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GENERAL ASSEMBLY

PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE TWENTY-SEVENTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 11 October 1988, at 3 p.m.

President:

Mr. CAPUTO

(Argentina)

later:

Mr. BORG OLIVIER
(Vice-President)

(Malta)

Mr. PEJIC
(Vice-President)

(Yugoslavia)

- General debate [9] (continued)

Statements made by:

Mr. Bongo (Gabon)
Mr. Somare (Papua New Guinea)
Mr. Jones (Grenada)
Mr. Bwanali (Malawi)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 9 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. BONGO (Gabon) (interpretation from French): On behalf of the Gabonese Government Sir, I offer you most cordial and heartfelt congratulations on your election to preside over the forty-third session of the General Assembly. I am convinced that your experience, your long and praiseworthy career in international affairs, and the fact that you are a man of culture whose depth is recognized by all, augur well for a successful outcome to the session.

I am also happy to take this opportunity to greet in you, Sir, the representative of a great country, the Argentine Republic, with which the Gabonese Republic, my country, has commendably close relations.

I wish also to take this opportunity to pay tribute to Ambassador Peter Florin, your predecessor, for the outstanding way in which he guided the work of the forty-second session.

The Gabonese delegation includes in these congratulations and tributes to the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar. No praise is too high for his admirable initiatives and the action he has taken, aimed at calming tensions and securing the peaceful settlement of disputes, to give concrete form to the contribution of the United Nations, the strength of its principles and the soundness of its purpose of bringing about world peace and prosperity.

(Mr. Bongo, Gabon)

Gabon continues to be dedicated to those fundamental principles of international life as set forth in the Charter, just as we reaffirm that our foreign policy, based on the permanent quest for solutions conducive to peace and development, manifestly serves noble causes.

The work of this session is beginning at a turning-point in international relations, first with the commemoration this year of the fortieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, an ideal common to all peoples and all nations, and, secondly, with the setting in motion of a process of ending regional conflicts and eventually securing their definitive settlement by peaceful means.

On a number of occasions Gabon has emphasized that the establishment of the United Nations constituted a decisive phase in the history of the world and has expressed the hope that everything will be done to attain the goals and principles enshrined in the Charter in San Francisco. The fact that the Organization is contributing to the settlement or adjustment of conflicts by peaceful means demonstrates its ability to promote peace and international security. It is a source of satisfaction for my country to see the United Nations carrying out one of its missions in this way, thus earning the Nobel Peace Prize, which has been awarded to the United Nations peace-keeping forces. This is a fitting occasion to point out that this event received special attention from the President of Gabon, Mr. Omar Bongo, who addressed a special message of congratulations to the Secretary-General in this connection.

(Mr. Bongo, Gabon)

How can we fail to express our satisfaction at the series of negotiations now going on in order to resolve the problems of the independence of Namibia, the frontier dispute between Chad and Libya, the Western Sahara and the Iran-Iraq conflict - to mention only those. We can only welcome the positive developments in each of those disputes, at the same time urging the concerned parties to show a spirit of open-mindedness and dialogue.

The commemoration of World Namibia Day on 26 August last provided us with an opportunity to note with great interest the development of the situation in that part of Africa, which we believe is destined to achieve independence in the near future.

Gabon welcomes the conclusion of the Geneva Accord providing for the withdrawal of South African troops from Angola and has been following with interest the modalities of its implementation, which, to be effective, require the consent of the parties concerned, particularly the front-line States. It was in that spirit that the President of the Republic of Gabon took the initiative of meeting, on 1 October this year, at Franceville in Gabon, with the Heads of State of Angola and Congo. There they discussed the question of the peace and security in Angola and the independence of Namibia, noted with satisfaction the positive development of the quadripartite talks which will shortly resume in Brazzaville and welcomed the efforts made by the People's Republic of Congo in order to secure the successful conduct of the negotiations. Further, they encouraged the parties to the negotiations to do their utmost to achieve a final agreement as soon as possible, this being a prerequisite for lasting peace in the subregion. Without any doubt, such a meeting augurs well for the implementation of the provisions of the Geneva Accord, the purpose of which is to organize free elections, under United Nations supervision, in accordance with Security Council resolution 435 (1978).

(Mr. Bongo, Gabon)

The entry into force of the cease-fire in southern Angola and on the Namibian border, in accordance with the provisions recently accepted by the parties, confirms the positive role which they have played.

