



General Assembly

PROVISIONAL

A/43/PV.26
12 October 1988

ENGLISH

Forty-third session

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE TWENTY-SIXTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 11 October 1988, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. CAFUTO (Argentina)

later: Mr. CABRAL (Guinea-Bissau)
(Vice-President)

- General debate [9] (continued)

Statements made by:

Mr. Hannibalsson (Iceland)
Prince Mohamed Bolkiah (Brunei Darussalam)
Mr. Fischer (German Democratic Republic)
Mr. Hurst (Antigua and Barbuda)

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

AGENDA ITEM 9 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. HANNIBALSSON (Iceland): Mr. President, I should like to begin by congratulating you on your election to the presidency of the forty-third session of the General Assembly. The Government of Iceland wishes you every success in carrying out the duties of your important and prestigious office.

The signing of the United Nations Charter was viewed by many as the first great victory of peace in the modern world. A system of international security was foreseen whereby peace would be ensured through collective action, and regional enforcement would be rendered largely superfluous. Sadly, the dream has never been realized. Instead, the onset of the cold war stimulated the growth of military alliances and a system of security through the mutual terror of nuclear armaments.

I will not say whether the Charter itself was basically at fault in being overly optimistic. That may be so, but I am certain, nevertheless, that the quest for "one world", enshrined in the Charter, has never been wholly abandoned. Moreover, one should not underestimate the significant strides mankind has recently made towards removing some of the hurdles that have stood in the way of strict observance of the United Nations Charter.

History, of course, will be the final judge. Most of us believe that we now stand at a crossroads in East-West relations. I certainly do not wish to underestimate the role of Western unity and steadfastness in bringing us to the present juncture. There is no denying, however, that credit is due to the East as well, where refreshing winds of change have resulted in a more dynamic and forthcoming approach to foreign policy.

(Mr. Hannibalsson, Iceland)

Improvements have been particularly notable in arms control and on regional issues. In arms control, we have for the first time started moving beyond mere limitations on nuclear armaments to meaningful reductions. The Treaty for the elimination of intermediate-range nuclear weapons, welcomed by my country as a milestone achievement, has inspired confidence across the whole range of arms control issues and given fresh impetus to talks aimed at cutting strategic nuclear arsenals as well as chemical and conventional weapons. No less significant is the movement we have witnessed towards the peaceful resolution of regional conflicts, many of which have been a thorn in the side of the international body politic for a good many years.

Taken as a whole, these developments have created hopes that the United Nations - no longer hobbled by cold war rivalry - might begin to achieve the results hoped for at the time of its founding.

There can be no denying that the progress we have made is due in large measure to the improved atmosphere in relations between the United States and the Soviet Union. It would be a mistake, however, to view the United Nations simply as an accessory to super-Power diplomacy. For one thing, to do so is to overlook the tremendous work done by the United Nations specialized agencies towards alleviating the causes of human conflict. By seeking to eliminate such causes, be they poverty, disease, ignorance or discrimination, the United Nations has not only rendered valuable service to peace in different areas of the world, but has also prevented regional conflicts from spilling over into cold war battlegrounds.

Moreover, one is entitled to ask where we would stand had it not been for the crucial mediating role of the United Nations in many regional conflicts.

(Mr. Hannibalsson, Iceland)

This, in many ways, has been the United Nations finest hour, as has been duly recorded by the well-deserved award of the Nobel Peace Prize to the Organization's peace-keeping forces this year. In a relatively short time the Organization has negotiated the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan and the cease-fire in the Iran-Iraq war. Thanks to the United Nations, an end to the war in Western Sahara may now be in sight and progress has been made towards a settlement in Cyprus. If all goes well, United Nations efforts in Angola and Namibia - whose rightful claim to independence can no longer be ignored - may bear fruit in the not-too-distant future.

For a nation like Iceland, which has no armed forces of its own, glad tidings like these are particularly welcome. But let us not forget that safeguarding the progress made will require continued dedication and good will on the part of all. Much will certainly depend on the work taking place at the Vienna follow-up meeting of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, not least in the humanitarian dimension. By honouring their commitment to fundamental human rights, including the right of men and women to participate fully in all spheres of social and economic life, Governments not only raise the level of well-being among their subjects, but also render service to peace. In the current end-game in Vienna, Iceland will work for a substantive outcome, based on a balanced approach to the whole range of issues covered in the Helsinki Final Act.

I find it a curious paradox that at a time of heightened expectations the United Nations should find itself in the throes of a major financial crisis. Iceland applauds plans by the Soviet Union and lately by the United States to pay up arrears, and appeals to other Members which have not already done so, to do the same. This is particularly urgent, as it appears that increased United Nations peace-keeping activities will make greater demands on its resources. Emphasis must

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also continue to be placed on the process of reform and renewal within the Organization itself.

As we look ahead there are numerous major challenges that confront us.

Recent progress in bilateral arms control notwithstanding, the cost of the arms race is increasing and so are the precision and destructive power of nuclear weapons. Clearly, therefore, nuclear arms control must remain a top priority. As we pursue major reductions in strategic nuclear weaponry, care must be taken that any possible shift of military confrontation to new categories of weapons or regions be firmly resisted. In the view of the Icelandic Government, it is of the utmost importance that a treaty to cut land-based long-range missiles should lead to less military activity at sea. For this reason, Icelanders have welcomed the super-Powers' agreement in principle at the Washington summit meeting to search for ways of limiting long-range, nuclear-armed sea-launched cruise missiles.

As is well known, my country does not allow nuclear weapons on its territory and presumes that visiting naval vessels will respect its sovereignty in this regard. One need hardly belabour the point that accidents involving nuclear arms at sea could have disastrous consequences for a nation like Iceland which bases its livelihood on the living resources of the sea.

