - Marcus Garvey, C. L. R. James, George Padmore, Eric Williams, V. S. Naipaul, Derek Walcott, George Lamming, Arthur Lewis, to name but a few. Our sportsmen, particularly in the field of cricket, have written their names in international halls of fame.

We have created the only new musical instrument of the twentieth century out of an industrial artifact, the steel oil drum. We have married it to our indigenous rhythms, the rhythms of carnival and calypso, and made it into a versatile instrument capable of rendering the most intricate musical compositions.

(Mr. Robinson, Trinidad and Tobago)

Out of many transplanted peoples brought together to service the capitalist and plantation systems, a human phenomenon has evolved - a coexistence and intermingling of peoples of varied ethnicity, religion and culture with growing appreciation of the values of each other's culture and philosophy, and with increasing awareness of a shared identity of ideals.

The peoples of the Caribbean form a virtual diaspora of their own, and their culture has always exerted and continues to exert a subtle influence far beyond its boundaries. In reality, therefore, we are a crucible where a new civilization is taking shape. Compounded of the civilizations of Asia, Africa, Europe and the Americas, Caribbean man is forever developing new and exciting variations of cultural synthesis.

Our commitment to the brotherhood of man, our historical evolution and experience as a people determine decisively our attitude to world affairs. Hence our attitude, for example, to the system of apartheid practised in South Africa. We consider that system a heinous assault on human dignity. Its continued existence is a burning reproach to all of us here today, a blot of shame on our international community. Its perpetrators must understand that their conduct is repugnant and totally unacceptable to civilized humanity. There must be no accommodation with apartheid in South Africa.

My Government will continue to interdict economic, cultural, sporting and other links with South Africa. At the international level, we will continue fully to support measures aimed at ending the apartheid system, including the imposition of comprehensive mandatory sanctions under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations.

We strongly condemn South Africa's acts of aggression against the front-line States, and the use of the illegally occupied Territory of Namibia as a platform

(Mr. Robinson, Trinidad and Tobago)

for the launching of attacks. The sacrifices of the front-line States in the anti-apartheid struggles of the peoples of South Africa and Namibia are deserving of the maximum political and economic assistance by the international community.

We invoke the support of the international community for the Namibian people in their just struggle for self-determination, freedom and genuine independence. Essential ingredients in any measures of support are, first, strict adherence to Decree No. 1 for the Protection of the Natural Resources of Namibia; secondly, unswerving support for the universally accepted United Nations plan for Namibian independence contained in Security Council resolution 435 (1978); thirdly, rejection of and dissociation from any illegally installed administration in the Territory; and, fourthly, the extension of sanctions adopted against South Africa, which must be mandatory and comprehensive.

It is also of the utmost importance that this Organization closely monitor the situation in the other 17 countries on the United Nations list of Trust and Non-Self-Governing Territories. The United Nations must seek to protect the rights, including the right to self-determination and independence, of the peoples of these dependencies. We must assist in ensuring that no policies or practices are adopted in these colonies that may eventually lead to heightened tensions and conflict in their post-independence period.

I turn now to the situation in Central America. The Procedure for the Establishment of a Firm and Lasting Peace in Central America, signed by the Presidents of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua in Guatemala City on 7 August 1987, is a laudable attempt by the peoples of the region to solve their problems by a regional initiative.

The Guatemala agreement is a delicate plant which will need careful and sensitive nurturing if it is to blossom as it can, into the enduring peace which

(Mr. Robinson, Trinidad and Tobago)

the peoples of the region so deeply desire and need. The agreement responds to the historical imperatives of the region and reflects the ideals and inspiration of the great liberator, Simon Bolivar.

It is also in the spirit of those ideals and aspirations that my Government looks forward to the early ratification of the amendment to the Charter of the Organization of American States, which would permit Belize and Guyana to take their rightful place in the family of American nations.

Trinidad and Tobago is a proud member of that distinguished family. We value highly our links with the nations of Latin America and the wider Caribbean with which we share common traditions, common origins and common interests. And we shall work towards a strengthening of these bonds in the years to come.

I turn now to the situation in the Middle East. Permit me to congratulate the Secretary-General on his dedicated efforts, with the full backing of the Security Council, to bring about an end to the conflict between Iran and Iraq. We trust that these efforts will be rewarded with an early peace. We are also painfully aware that problems of equal gravity remain, and I refer, in particular, to the Palestinian question, the resolution of which is fundamental to peace in the area.