While we therefore welcome developments in southern Africa, we must remember that southern Africa consists of more than just Namibia. The problem of apartheid is more than a source of concern in that part of the continent and it remains as grave as ever. Apartheid is considered a crime against mankind, as it excludes from the exercise of power some 20 million blacks, who are constantly the victims of aggression and torture and whose lives are always in danger. It is thus a factor of permanent insecurity in international relations. Far from being excessive, the description of apartheid as a crime against mankind is now clearly widely accepted by the international community. Recently, under the auspices of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), two meetings were held in Harare, in Zimbabwe - an international conference of children against apartheid and a symposium of persons involved in science, the arts and letters, to promote the survival and development of children in the front-line States. That double meeting was an opportunity to re-emphasize the indignation felt throughout the world at the atrocities and sufferings inflicted on the black majority in South Africa.

At the Conference of Foreign Ministers of the non-aligned countries just held, in September, in Nicosia, representatives of States from all continents once again agreed on the wisdom of the description of apartheid as a crime against mankind and emphasized that its régime constitutes an insult to the universal conscience. The United Nations must attach prime importance to that judgement by the Non-Aligned Movement and find within itself the resources to meet this historic challenge.

(Mr. Bongo, Gabon)

The frontier dispute between Chad and Libya has always been in the forefront of the concerns of Gabon, particularly since the Organization of African Unity conferred upon it in 1977 the mandate of chairmanship and entrusted it with the work of the Ad Hoc Committee of Mediation charged with finding ways and means of bringing about a settlement. The forty-second session of the General Assembly has already given me the opportunity to report on the conclusions of the first summit meeting of that Ad Hoc Committee, held in Lusaka, Zambia, in September 1987. I now take pleasure in reporting that in fulfilment of the decisions taken at that time the second summit meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee met in Addis Ababa last May, during the twenty-fourth summit meeting of the Organization of African Unity. In accordance with a resolution adopted by that body, and on the invitation of the President of Gabon, the Foreign Ministers of Libya and Chad met at Libreville from 7 to 9 July last - for the first time, it should be noted, since the outbreak of the conflict. The representatives of the two parties then broached, in a spirit of open-mindedness and candour, all questions which needed to be discussed in order to bring about an atmosphere of trust conducive to the normalization of their relations in spheres of common interest, particularly those of diplomacy and co-operation.

(Mr. Bongo, Gabon)

The recent release by the authorities in Tripoli of Chadian prisoners, the recognition of the Nijamena Government by Libya, affirmed here again by my Libyan colleague, and the recent decision by the two countries to restore diplomatic relations are the logical sequence to the meetings that I have described. We can only welcome these events and express our keen hope that the two parties, in good faith, will make whatever efforts are necessary to resolve all the questions still pending in accordance with the charter of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the United Nations Charter, in a spirit of fraternity and responsibility and in co-operation with the Ad Hoc Committee.

With regard to Western Sahara, the Secretary-General's visit to Africa in February 1988 enabled him to focus attention on this issue. The decision taken at the forty-second session of the General Assembly by the Chairman of the OAU and the Secretary-General to send a technical mission to that region for fact-finding purposes and to secure acceptance by the two parties of the proposed United Nations peace plan, which provides for a cease-fire followed by a referendum on self-determination, is a source of satisfaction for my country. We follow this momentum for peace with particular attention, since it will lead to a climate of détente and co-operation in the inter-Maghreb zone.

With regard to the Iran-Iraq conflict, my country wishes to pay a well-deserved tribute to the Secretary-General and his Personal Representative for their efforts to ensure the successful outcome of the Geneva negotiations aimed at finding a compromise satisfactory to the two parties in accordance with Security Council resolution 598 (1987). My delegation takes this opportunity to appeal most emphatically once again to those two brother countries to associate themselves

(Mr. Bongo, Gabon)

fully and in good faith with the process for the settlement of this conflict that is now being pursued under United Nations auspices.

The situation in the Middle East, particularly recent developments in the occupied Arab territories, is a threat to international peace and security. That is why Gabon reaffirms and supports our Organization's insistence that any settlement of the Middle East crisis must necessarily involve the total and unconditional withdrawal of Israel from the Arab territories occupied since 1967; de jure recognition of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) as the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people; and recognition of the Palestinians' right to the free exercise of their right to self-determination and, especially, their right to their own State within internationally recognized borders.