As we move towards significant reductions in nuclear arsenals, the need to correct the current imbalance in the field of conventional forces and equipment in Europe has acquired new urgency. Having participated, along with its allies in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), in negotiations with the Warsaw Pact on a mandate for new conventional stability talks, Iceland hopes for the early adoption of a mandate to ensure that these important talks can get under way this year as envisaged.

This year's third special session on disarmament may have been a disappointment in that it failed to reach a consensus on a final document. My

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country was nevertheless encouraged that a number of positive steps were taken. I draw attention in particular to the concrete discussions on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the Nordic memorandum on that question, as well as to the discussions on verification issues and chemical weapons. The early conclusion of a comprehensive ban on chemical weapons must remain among our foremost objectives. Iceland is encouraged that negotiations on this issue within the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva have reached a final stage. I also welcome the opportunity here to declare my country's full support for the proposal of President Reagan in this forum two weeks ago to convene an international conference to bolster the Geneva Protocol of 1925 outlawing the use of chemical weapons.*

As we chart the course of the multilateral disarmament agenda for the decade ahead, we must build on the paper which nearly became the final document of the third special session and on the commitments we all undertook in the Final Document of the first special session in 1978.

I spoke earlier of the progress we have made on regional issues. Regrettably, there have also been exceptions. The thaw in relations between East and West has failed to advance noticeably the peace process in the Middle East. Any peaceful solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict will depend on mutual restraint and a spirit of compromise. At a minimum, while Israel must recognize the right of the Palestinian people to determine their own future, the Arab world must cease to question the undisputed right of the State of Israel to exist. The tragic events in the occupied Israeli territories over the last year have rightly caused concern among the world community and reawakened interest in an international conference, under United Nations auspices, to discuss a comprehensive peace settlement.

* Mr. Cabral (Guinea-Bissau), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Hannibalsson, Iceland)

Turning to Central America, recent peace efforts have also fallen short of expectations. Iceland, like the rest of the Nordic countries, is firmly of the view that the countries in a given region should themselves be in charge of the building of peace and democracy there.

As to the situation in South-East Asia, I should like only to reiterate the continuing relevance of last year's General Assembly resolution on Kampuchea, of which my country was a co-sponsor, and which will be resubmitted in a slightly amended form this year.

If I have dwelt too long on the political and military issues, it is only because I fear that armed conflicts may yet turn our budding optimism into pessimism and despair. At the same time, any listing of the tasks that lie ahead would remain quite incomplete if it failed to mention the challenges facing us in the related areas of environment and development.

As was rightly observed in last year's report of the Brundtland Commission, we face a vast and expanding dimension of responsibility in the sphere of ecology. Problems that are transnational in character, be they pollution, the "greenhouse" effect or the deterioration of the ozone layer, must be tackled with a global strategy, if they are not seriously to impair the quality of life on this planet.

Neglect of the environment is in turn directly related to the gloomy economic situation of many of the developing countries. In Africa, deforestation and desertification are worsening the plight of a number of States in which per capita income levels are even lower today than they were at the beginning of the decade. An enhanced development effort is urgently called for to alleviate poverty and hunger in this hemisphere.

(Mr. Hannibalsson, Iceland)

But the problem of development, as everyone knows, is not confined to the decaying environment. I want to mention in particular the crushing debt burden of the developing world, which not only stifles necessary economic growth but also places a dangerous strain on the feeble democratic foundations of a number of States. While no one should minimize the manifold and complex aspects of this problem, it is economically unsound and morally indefensible that the industrialized nations should siphon off from the developing world billions of dollars in debt repayments and interests. According to estimates of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), such net transfers from poor countries to rich currently amount to between \$US 30 billion and \$US 40 billion per year.

To remedy this state of affairs in the long term, increased assistance and debt relief will only be sufficient provided they are linked to a comprehensive plan for structural change in North-South relations. Let us also be mindful that no economic system can be expected to be fully satisfactory or truly effective if it lacks the genuine and full participation of all people, men and women alike. In this connection, let me subscribe to the view expressed by Iceland's Minister of Social Affairs at the Nordic Council's Equal Rights Conference in Oslo last August, calling for the establishment of a special United Nations equal rights organization.

The link between human rights and development is often close. Iceland feels strongly that the world community must keep up its pressure on the racist régime in Pretoria, whose policies of apartheid and destabilization are among the root causes of the human tragedy taking place in southern Africa.

In a year when we celebrate the fortieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, we should reaffirm our obligation to doing away with human rights abuses, wherever they take place and regardless of colour or political creed.

(Mr. Hannibalsson, Iceland)

I referred at the outset to the Charter's sanguine vision of universal peace and security. The realization of that vision may still be far off in the future. Yet, with peace and freedom on the march around the globe as they have rarely been before over the last 40 years, confidence is reviving in the efficiency of this world Organization.

But while some of the critics of the United Nations may have been disarmed, there is need to warn against unrealistic expectations. For one thing, merely to safeguard what has been accomplished will require redoubled effort. In this sense, it would be true to say that we must run simply to stay in place.

In conclusion, may I express the hope that this year's Assembly will result in the strengthening of our commitments to the purposes of the Charter. In this endeavour, I can pledge the full and loyal support of my country.

PRINCE Mohamed BOLKIAH (Brunei Darussalam): I should like to congratulate the President on his election to the presidency of the forty-third session of the General Assembly. My delegation is confident that we will all benefit from his experience and wisdom and that he will give our deliberations positive guidance.

I also wish to express my appreciation to the outgoing President, His Excellency Mr. Peter Florin, for his able presidency of the forty-second session of the General Assembly and the fifteenth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

Over the past few months we have seen peace initiatives in many parts of the world which have brought hope that there is a growing awareness that armed conflicts bring about only human suffering. It is generally thought that peace moves now stand a greater chance of success. This can be attributed to a large extent to the improved relations between the United States and the Soviet Union.