In this connection, we endorse the proposal for an international peace conference on the Middle East. We also urge an intensification of the search for a just and lasting peace which recognizes the rights of all States in the region to exist within secure and recognized boundaries and which guarantees a homeland for the Palestinian people.

It is not only in the Middle East where problems afflict us. Throughout the world there are areas of conflict which must be satisfactorily resolved. I recognize that the task will be a long and difficult one, but it is one we ignore only at the risk of continued global instability and disorder.

(Mr. Robinson, Trinidad and Tobago)

The issue of nuclear disarmament continues to be a source of great concern to the international community. All nations, large and small, developed and developing, would be affected by the consequences of a nuclear conflagration. For this reason, we will continue to voice our deep disquiet and apprehension over the spiralling arms race and to highlight the dangers of nuclear arsenals which, in the final analysis, add to a sense of insecurity among peoples throughout the world.

We welcome the recent agreement in principle entered into between the United States and the Soviet Union on the elimination of intermediate range nuclear missiles. It is a development of the first importance and engenders optimism for the future. The leaders of both countries merit our warmest congratulations on this historic step.

It is becoming increasingly apparent that threats to security are not only military in nature. My Government shares the views of those who recognize the importance of social and economic development as a stabilizing factor in the quest for security.

(Mr. Robinson, Trinidad and Tobago)

From its inception the United Nations recognized disarmament and development as two of the fundamental issues facing the world community. The recent International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development not only reaffirmed the validity of this perception, but also underscored the profound linkages between these two most urgent challenges of our times.

Reduced spending on arms by the industrialized nations can result in the release of enormous financial resources for development. We of the developing world ourselves, however, also have a responsibility in this process to reduce spending on armaments. Too many of our developing nations expend inordinate amounts of scarce financial resources on increasingly sophisticated weapons. These acquisitions very often tend to disturb regional balances and to aggravate tensions, leading to the perceived need for more and more weapons and to the negation of efforts to attain the desired goals. Every effort must be made to break this vicious circle. Its cost in human, material and financial resources is unacceptable.

I turn now to the global economic and financial situation. Most developing countries have experienced in the 1980s sharp economic and social decline. The world economy has grown but slowly and, in the process, the benefits have accrued largely to the developed countries, with the result that the gap between developed and developing countries continues to widen. For the countries of the developing world the major constraints inhibiting growth and development have been chronically low commodity prices, difficulties in securing financing for productive investments, the imposition of trade barriers which restrict access to export markets, and the burden of servicing a tremendous external debt. These influences on the world economy must be addressed if we are to avoid in the 1990s the hardship and wasted opportunities of the 1980s.

(Mr. Robinson, Trinidad and Tobago)

The new international economic order, which was conceived as a vehicle for promoting a more equitable distribution of global wealth and resources between developed and developing countries, has continued to elude us. The fundamental rules of the existing international economic system are still determined by a few wealthy nations and weighted against the economic aspirations of developing countries.

Many States advocate a free and open trading system, but too often words are not matched by the necessary action to encourage access to domestic markets. We cannot overemphasize the fact that measures to facilitate trade remain a vital requirement for redressing the imbalances in the flow of resources. My Government consequently welcomes the decision taken last year at Punta del Este to launch a new round of multilateral trade negotiations within the context of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. This decision provides the international community with an opportunity to tackle, and resolve, the problem of the many impediments in the international trading system.

The need to facilitate capital flows to developing countries must also be urgently addressed. Concessional assistance has stagnated and the international commercial banking sector, stunned by the debt crisis, has moved swiftly to withdraw and to reduce its exposure in developing countries. In addition, countries like Trinidad and Tobago are denied access to resources solely on the basis of the criterion of per capita gross national product. Such decisions lack sensitivity to changing situations and to the negative effects of declining national income, particularly on vulnerable groups. Decision-making by multilateral institutions should surely take into account a wider range of economic and social factors.