Gabon also endorses the holding of an international conference on peace in the Middle East, under the auspices of the United Nations and with the participation of all the parties concerned, including the PLO.

The situation in Lebanon causes us great concern, in particular because of the excellent relations between Lebanon and Gabon. That is why we call upon all the parties concerned to put an end to this fratricidal struggle, and for an end to all the foreign interference that has caused the threat of partition to hang over that country.

With regard to the situation in Afghanistan, Gabon endorses the principle of the right of the Afghan people to decide for itself the form of its own government and to choose its economic, political and social system without foreign interference. My country welcomes all the efforts and initiatives that have

(Mr. Bongo, Gabon)

resulted in the withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghan territory, thus helping to bring about the political solution of the situation in that State.

We are also convinced that the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Kampuchea is a prerequisite for a just and lasting settlement of the problems of that country, which must regain its inalienable right to choose freely its political, economic and social system.

The situation in the Korean peninsula is still deadlocked. Gabon, which is pleased to count both Koreas among its best friends, will support whole-heartedly any initiative aimed at the reunification of Korea. The agreement which the two Koreas have reached on the inclusion in the Assembly's agenda of an item entitled, "Promotion of peace, reconciliation and dialogue in the Korean peninsula" is an encouraging development and prompts us to urge them to persevere in their search for a negotiated solution, for a united Korea would be a guarantee of peace and stability in South-East Asia.

The mounting tension in Central America is also a source of great concern to my country. Gabon reiterates its support for the Contadora Group and welcomes the additional contribution made by the Lima group, since these provide the framework necessary for dialogue and better mutual understanding in the region.

In mentioning these various conflicts I intend only to highlight the commitment of the United Nations and various Member States, particularly the super-Powers, to reach a settlement, with the increasing help of the Secretary-General.

The third special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, which was held in New York from 31 May to 24 June last, was preceded by the American-Soviet agreement on the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles - INF Treaty - in December 1987, demonstrated that the

(Mr. Bongo, Gabon)

protagonists on the international scene are acting in keeping with the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Particularly meaningful in this general movement are the agreements that have been reached and the events that have taken place in the field of disarmament in the course of this year between the two super-Powers, which will contribute to reinforcing détente in international relations. That is why my country welcomes with interest not only the American-Soviet agreement, but also the inclusion in the agenda of the current session of item 72, "Review of the implementation of the Declaration on the Strengthening of International Security".

Gabon considers, in particular, that resolution 42/92, adopted at the previous session of the General Assembly and containing a provision calling upon members of the Security Council to take appropriate and effective measures to turn Africa into a nuclear-free zone, deserves practical follow-up. It is specifically in this context that Gabon, concerned about the future of Africa, notes with alarm and is watching the compelling manoeuvres, both treacherous and illegal, directed towards making our continent the depository, the rubbish-bin, for the toxic wastes of the industrialized countries. The agreements entered into for this purpose between some African countries and multinational enterprises have quickly been revealed as fool's bargains.

(Mr. Bongo, Gabon)

Hence, at the most recent summit meeting of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in Addis Ababa last May, such an operation was viewed as constituting a criminal act against Africa and African populations and that meeting recommended that member States of the OAU should participate in a working group to prepare a world convention to monitor trans-border carriage of harmful wastes.

My country can all the more easily endorse that step because it has not responded to the various offers that have been extended to it to give all or any part of its territory to those new merchants of death for the purpose of storing their dangerous products. Similarly, it endorses any initiative that has been taken within the United Nations directed towards preparing an international convention on the transfer of waste. We are therefore pleased to see that this question has been included on the agenda of our work and we express the hope that the General Assembly will consider it with all due attention. For our part, we are convinced that the industrial development of Africa must not become counter-productive, in particular by destabilizing its ecological and human balances. Development must be achieved in security in order truly to be a bearer of peace.

Hence, security and development are interconnected. Disarmament and development are as well. This is a concern which, upon the initiative of our Governments, is being discussed in various international bodies, both at the world level and at the regional level. In this connection, my country approves the work that has been carried out by the Regional Centre of the United Nations for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, which met in Lomé, Togo, last February.

(Mr. Bongo, Gabon)

It is easy to note that, beginning from our Organization and its own involvement, this wind of peace that is blowing throughout the world is dependent upon the will of the parties to conflicts themselves, and, generally speaking, upon the restored spirit of mutual trust in the conduct of current international relations.