(Prince Mohamed Bolkiah,
Brunei Darussalam)

The signing of the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles (INF) by the United States and the Soviet Union signalled the beginning of the peace initiatives. I should like to congratulate the leaders of both the United States and the Soviet Union on the positive lead they have given and on showing that problems and conflicts can be solved through negotiation.

The improvement in Soviet-American relations fostered the Accords on Afghanistan, which are a great step forward. We hope the Accords will enable the Afghan people to return from the refugee camps to Afghanistan to live in peace.

There has also been noticeable progress in other regions such as Cyprus, Western Sahara and New Caledonia. In southern Africa, progress towards ensuring the viable independence of Namibia must include the withdrawal of foreign troops.

My delegation was happy to hear the announcement by the Secretary-General of the cease-fire between Iran and Iraq. We hope the difficulties in the peace negotiations can be overcome and the cease-fire will lead to a durable peace between the two countries ending the terrible bloodshed and destruction of the war, and will also ease international tension. We wish to congratulate the Secretary-General on his dedicated perseverance in the face of great difficulties in bringing about the cease-fire. We are happy that both Iran and Iraq realize the futility of continuing this senseless and tragic war.

The appearance of peace initiatives in many parts of the world has brought the United Nations once again to the centre of the stage where it rightly belongs. Through the personal dedication and untiring hard work of the Secretary-General, and the continued support of Members of this Organization, the United Nations flag is once again seen as a symbol of our hope for a future in which we can all enjoy peace and security.

(Prince Mohamed Bolkiah,
Brunei Darussalam)

This development pleases my delegation. The effectiveness of the United Nations depends on its Members. Today we see the growing willingness of Member countries to turn to the United Nations to resolve their conflicts rather than to continue with armed hostility. We believe the United Nations can carry out its tasks as required by the Charter. It is of particular importance to us, as a small country, that this pattern of resolving conflicts be followed peacefully through the United Nations rather than by military force.

(Prince Mohamed Bolkiah,
Brunei Darussalam)

However, many long-standing problems still remain. The Palestinian people continue to be deprived of their right to self-determination and independence, which prevents them from returning to their homeland. Israel's policy of aggression and expansion in the occupied territories has further worsened the conflict. The ongoing uprising in the occupied territories should convince Israel that its occupation of the Palestinian lands can only bring insecurity and instability, both in the region and in Israel itself.

Israel cannot for ever deny the Palestinians their inalienable right to a homeland or remain hopeful that the Palestinians will one day just accept its rule. For this reason, my delegation supports the convening of the International Conference on the Middle East with the participation of the PLO as the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. The Conference will, we hope, find a just, lasting and comprehensive solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

In South Africa, the apartheid system of the racist régime in Pretoria has yet to be dismantled, despite the many international condemnations of the inhuman racist policies involving terror and suffering for the black population of South Africa and the neighbouring countries. We therefore call upon the international community to continue to apply pressure - political and economic - on South Africa so that its apartheid policies can be dismantled and that justice may prevail.

In our region, there have been hopeful signs that the Kampuchean problem can be resolved. For the first time, the four Kampuchean factions and representatives of concerned countries in the region met face to face in Bogor, Indonesia. The Jakarta Informal Meeting was a breakthrough and we hope it will lead to further meetings in order that the question of the foreign occupation of Kampuchea may be resolved. My delegation has always maintained that a comprehensive political

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settlement cannot be achieved as long as foreign forces still remain in Kampuchea. I therefore call for the withdrawal of foreign forces from Kampuchea so that the process of national reconciliation among all Kampuchians under the leadership of Prince Norodom Sihanouk can be promoted.

For 40 years the Korean Peninsula has remained tense owing to the conflict between the two Koreas. Brunei Darussalam is hopeful that the recent dialogue and initiatives by the two countries will bring about peace and stability leading eventually to national reunification. We also wish to renew our support for the admission of the Republic of Korea as a Member of the United Nations, if it so desires, in conformity with the principle of universality of membership of the United Nations.

It is tragic that this Organization should face severe financial problems at a time when it can make such a valuable contribution to peace. The financial crisis that threatens the United Nations is now having a crippling effect on its ability to perform.

None of us would like to see the United Nations reduced to bankruptcy and oblivion. On the contrary, we wish to see the United Nations strong and capable of meeting the challenges of today. A clear demonstration by all Members of their political support for the United Nations through the paying of their assessed contributions remains the only way of avoiding a position of weakness. In my delegation's view, we owe it to this and coming generations to sustain this Organization in order to ensure the survival of mankind in peace.

Today the world situation is more hopeful than it was a year ago and one message is clear, namely, that all signatories to the United Nations Charter must

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adhere to its basic principles. Furthermore, at a time when there are greater chances for peace, it is important that we should let the voice of the United Nations be heard. We must ensure a peaceful world for all of us to live in.

Mr. FISCHER (German Democratic Republic) (interpretation from German; English text furnished by the delegation): It is with satisfaction, relief and also, justifiably, great expectations, that people are becoming aware of encouraging changes in the course of international events. Tensions and confrontation have diminished, and an auspicious trend has set in.

For the first time in history a start has been made with real disarmament in one area. With a sense of relief the world is experiencing the destruction of highly sophisticated nuclear weapons as a result of the Treaty concluded between the Soviet Union and the United States of America.

It does indeed enhance confidence to see that political reason and a sense of political responsibility, as well as an awareness of the fact that the existence of nuclear weapons of mass destruction has changed the world, can overcome outdated ways of thinking and acting dictated by deterrence, with all its attendant risks.