(Mr. Robinson, Trinidad and Tobago)

It has now come to be accepted that structural adjustment is an imperative for developing countries during this period. Structural adjustment must, however, be regarded as only one aspect of a meaningful, growth-oriented process. Multilateral financial institutions, particularly the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, which have been the main proponents of such policies, should be afforded the necessary resources for an expanded and supportive role in this process. Their impact on an expanding world economy can be enhanced only if they are provided with a larger capital base and allowed more flexible and innovative approaches.

The debt problem has largely been met with a series of unco-ordinated responses determined out of frustration and anxiety. Debtors are thus caught on a treadmill of debt-servicing and rescheduling and have in fact become net exporters of capital. The perverse situation in which developing capital-deficient countries are forced to be net suppliers of capital is neither acceptable nor sustainable.

We owe it to our peoples, which hopefully follow our deliberations, to search for and find new and imaginative responses to this crisis. We believe that the agreements struck at the recently concluded seventh session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) will provide a basis on which we could build and advance. We emphasize that solutions to the problem must be based on the acceptance of shared responsibility between debtors and creditors. We support the several positive proposals put forward to that end at the recent joint meetings of the Bank and Fund in Washington.

We of the developing world need not wring our hands in despair or be mere passive observers of international economic interaction. It is incumbent upon us, as developing countries, to take bold and decisive steps to improve our performance and economic structures, and to make them more efficient and responsive to the goals

(Mr. Robinson, Trinidad and Tobago)

and aspirations of our peoples. Several of our countries are doing exactly that. Collectively, the countries of the South must awaken to our vast potential and diverse strengths. These must not be squandered but harnessed in our striving for development. Joint action by the international community, however, is the inescapable imperative for our continued existence on this planet.

We the Members of this body are committed by our Charter to work towards a world in which nations coexist in peace based on respect for law and justice. If the measure of a State's ability to make a significant contribution towards this end is the extent of its coercive power, then we in the Caribbean are indeed irrelevant to the deliberations of the Assembly. But we do not hold that power can be so narrowly defined or that international affairs can be conducted on the basis that might is right.

It is the cause of man, the cause of human dignity, for which we plead. It is for this reason that we remain committed to the community of the United Nations; because it is here that the weak, the poor, the oppressed, the hungry millions who form the majority of the peoples of this earth, can find a voice and receive a hearing among the leaders of the world. And I am confident that their voices will be heard.

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

Mr. Arthur N. R. Robinson, Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, was escorted from the rostrum.

Mr. ABDOUN (Sudan) (interpretation from Arabic): It is my pleasure to extend to you, Sir, the warm congratulations of my country on your election to the presidency of the current session of the General Assembly. Your election to this high office reflects the international community's appreciation of your outstanding abilities. I wish you success in conducting the affairs of this session.

Allow me also, Sir, to convey to your predecessor my country's deep appreciation of the wisdom and ability with which he presided over the work of the previous session.

Democracy is the best option of the peoples of the free world. Our Sudanese people has unanimously opted for democracy and adamantly clings to liberty. The Sudanese have experienced dictatorship and military rule at first hand.

It is a source of pride for me to be able to state that my country has now succeeded in building a number of multilateralist democratic institutions. Our belief in political democracy must of necessity lead to the democratization of our country's economic and social life. Thus the fabric of democratic rule would become whole. It is for this reason that the Sudan strives after economic and social development. This is no easy task in a country as vast as ours which, as a third world country suffers from the accumulated problems of the past and the present, which beset its endeavours vis-à-vis the challenges of the future.

The nascent democratic experience in Sudan faces numerous internal and external challenges. Therefore, it needs the support of all the democratic forces of the world. Experience has shown that the developing nations can find it beyond their reach to tread the path of democracy in the face of the difficult problems which stand in their way.

My country is a case in point. Only the concerted efforts of the international community represented by the United Nations system and friendly countries, threw us a lifeline when we faced the horror of famine.

(Mr. Abdoun, Sudan)

The problems facing my country are the following: first, the problem of drought and desertification. This is one of the most dangerous threats to life for man and animal alike in the continent of Africa to which the Sudan belongs. It is a deadly threat because it begets famine and its attendant miseries. Therefore, it calls for regional and international co-operation in the study of its root causes and practicable preventive measures. It also calls for the provision of the material and technical means that would make possible the study and the development of such measures. In this respect, my country commends the efforts of the United Nations and its specialized agencies and calls for the continued assistance of the entire international community.