The work of the United Nations is not solely restricted to the political sphere. All Member States will agree in noting that the United Nations recently has been concerned at the particularly critical economic situation on the African continent. A number of its initiatives have led to the establishment, in December 1986, of a Steering Committee composed of the directors of United Nations agencies, as well as the establishment of an Advisory Group on Financial Flows to Africa. Each of these mechanisms is to recommend to the United Nations solutions which can limit the serious financial problems which our countries are experiencing.

With regard to the Advisory Group on Financial Flows to Africa, the most recent Conference of Ministers of the Non-Aligned Countries noted that it had estimated a yearly shortfall of approximately \$5 billion between the real needs of African countries and prospective contributions. On the basis of that estimate, the Conference felt that it should emphasize the urgent need to reduce that shortfall. It seems timely to me to point out that the economic situation in Gabon clearly deteriorated in 1986, just at a time when its fifth five-year plan, begun in 1984, had very nearly achieved its objectives. In the course of that difficult year, the average price of Gabonese oil, our main source of revenue, fell by more than one half, the slump of crude and the decline in the rate of the United States dollar being at the root of that movement. The outcome has been a drastic decline in our gross national product. This handicaps our development and prevents us from finding solutions to our ills. These include insufficient infrastructure in river

(Mr. Bongo, Gabon)

transport and telecommunications; the use of migrant labour, which is expensive for the country; and the weakness of the agricultural sector, sharpened by the rural exodus.

With regard to this last point, I should like to tell you that Gabon is able only to meet 20 per cent of its food needs itself. The remaining 80 per cent dangerously affects our balance of payments, resulting in insufficient savings and systematic recourse to loans in order to finance any projects, to such an extent that debt servicing is becoming ever more heavy.

Here and now I should like to thank the authorities of the United Nations Development Programme which, in the course of its work in the Governing Council in Geneva, from 6 June to 1 July last, annulled Gabon's obligation to become a net contributor to reimbursing pre-financing of some of our projects. This evidence of attention and pragmatism on the part of international organizations towards our country constitutes assistance which we appreciate at its proper value.

However, these are not the only reasons why we are concerned when we know that, between 1985 and 1987, the countries of sub-Saharan Africa paid the International Monetary Fund a net amount exceeding \$2.2 billion and, as was noted in 1986 by the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, Mr. Adebayo Adedeji, the decline in commodity prices and debt servicing caused an outflow of capital at an amount of \$34 billion while, at the same time, Africa received no more than \$18 billion.

The Final Declaration of the seventh session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in Geneva in July-August 1987 sheds a new light on our apprehensions in that, in view of the instability in export revenue from our commodities and the resultant vulnerability of the economies of our countries, UNCTAD is advocating a diversification of exports on the one hand and the preparation of studies of phenomena that impede such diversification.

(Mr. Bongo, Gabon)

Despite a slight increase in commodity prices in 1983-1984, the unfavourable conditions that weighed on our markets since the beginning of the 1980s continued in 1985. The weakness of commodity prices in the course of recent years is due to the fact that despite increased supply of products, demand has hardly increased.

With regard to debt, in order to avoid its increase, our countries have had to reduce imports and sums reserved for investment. Despite this, the debt of Africa exceeds \$200 billion.

(Mr. Bongo, Gabon)

The debt and its servicing, between 1984 and 1986, averaged \$10 billion a year. The figure will exceed \$15.5 billion between 1987 and 1989.

In its 1988 report the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) emphasized that in sub-Saharan Africa the per capita gross national product had declined by 14 per cent in real terms between 1980 and 1987, and said that this debt burden had destabilized internal economies by sharpening social conflicts and affecting expenditure on improving the human resources and material infrastructures essential for future development.

These data, which were reported to the Society for International Development by Mr. Stephen Lewis, the former Permanent Representative of Canada to the United Nations and now the Secretary-General's Special Adviser in connection with the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990, revealed the extraordinary situation that our countries are confronting. That is why the member countries of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) defined a common position regarding the urgent convening of an international conference on African debt, since it is the aim of our countries to embark resolutely on the path of economic growth and development. The recent proposal of the Head of State of Gabon for a discounting of African countries' debts has the same objective.