Political dialogue has been revived, and is yielding encouraging results. There has been a noticeable upswing in efforts to settle peacefully the complex, protracted and costly regional conflicts and for the first time solutions are in sight.

Even though they are only the beginning of a turn for the better, these processes open up greater opportunities for action by the United Nations.

All this indicates that efforts with a view to détente and disarmament are worth while, that a turn for the better is feasible. In this context, the highest representative of the German Democratic Republic, Erich Honecker, noted during his

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recent visit to the Soviet Union that through its predictable and constructive policies, and with much initiative, the German Democratic Republic had a share in the most recent encouraging developments. He went on to say that matters of particular concern to the German Democratic Republic, as regards the future, were a secure peace and a turning away from confrontation in international relations and towards co-operation.

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To be realistic though, it should be noted that the situation in the world is still complex and contradictory. Mountains of weapons, both nuclear and conventional, keep on growing: nuclear-weapon tests are continuing, new types of arms are being tested and put into production. Plans for the weaponization of outer space have not been abandoned. Current military spending around the world amounts to a sum equivalent to the material damage caused by the two world wars put together.

Many scourges, hunger, disease, illiteracy, pollution of the environment, and underdevelopment, to mention only a few, are increasingly assuming proportions that make them a threat to mankind. Global catastrophes, whether of a military, economic, ecological or other nature, continue to be conceivable as long as the means for their prevention fall victim to arms policies for the sake of profit. We subscribe to the view that, not only must no hiatus be allowed to occur now in the disarmament negotiations, but there is a real need for further results, for only in this way is it possible for immense resources to be released to help resolve, or at least mitigate, mankind's global problems.

More than 30 years ago, when the cold war was pushing the world to the brink of a "hot" war, Bertrand Russell and Albert Einstein demanded, on the eve of the founding of the Pugwash Movement:

"We must learn to think in a new way. We have to learn to ask ourselves, not what steps can be taken to give military victory to whatever group we prefer, for there no longer are such steps; the question we have to ask ourselves is: What step can be taken to prevent a military contest of which the issue must be disaster for all parties?"

Since then, these perceptions have been shared world wide. It is true that, in the nuclear age, violence, war and confrontation have become unsuitable means of

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politics. Security can no longer be based on mountains of weapons, or mutual deterrence. Deterrence means - otherwise it would not be credible - perpetuation of the arms race. Deterrence counts on fear, engenders distrust and it can fail - not only in the event of irrational action but also because it is becoming more and more difficult for man to manage the highly sophisticated weapons systems.

The alternative is a security that counts on political, economic, ecological, cultural and humanitarian co-operation, along with the systematic diminution of the military factor. This concept can transform the shared risk in which - like it or not - the international community finds itself at present, into a fabric of security shared by all nations.

It is encouraging that the debate of this vital question has begun in East and West, and North and South. Let me call to mind the proposal of socialist States for a comprehensive system of international peace and security, and the proposals and ideas presented here by the Foreign Minister of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Let me recall the Six-Nation Initiative to build a new concept of global security without nuclear weapons, India's initiative to create a system of comprehensive global security, and the ideas of many Western European politicians to establish co-operative security structures and co-operative solutions.

All these endeavours to introduce a new concept of international relations meet with the support of the socialist German State. The conditions have now become mature enough to make it possible to push for results in the dialogue on security policies in the United Nations.

Admittedly, a world without weapons is still a distant hope. But measures for arms limitation and disarmament are the only means towards this end. The Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles - the INF Treaty - has proved that this road is practicable. Relevant proposals to this end were

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submitted by the Warsaw Treaty States at the session of the Political Consultative Committee of the Alliance last July. They envisage the following priorities: conclusion of a treaty on a 50 per cent reduction in Soviet and American strategic offensive arsenals together with strict adherence to the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty, to be followed by further steps to reduce the arsenals of nuclear weapons to the point of their elimination; a complete and general ban on nuclear-weapon tests and, as a step towards this goal, agreements between the USSR and the United States on decreasing the yield and number of their nuclear explosions; prevention of an arms race in outer space - to this end, a ban on anti-satellite weapons, the establishment of an inspectorate to observe all space launches, and the creation of an organization for the protection of outer space; a ban on chemical weapons; radical reductions in armed forces and in conventional armaments in Europe; the inclusion of naval forces in the disarmament negotiations; prevention of the military abuse of the latest scientific and technological achievements; establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones and zones of peace - wherever possible - as important steps on the road to general and complete disarmament; mutual observation of the implementation of commitments or of arms postures - which means real control through effective verification.

That will reduce mistrust, help gradually to overcome the image of the "enemy", and finally generate confidence and therewith a readiness for co-operation. The positive experiences resulting from the Stockholm Declaration are an encouragement in this regard.

The German Democratic Republic shares the view of the Six-Nation Initiative that it would be helpful to set up a multilateral verification system within the framework of the United Nations.

(Mr. Fischer, German Democratic Republic)

Regrettably, peace cannot be taken for granted, least of all in Europe, a continent which has lived through more years of war than of peace. For that reason more than 40 years of peace - the longest period of peace in Europe to date - should not make us forget that this peace is fragile because it is built on arms. In Europe there is a concentration of destructive military capabilities unparalleled anywhere else in the world. For this continent, where two devastating world wars have begun in this century, disarmament is a vital question, indeed a question of survival. On the other hand, Europe is the continent where the Helsinki Final Act and the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) process show that peaceful coexistence among States with different social systems is feasible and of undisputed benefit to all the parties involved.

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As for the remaining tactical nuclear weapons, their inclusion in the disarmament process in Europe should be called for most emphatically. The Berlin Conference on Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones, where the broadest spectrum of peace activists met for an all-embracing, equal and open dialogue, has strengthened our resolve to pursue the proposal, which we submitted jointly with the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, for denuclearization in Central Europe.