Secondly, the refugee problem. For more than three decades now, Sudan has become the recipient of ever increasing numbers of refugees. It has adopted a constantly hospitable policy vis-à-vis this problem. This was only natural in the case of a country with its deeply rooted traditions of hospitality and a strong commitment to the relevant regional and international instruments. However, the influx of refugees is on the increase, especially in the eastern, western and southern areas of the country. Refugees now constitute more than 10 per cent of the total population of the country. Obviously, this has created excessive pressures which the country's economic and human capabilities cannot withstand.

While the Sudan fully abides by the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of its neighbours, it favours the voluntary return of the refugees to their countries of origin. The Sudan will spare no effort in seeking appropriate ways and means to achieve the national reconciliation which would ensure the voluntary return of the refugees to their countries. In the meantime, it is necessary to organize the refugee situation in such a way as to ensure their safety, and provide them with the necessary health and educational facilities

(Mr. Abdoun, Sudan)

without overburdening the country's means or jeopardizing the security and well-being of Sudanese society.

While we deeply appreciate the support of the international community in this connection, my delegation looks forward to more efforts being made to find lasting solutions to the root causes of the refugee problem and to step up the relief operations.

In this connection, Sudan welcomes all missions dispatched by the world body. We also highly commend the report of the specialized inter-agency mission which visited Sudan last year and warmly welcome the mission now assessing our country's needs in relation to the refugee problem. Sudan also sets great store by the implementation of all the recommendations relating to the linkage of relief assistance to development efforts in the refugee areas.

In the context of the collective responsibility of the international community in addressing the problem of refugees, my delegation wishes to give notice that we all face an extremely grave situation which will deteriorate further unless all the United Nations resolutions and recommendations relating to the refugees are fully and urgently implemented.

The third problem facing my country is that of indebtedness. The present democratic Government in the Sudan inherited, among other problems, a heavy burden of external debts which were incurred, on the one hand, as a result of the reckless policies of the deposed military régime and, on the other, because of the worsening of the acute international economic crisis. The cost of debt servicing now exceeds our export earnings.

(Mr. Abdoun, Sudan)

Sudan, like other less developed nations, is unable to strike a balance between the repayment of its debts and the continued provision of urgently necessary and basic services to its people. The debt situation, in our view, calls for more concerted efforts on the part of the international community and the immediate development of creative remedial solutions. It also calls for new and more concessional repayment and rescheduling over more extended periods of time, with longer grace periods.

In this context, my delegation welcomes the positive signs which indicate the earnestness of the international community in seeking a solution to the debt problem. We welcome also the final statement of the recent Venice summit of the Western industrialized countries. We sincerely hope that those intentions will be translated into practical, positive steps. Together with other African countries, my delegation calls for the convening of an international conference to consider the ever-escalating problem of African indebtedness.

The current world economic situation continues to affect adversely the economies of many countries of the world, particularly in Africa. Those are countries which face deteriorating conditions that make it extremely difficult even to think of formulating plans of economic and social development. Lack of foreign exchange is not the primary difficulty in that respect. In many instances it is the inability to provide the local components required for the implementation of development plans that is the greatest difficulty.

By the end of this decade, all the countries of the world, regardless of wealth, will face grim prospects that will threaten their very existence, unless North and South join hands and co-operate in all economic areas. Such concerted efforts will require greater sacrifices and concessions on the part of the developed nations and more diligence on the part of the developing nations in

(Mr. Abdoun, Sudan)

putting their house in order and redressing their administrative and financial infrastructure to eliminate shortcomings and adverse elements.

We have continued to call, from this rostrum and in other forums, for the sort of genuine and effective international interdependence that would meet all our needs. Our world has become so compact and interdependent as to make all its small nations vulnerable to the repercussions of any policy decision by any of the industrialized countries.

We remain convinced that a proper formula for addressing economic backwardness and the problems of development will never be achieved under the existing inequitable international economic order. An equitable formula is essential if we are to protect the rights of producers of primary commodities and make them compatible with the interests of the manufacturers.

The hope of a new international economic order, though distant, still seduces the peoples of the third world. None the less, we concede that it is incumbent upon our Governments to rationalize their economic and fiscal policies. In this respect, we wish to put it on record that many African Governments have taken considerable steps towards the achievement of that goal in line with the resolutions of the African Steering Committee. However, the African attempts at rationalization have not been matched by a parallel attempt at economic rescue. While the returns on our commodities have slumped, the costs of agriculture inputs and other manufactured goods have soared. Aid has dried up, our export earnings have fallen. We are indeed caught in a vicious circle.

The United Nations was created primarily to maintain international peace, ensure security, bring about international co-operation in the economic and social fields, foster the principles of good-neighbourliness, resolve disputes by peaceful means and ensure non-interference by any State in the internal affairs of others.

(Mr. Abdoun, Sudan)

We have acted to translate those lofty purposes and principles into guidelines in the conduct of our foreign policy and our relations with our neighbours and the other countries of the world.

It is the duty of Members of the United Nations to demonstrate the Organization's credibility and reaffirm its world role. We can do that by showing respect for the spirit and the letter of the Charter, applying its principles and adhering to them in coping with international problems. Non-compliance with the provisions of the Charter, the partisan, self-seeking approach of some countries at the expense of the international community's interests and the tendency of certain States to bypass the United Nations in dealing with disputes constitute, in our opinion, an infringement of the commitments of Member States with regard to the Organization and a retreat from what the world had agreed upon when this Organization was created.

The achievements of the United Nations are a source of pride to us all. We believe that this is the view of all Member States. However, there are evident shortcomings. The Organization is still unable to ensure independence and sovereignty for the Palestinian people on their native soil. It has failed to achieve the independence of Namibia. It has failed to put an end to the heinous policies of apartheid practised by the white minority in South Africa. And it has failed to curb the nuclear and conventional arms races.

The United Nations continues to face a naked challenge in the Middle East. The situation there is deteriorating. The adoption of yet more resolutions to be added to those already on the records of the Organization would no longer be useful. The dimensions and origins of this question are clear enough. The international community is well aware that peace in the Middle East cannot be achieved without justice. The Organization's resolutions state that quite

(Mr. Abdoun, Sudan)

clearly. The Palestinian question is the crux of the conflict in the Middle East and its root cause. There can be no peace in the Middle East without Israel's total and unconditional withdrawal from all the Arab territories it has occupied since 1967, including Al-Quds Al-Sharif, that is, the Holy City of Jerusalem.

Israel's continued disregard of United Nations resolutions, its contempt for the international consensus and its persistent and flagrant violation of the Charter are, in our view, the cause of the deteriorating situation in the region.

In view of all this, we reaffirm once more the importance of convening an international conference on peace in the Middle East, in accordance with the 1983 Geneva Declaration on Palestine, endorsed by this Assembly. The international conference should be held under the auspices of the United Nations, with the participation of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

My country watches with sorrow and anxiety the Iran-Iraq war, which has entered its eighth year. That war has exacted a heavy toll in lives and resources of the two countries, with which we have close spiritual and historical ties.

(Mr. Abdoun, Sudan)

The developments arising from that conflict have created a new situation fraught with danger for the security of the region and the peace of the world. My delegation commends Security Council resolution 598 (1987), which is proof enough of the wish of the international community to see an immediate end to the conflict. We also commend the efforts of the Secretary-General towards the implementation of Security Council resolution 598 (1987), and hope that he will continue his mission of good offices and achieve a comprehensive and honourable settlement to this protracted dispute.

Many years have passed since the international community voiced its first unequivocal condemnation of the abhorrent crime of apartheid practised by the racist minority in South Africa. None the less, the racist Pretoria régime continues to defy the international will, and ignore the world Organization's resolutions, following the lead of its twin, the Zionist entity in Israel.

The overwhelming majority of the people of South Africa are still deprived of their basic human rights and subjected to the most brutal measures of oppression and racial violence. From this podium, we salute the struggle of the South African people and laud their just cause. We reiterate our unflinching support for their just revolution under the leadership of the African National Congress of South Africa and the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania. We also reiterate our conviction that the dismantling of the abhorrent system of apartheid and the realization of the aspirations of the African majority in South Africa can be achieved only through the cornering of the Pretoria régime and imposition of a total embargo and comprehensive sanctions against it under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter. The world is duty-bound to undertake further concerted action in support of the just struggle of the people of South Africa in order to bring about the long awaited change in that part of the African continent.