As for chemical weapons, a global ban should be instituted as soon as possible. Any methods - no matter who proposes them - will receive our support if they take us all closer to that goal with no further loss of time. In this respect, we welcome the new proposals put forward by President Francois Mitterrand. A chemical-weapon-free zone in Europe should be helpful in this context.

I wish to recall here the offer made to the Federal Republic of Germany by the German Democratic Republic and Czechoslovakia to make an immediate start on negotiations to free the territories of these States, or keep their territories free, from chemical weapons. The parts of the Convention on a comprehensive prohibition of chemical weapons that have already been agreed in Geneva - notably, those on verification - could be tested in a practical way in such a zone. Other steps conducive to a final agreement would be an exchange of data on chemicals to be banned under the Convention, as well as model inspections at production sites of the chemical industry. The German Democratic Republic has made relevant data available, and other States remain called upon to do the same.

The States parties to the Warsaw Treaty strongly support substantial reductions of armed forces and conventional armaments in Europe - that is, from the Atlantic to the Urals. The relevant three-stage proposal that they submitted in

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Warsaw takes account of the other side's ideas and could well provide a basis for negotiations, which could be opened as early as this year.

The Warsaw Treaty States desire a situation in which any surprise attack or operation would be impossible, only the forces and equipment required for defence would be retained. That presupposes that this is the very objective of the military doctrines of both alliances.

The plan to establish a zone of confidence and security in Central Europe, put forward by the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, Milos Jakes, like Wojciech Jaruzelski's memorandum on arms cuts in Central Europe, is an immediately practicable step, provided that there is a readiness in principle for confidence-building and arms limitation. The creation of a European centre to reduce the risk of war in Europe, or of a mechanism for peaceful crisis management in Central Europe - the installation of a "hot line" between Berlin, Bonn and Prague - or of mixed observation posts at strategically important points, would promote confidence-building and disarmament.

This and other material is what we could use, beginning at once, to build, brick by brick, the house of Europe in the spirit of the Helsinki Final Act.

It is with this very goal in mind that we strive to conclude the Vienna follow-up meeting at the level of Foreign Ministers as soon as possible with a substantive document that is balanced in all parts. This would make it possible to start, as early as this year, the generally desired negotiations on the reduction of armed forces and conventional armaments in Europe and to agree on further confidence-building measures.

The existence of two sovereign German States, independent of each other and with different social systems, is a constituent element of a peaceful European order. As far as relations between them are concerned, there is something I wish

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to underline: it is crucial that they be not a source of tensions and threats affecting the relationship between States in Europe, but rather a constructive factor in East-West relations. It is in the hands of the two German States to make their mutual relationship a desirable model of peaceful coexistence between States with different social systems. This should be possible if both sides take account of the existing realities and display political will, reason and realism. Such is the way to fulfil the obligation, undertaken by the two States, that never again must war, but only peace, start from German soil - an obligation reaffirmed by General Secretary Erich Honecker and Federal Chancellor Helmut Kohl in the joint communiqué published when the German Democratic Republic's highest representative paid an official visit to the Federal Republic about a year ago. The German Democratic Republic is ready to pursue this policy at any time.

Thanks to a calmer international situation, thanks to initial successes in arms limitation and disarmament, and, not least, thanks to the improved relations between the Soviet Union and the United States, conditions have become more favourable for the settlement of international conflicts as well. Progress on such problems, crucial as it is for world peace, is evident indeed. It confirms that dialogue, willingness to compromise, a sense of reality and perceptiveness are the only way towards just, comprehensive and lasting solutions. If positive results are to be achieved, all States should be committed to this aim, for all States, whether or not involved directly, are in any case directly affected. For these reasons it is both their right and their obligation to act rather than to remain aloof.

At the same time it has become obvious that the United Nations can assist in the peaceful settlement of international conflicts if and when all States, but chiefly the sides to the conflicts themselves, support the Organization in this

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effort. Our particular acknowledgement and gratitude go to the Secretary-General, Mr. Perez de Cuellar, for the numerous initiatives he has taken. We extend to him our sincere congratulations on the high distinction of the Nobel Peace Prize awarded to the United Nations peace-keeping forces, and encourage him to persist in his efforts.

(Mr. Fischer, German
Democratic Republic)

The Geneva agreements have been an important step towards bringing calm to the situation in and around Afghanistan. The Afghan people needs peace and national reconciliation to engage in reconstruction. For that, all sides must strictly fulfil the obligations they have undertaken. Externally supported terror and all kinds of foreign intervention must be discontinued.

Security Council resolution 598 (1987) has proved to be a sound basis for settling the tragic and costly fighting between Iran and Iraq. The negotiations that have been started must now convert the truce into a lasting peace. Maximum restraint by the parties directly involved in the conflict and the withdrawal of foreign naval forces could have a favourable bearing on the peace process.

As far as the situation on the Korean peninsula is concerned, the German Democratic Republic supports the proposals of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea for safeguarding peace and détente in that region.

The negotiations between Angola, Cuba and South Africa and the agreements reached so far in regard to attaining independence for Namibia should be viewed as an important step towards a political solution to the conflict in southern Africa. Implementation of Security Council resolution 435 (1978) continues to rank high on the agenda. But so long as apartheid persists in South Africa, destabilization and aggression will threaten the States of the region. Therefore, comprehensive and binding sanctions against the racist régime are a matter of necessity. Apartheid cannot be reformed: it must be abolished. Let me repeat on this Day of Solidarity with South African Political Prisoners: Nelson Mandela and all other patriots must be free at last.