(Mr. Abdoun, Sudan)

The international community has reiterated often enough its condemnation of the racist régime's continued illegal occupation of Namibia and its plundering of the wealth of that Territory. All the African States agree that there must be a peaceful democratic solution to this problem. However, the manoeuvres of the racist régime continue to obstruct and thwart every effort aimed at achieving a just and lasting peace. It should be emphasized here that the only acceptable framework for a comprehensive, urgent and peaceful settlement of this problem is Security Council resolution 435 (1978). Until such time as that resolution is implemented, there is no alternative but to support the struggle of the people of Namibia under the leadership of the South West Africa People's Organization until the attainment of full Namibian independence and sovereignty over its entire territory. We therefore call upon all peace-loving nations to continue to support that people's just struggle for liberation.

We listened attentively to the statement of the delegation of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan, which gave details concerning the policy of national reconciliation recently declared by the Government of Afghanistan and its new intention to make Afghanistan an independent non-aligned country. We are of the view that unless all foreign troops are withdrawn from all Afghan territory, realization of the aspirations of the Afghan people to national reconciliation, complete independence and non-alignment will remain remote.

We share the view that national reconciliation is but another facet of peaceful coexistence, a principle which we have embraced as a guiding light for our policy. Such national reconciliation, in Afghanistan or in Kampuchea, cannot be achieved without the total withdrawal of all foreign forces from those countries. Withdrawal would be the starting-point and the essential springboard for national reconciliation.

(Mr. Abdoun, Sudan)

The arms race has pushed all nations, especially those in possession of huge arsenals, to the brink of a very dangerous situation and has caused them to manufacture ever increasing quantities of new, more lethal weapons. Like other developing countries, my country looks with anxiety and alarm upon the vast resources being squandered on nuclear and conventional armaments at a time when millions in Africa and the rest of the third world are dying of hunger and millions are suffering from disease, poverty and ignorance.

In recent years, the arms race has sucked in certain developing countries under the pressure of regional conflicts. The acquisition of weapons by those countries has placed a heavy burden on their resources, hampered their development programmes, put them deeper in debt and exacerbated their economic problems.

Despite all this, we feel heartened by the initial agreement in principle between the United States of America and the Soviet Union on the elimination of short-range and medium-range nuclear missiles in Europe. We hope that this significant step will be followed by further steps towards the cessation of the arms race.

We hope too that the Conference on Disarmament will be able to formulate a comprehensive test-ban treaty that would prohibit nuclear testing in the atmosphere, underground and under water. The conclusion of such an agreement is a prerequisite for an end to vertical and horizontal nuclear proliferation.

The International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development, which recently concluded its deliberations here in New York, was a landmark; it affirmed the principles of multilateralism in disarmament negotiations, and highlighted the link between disarmament and development. For the first time in the history of international relations, the Conference succeeded in promoting acceptance of the principle of the relationship between disarmament

(Mr. Abdoun, Sudan)

and development. The very fact that it was possible to convene the Conference sent a strong message to the major Powers that disarmament negotiations are no longer the preserve of nuclear Powers. The Conference recognized too that non-military threats are among the dangers facing regional and international peace and security.

Although the final document of the Conference was adopted by consensus, it fell short of the hopes and aspirations of developing countries, which are the prime victims of the arms race and of its negative impact upon their security and their social and economic development. Nevertheless, my delegation sees in the Conference a beginning of a long path which may lead to success if we show the resolve to affirm the principle of collective security, as envisioned by the Charter.

(Mr. Abdoun, Sudan)

In conclusion and notwithstanding the foregoing, we meet at the forty-second session in hope and optimism. We feel optimism because the international Organization has restored its credibility and regained its ability to cope with hotbeds of tension and solve conflicts between its Members forcefully and with firm perseverance, and because Member States have recognized that the obnoxious system of apartheid cannot be reformed and must be eradicated, and the major Members of this Organization have begun the march towards disarmament. Another reason for optimism is that the international community has highlighted the grave and imminent dangers that threaten our world. Moreover, there is growing progress regarding the peace initiatives in Central America, and constructive bilateral and multilateral consultations are now under way to solve the critical situation in Angola, which could accelerate the attainment of complete independence for Namibia. It is our earnest hope that this optimism will prove justified.

The meeting rose at 12.30 p.m.