We welcome the positive developments on the Horn of Africa, above all the peace agreement between Ethiopia and Somalia and the understanding between Ethiopia and Sudan.

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There is quasi-unanimity that an international Middle East conference would be the best way to find a comprehensive, just and hence lasting settlement to the protracted and extremely complex conflict in that region. It therefore would seem to be fitting for the Security Council to prepare a negotiating mechanism, at the level of foreign ministers if necessary. All interested parties, including the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and Israel, must of course participate in such a conference, to be held under the auspices of the United Nations. The Arabic "salaam" should be answered with a "shalom" from Tel Aviv.

The German Democratic Republic emphatically supports the Guatemala plan for peace in Central America. The Nicaraguan Government has been doing all it can to implement that plan fully. It is for the contras and the Power that supports them to go their part of the way towards a peaceful settlement of the conflict. Outside interference in Nicaragua must come to an end. The same applies to Panama.

The Jakarta Informal Meeting should be viewed as an expression of the endeavours of the Indochinese States to settle the Kampuchean conflict by political means. May the agreed consultations and the forthcoming talks between Chairman Hun Sen of the Council of Ministers and Prince Norodom Sihanouk be successful.

A source of hope is the resumption of negotiations between the leaders of the two communities towards resolving the Cyprus question.

The efforts being made to achieve a peaceful settlement of the problems concerning Western Sahara also meet with our support.

For the improvement of international relations to be enduring, united efforts are required, mainly for the observance of the supreme human right - the right to a life of peace. The German Democratic Republic advocates stepped-up co-operation to eliminate mass violations of human rights and to ensure implementation of all human

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rights - economic, social, cultural, civil and political. The lessons of the past and the responsibility for the future should be perceived as a common obligation to act against fascism and neo-fascism in all its manifestations.

Today more than 5 billion people live on earth, and by the turn of this century their number may well exceed 6 billion. They all need employment and food; they all have a right to shelter, health care and education. The solution of these formidable problems is becoming more and more an elementary condition for the maintenance of peace and security. The growth and prosperity enjoyed by some must no longer be attained at the expense and to the detriment of other States and peoples. There is an imperative need for co-operative solutions in overcoming underdevelopment, in the democratic restructuring of international economic relations, in international trade, monetary and financial relations, the environmental sector and many other fields of human activity. The United Nations constitutes the universal framework for efforts to achieve those ends.

It is necessary to draft expeditiously an international development strategy for the 1990s. A special session of the General Assembly on international economic issues, to be held in the year 1990, could be useful in that regard.

The external-debt problems of developing countries have to be solved globally and equitably - that is, in a manner that would guarantee a future of sustained growth and social progress for those countries.

No doubt, a system that would warn of risk factors in the world economy could strengthen economic security. A report on this subject should be submitted to the United Nations not later than 1989 - that is, next year.

The Warsaw Treaty States have put forward proposals in their declaration on "The impact of the arms race on the natural environment and other aspects of ecological security". The United Nations certainly has a special part to play in

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co-ordinating the efforts in the field of ecological security. Relevant proposals which have been submitted for holding meetings in this respect under United Nations auspices have our approval.

For the German Democratic Republic 1988 means 15 years of co-operation within the United Nations. I reiterate today what the then Foreign Minister, Otto Winzer, said 15 years ago - that the socialist German State respected without any reservations the purposes and principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter and desired that they guide the actions of States world-wide. This State remains committed to promoting the work of the United Nations.

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The possibilities and mechanisms available to Member States and to the Organization are not yet fully utilized. It is also crucial for the effectiveness of the United Nations that co-operation among all States on an equal basis should not be hampered by discriminatory and unjustifiable restrictions imposed on a certain number of permanent missions and reflected in the debates in the Committee on Relations with the Host Country.

The prestige and authority of the United Nations have been visibly enhanced through its latest peace-making efforts. That is an encouragement to redouble our efforts for the attainment of the lofty objectives of this world Organization. The German Democratic Republic, for its part, is ready to do that.

Mr. MURST (Antigua and Barbuda): Mr. President, I extend my country's congratulations to Mr. Dante Caputo on his election to the presidency of the forty-third session of the General Assembly. His ability and experience are well-known and we look forward to his wise counsel.

Permit me also to pay tribute to the former President, Mr. Peter Florin, for the skilful manner in which he directed our deliberations over the past year. His guidance was most encouraging as he manifested a keen commitment to international peace and worked with passion and zeal towards getting positive results.

In 1939, the working classes of Antigua and Barbuda formed an organization which has proved to be the catalyst of advancement and a leading force in securing our nation's independence. In January 1989 we celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the labour movement and we are pledged to continue working for the betterment of all of our citizens, while emphasizing the specific needs of workers - workers who express themselves openly and frequently on both domestic and international matters, workers who recognize the significance and importance of

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the United Nations and who embrace and are dedicated to the principle of peace. On their behalf, and on behalf of all the citizens of our twin-island State, I should like to offer sincerest congratulations to the United Nations peace-keeping forces on receiving the Nobel Peace Prize. We also wish to acknowledge the untiring efforts of the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, in building the bridges for the establishment of peace, and for the further strengthening of the operational machinery of this Organization.

In this, our forty-third session of the General Assembly, Antigua and Barbuda is pleased that there is now a mood of optimism present in international affairs. Yet, small countries such as Antigua and Barbuda have watched with dismay as more and more emphasis is placed on bilateralism by the more powerful and more dominant countries. This retreat from multilateralism, if allowed to continue, can lead to a decline in the role of the United Nations. Matters of interest to the global community necessitate the participation of all countries, irrespective of size, ideology or financial solvency. We adhere to the principle enunciated in the Nassau Declaration of World Order emerging from the 1985 Commonwealth Summit held in the Bahamas, that "in the world of today and tomorrow, international co-operation is not an option but a necessity".

We must remind ourselves that multilateralism is an expression of solidarity among States endeavouring to promote their mutual interests and to resolve conflicts through peaceful means and methods. We believe that the strength of multilateralism can only be assessed by how well it serves the international community in times of crisis and tension. In short, to negate the principle of multilateralism is to retreat and to completely erode the role envisaged for the United Nations by its founders - that of promoting peace, security, economic development and the self-determination of peoples yet unfree.

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Antigua and Barbuda bemoans the affliction of the world-wide community by the internationalization of crime, particularly terrorism and trafficking in narcotics. Both are of deep concern to our twin-island community. It is essential that multilateral co-operation be strengthened in an effort to save our own and future generations from those scourges. In specific regard to drugs, we are encouraged that the international conference on drug abuse has assigned a greater responsibility to the United Nations. Drug abuse breaks down the framework of the society which earlier generations have worked so very hard to build. It destroys our youngsters and literally turns many into unrecognizable creatures. As transit points in the trafficking of drugs, our small nations can be put at the mercy of wealthy and powerful drug barons. The major markets of consumption must therefore be called upon to apply greater initiative in combatting the drug problem since a significant decline in consumption will do much to help eliminate production. It is evident, however, that only through concerted action between producing, transit and major consuming States, will the international community be able to put an end to this scourge.

Since 1983, Antigua and Barbuda has been at the forefront on the question of Antarctica. It is therefore with deep regret that we learned of the decision of the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties (ATCP) to disregard totally and completely General Assembly resolution 42/46 of 30 November 1987 on the "Question of Antarctica". It is even further regretted that the racist régime of South Africa was allowed to participate in the ATCP negotiations held in Wellington from 2 May to 2 June 1988.

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Antigua and Barbuda was profoundly astonished when, during the general debate, one Member State declared that it is linked with Antarctica by its sovereignty, its history and continuity. The concept of sovereignty in regard to Antarctica is one that we cannot understand or consider. Antarctica must remain the heritage of all mankind, not the possession of a few large States.

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We will continue to work dauntlessly and steadfastly for consensus on the question of Antarctica and we pledge to continue pressing for a moratorium on negotiations to establish a minerals régime until all members of the international community can participate fully in such negotiations. We further appeal to the ATCP States to have the Secretary-General or his representative attend all meetings of the Treaty Parties.

Antigua and Barbuda is but one of the many small voices expressing their concern over the Antarctic issue. A joint approach by developing countries and other countries not members of the consultative group is necessary to achieve positive results. The United Nations has not been able to produce a consensus resolution on Antarctica since the year it was first placed on the agenda. However, unless the ATCP States broaden representation of the decision-making process, the United Nations will continue to be used as the forum in which non-ATCP States express their concerns and gain support for their position.

We take this opportunity to outline another position that is of primary concern to the economic planners in my nation. Since the thirty-ninth session of the General Assembly, island developing countries have emphasized that there has been a lack of sustained empirical work on our development experience. Enough attention has certainly not been paid to the problems centred around transportation, communication and marine issues. More examination needs to be given to the relationship between imports and exports and the problems involved in attracting foreign investment.

Antigua and Barbuda and other island developing States have repeatedly stressed that the use of traditional economic indicators in assessing our well-being are neither apt nor realistic. The overwhelming reliance on per capita gross national product presents major distortions. It does not reflect the fact

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that our island nations are too small to provide for our populations economically many services routinely afforded citizens of larger countries. It fails to reflect our inability to penetrate markets for our embryonic manufacturing industries, whose production levels reflect small size. It does not give an adequate representation of our vulnerability: that a single hurricane can set back our development 10 years or more, destroy 50 per cent of our housing stock, and completely devastate our agriculture and tourism industries. Witness Jamaica and the effects of hurricane Gilbert. Therefore we once again present a case for the use of more reliable economic performance indicators and for special assistance to island developing countries.

While recognizing the outstanding role the United Nations is playing in bringing about solutions to international problems, it is impossible for this Organization to continue its efforts at the same level with its existing financial situation. Consequently it behooves Member States to contribute to its support on a reliable and permanent basis. We say this even though it is most apparent that many countries are experiencing severe financial difficulties.

Well we know that the international community has to harness itself to tackle the difficulties posed by debt, by trade and commodity problems and by human resources development. The debt crisis can, however, be properly addressed only if debtor and creditor countries fully realize that our mutual interest lies in breaking the deadlock. We call for an environment that gives impetus to progress within developing countries and for a more vigorous and healthy growth in international trade.

Public anxiety has increased throughout the world with the knowledge that the greenhouse effect has begun to impact upon our planet and will cause even greater atmospheric changes in the years to come. The threat to the ozone layer has

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brought about the realization that no individual country acting alone can protect its own environment. We acclaim the adoption of the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer and hope that it will be followed by other measures to protect the atmosphere.

The threat to the ozone layer initially generated by affluent societies is inextricably linked with those of poverty, economic development and population growth. The reality is that the world's population will possibly double by the middle of the twenty-first century and that this growing population will be driven to use increasing amounts of irreplaceable natural resources which in turn will lead to the emission of higher levels of pollutants into the air by industry. In addition, the practice of trafficking in and the dumping of toxic wastes needs to be halted by immediate international action. We consequently join Norway in issuing a call for a strict international régime to protect developing countries from becoming a dumping ground for hazardous wastes. In the Caribbean, reliant as we are upon our natural beauty and cognizant of the fragility of our ecosystems, the dumping of hazardous wastes must not be allowed.

In this the fortieth anniversary of the proclamation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, we are appalled by the numerous violations of human rights in so many countries.

We are saddened by news of summary arrests and executions, the disappearance of individuals and the systematic practice of detention and killings of unarmed demonstrators. The protection of human rights is given high priority by my Government, and we firmly subscribe to the belief that human rights is for all people and all nations. To press for human rights is to join the struggle for democracy and advancement.

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South Africa, unfortunately, continues steadfastly with its evil policy of apartheid. The Secretary-General in his report stated that

"Developments in, or relating to, the continuance of a situation of racial discrimination, which is so repugnant to the spirit of our age, lend further force to the repeated - and hitherto unheeded - urgings of the international community that apartheid be dismantled". (A/43/1, p. 5)

We again call for the unconditional release of Nelson Mandela and all those incarcerated in South African gaols as a consequence of their struggle for their right to be free and to be liberated from all shackles of bondage in their own country.

Antigua and Barbuda wishes to urge once again the adoption of mandatory sanctions of a comprehensive nature against the Pretoria régime.

It is important here to reaffirm that apartheid cannot be reformed; it has to be abolished. The racist régime continues to stifle all opposition to its abhorrent practices, and this includes the insulation of South Africa from scrutiny by the international press and the banning of anti-apartheid organizations in that country. We consequently reaffirm our commitment to the just struggle of the oppressed people of South Africa and Namibia - people who remain undeterred despite the intensity of the brutality of the racist Pretoria régime.

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Antigua and Barbuda welcomes the prospect for peace in Angola and Namibia. Peace has evaded Angola since independence and the international community is looking forward to a withdrawal of all foreign troops from Angola's soil. Likewise, we look forward to the implementation of Security Council resolution 435 (1978), in an effort to bring peace and ultimate independence to Namibia. We are understandably both hopeful and sceptical, for well we remember that five years ago the Lusaka Agreement was to have produced a cease-fire, a disengagement on the part of South Africa, and the establishment of a joint commission for the purpose of monitoring. This agreement, however, collapsed by the end of the year of its inception, be it recalled.

In Central America, we recognize that the momentum for peace has faltered since the signing of the Esquipulas II agreement; yet we are certain that the principal merit of the agreement lies in the democratization it brings to the area. Antigua and Barbuda urges full compliance by all the parties concerned. We are appalled by the devastation of national economies and the misery generated by civil conflicts. It is our firm belief that these conflicts are rooted in poverty. There is thus a need for a broader approach than is now evident in the solution of Central America's problems. In the same vein, our hearts go out to the Panamanian people in this period of extreme difficulty, and it is our hope that there will be a quick resolution of the crisis.

In Afghanistan, the determined efforts of the Secretary-General and of Diego Cordovez produced, through the Geneva Accords in April, a basis for all Afghans to exercise their right to self-determination. The fact that this is the first instance in which the two most powerful States have become co-guarantors of an agreement negotiated under the auspices of the Secretary-General is of particular importance, especially to those of us from developing countries. This

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approach signals the beginning of the end of proxy wars waged by nations whose material (storehouse) can ill afford the squandering of scarce resources brought on by wars. We therefore urge all parties involved to co-operate with the United Nations good offices mission.

My country welcomes the new atmosphere which has emerged between the French Government and the Melanesian Kanaks as much as we applaud the initiation of a dialogue over the past year between the parties to the Kampuchean conflict. The people of Kampuchea yearn for peace and the framework has to be established in which citizens of that country are able to have a government from among their own - a government which will guarantee basic and fundamental human rights.

The yearning for peace is also evident in Cyprus. The fact that the two sides involved in the Cyprus conflict have expressed their desire to meet without pre-conditions and to attempt to reach a negotiated settlement on all aspects of their problems, augurs well for the future. We therefore encourage the Secretary-General to continue in his perseverance in obtaining a workable solution.

I turn to the Middle East. The situation in the Middle East continues to have the propensity for generating repercussions in a far wider sphere. We therefore urge the United Nations to continue in its quest to find a lasting settlement to the Middle East question - a settlement which will guarantee the right of all States and peoples in the region to exist in peace within recognized and secure borders. The best hope for such a solution lies in the convening of an international peace conference specifically geared to problems of the Middle East. The interests of all concerned are best served through dialogue and negotiation in an atmosphere dedicated to peaceful resolution.

A peaceful resolution in Lebanon is also desirable. The endless cycle of communal violence in Lebanon is most distressing. Antigua and Barbuda stands ready

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to endorse any proposal leading to full Lebanese sovereignty over the entire country which guarantees the withdrawal of foreign troops from the area.

One final word. In South-East Asia we acknowledge the existence of two Koreas as a consequence of the Second World War. We have, however, been pleased to hear of the new policy of the Republic of Korea as enunciated in the special declaration of President Roh Tae Woo on 7 July 1988. The President's statement embodies an epoch-making six-point policy on inter-Korean affairs and lays the basis for a reconciliation between the two countries.

The Republic of Korea is celebrating its fortieth anniversary. It has demonstrated full maturity, as evidenced by its hosting of the twenty-fourth summer Olympic Games in Seoul and the establishment of diplomatic relations with as many as 121 Member States of the United Nations. When we consider that there are other countries in the United Nations which had suffered the same divided fate as the Koreas, we can find no logical cause or explanation to deny the Republic of Korea membership in this body.

We are indeed thrilled that the United Nations has been an important participant in the easing of world tensions. We believe that the United Nations must continue to play an ever-increasing role in international affairs if peace and justice are to become universal. Small nation States like my own look increasingly to international law for protection, and we are keenly aware of the role of the United Nations in promoting respect for law.

As workers in Antigua and Barbuda prepare to celebrate 50 successful years of trade unionism, let us here commit ourselves in this forty-third session to securing for the world's peoples a greater degree of freedom and justice through this the parliament of parliaments.

The meeting rose at 11.50 a.m.