Taking all this into account, the Secretary-General has emphasized that the margin of manoeuvre available to Africa in the implementation of the Programme of Action has been reduced by an unfavourable financial climate. This justifies his conclusion that it is essential for the international community to act speedily to free additional financial resources and increase flexibility.

(Mr. Bongo, Gabon)

I cannot conclude without referring to some social and cultural aspects of man's development in his dual dimension, individual and collective, which has been one of the concerns of our country, and, first and foremost, human rights, which cannot be forgotten this year as we commemorate the fortieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Careful thought and the experience gained regionally, nationally and internationally have convinced us that there can be no development without a policy of promoting and protecting human rights, just as there can be no promotion and protection of human rights without a peace policy.

Gabon, a delegation which participated in the work of the meeting of the Governing Council of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in New York from 18 to 29 April 1988, greatly appreciates the recommendations made by that institution for overcoming the present particularly difficult economic situation. Among the measures proposed, the promotion of "human adjustment", which is designed to protect vulnerable groups while struggling effectively against the economic crisis, and the Bamako initiative, designed to lead towards the establishment of a self-help system with regard to medical assistance, enjoy our country's support.

As UNICEF has indicated in its 1988 annual report, the mortality rate for children under 3 years of age remains very high, at approximately 174 per 1,000. Our country is pursuing a social policy with the following objectives: to contribute to protecting the family, children and youth; to participate in the fight against such major endemic social scourges as tuberculosis, leprosy, alcoholism, venereal diseases and diarrhoea, epidemics, mental illness and juvenile delinquency.

(Mr. Bongo, Gabon)

In the context of this policy, vaccination, thanks to the expanded vaccination programme, carried out in our country with the assistance of UNICEF, had covered more than 50 per cent in 1987. Pediatricians noted five times fewer cases of measles than in previous years. Our country is pleased to see that UNICEF's activities have found their place within the broader context of the Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990. This satisfaction extends also to the recommendation made by the Governing Council of UNICEF that the needs and priorities of women be taken into account in all projects that receive its assistance.

With regard to all these activities, Gabon would like to express its special gratitude to the United Nations for its pragmatism and effectiveness. Much certainly remains to be done. That is why I take this opportunity to assure the Assembly of my country's readiness to co-operate with the Organization so that together we may contribute to the progressive improvement of the social condition of mankind.

At this moment, as we reaffirm our dedication to the purposes and principles of the United Nations, we must declare faithfully that we will do nothing that might impede their achievement. Let us commit ourselves to do our utmost to ensure that these words become a reality, that the Organization truly becomes an effective tool in the service of peace, freedom, security and justice - values which mankind has perhaps lost, but which it hopes to regain in order to recover its self-esteem.

This is the message that I address to the representatives of other nations meeting in this Assembly, and the commitment that I reiterate on behalf of the President of the Republic, Mr. Hadj Omar Bongo, and the Government and people of Gabon as a whole.

Mr. SOMARE (Papua New Guinea): I congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the important post of President of the forty-third session of the General Assembly. My delegation shares the confidence that the members of this body have placed in you. Let me assure you of my delegation's full co-operation in the discharge of the high duties entrusted to you.

May I also take this opportunity to place on record my country's appreciation of a job well done by your predecessor, Mr. Peter Florin.

I have had the honour of addressing the General Assembly on two previous occasions in my capacity as Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea: on 10 October 1975, shortly after my country gained independence, and in 1983.

(Mr. Somare, Papua New Guinea)

I am especially honoured to be able to represent Papua New Guinea as Foreign Minister at the forty-third session of the General Assembly, an occasion which marks the fortieth anniversary of the adoption by the General Assembly of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

As I stated on those two previous occasions, Papua New Guinea regards the United Nations as having a special role in working for the resolution of tensions and conflicts and for building a stronger framework for international co-operation based on mutual respect and understanding.

Papua New Guinea remains committed to playing its part in contributing to this objective. As in previous years, the agenda for this session of the General Assembly is a complex one. Many pressing issues remain unresolved, and many uncertainties still exist in international relations, uncertainties which have a direct impact on the development processes of a great number of developing countries, including Papua New Guinea. But despite these uncertainties, there can still be some cause for hope and optimism. It can be said with a measure of confidence that a number of positive steps have been taken in tackling problems which are the subject of this session's attention.

My delegation highly commends the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, for his unwavering efforts in upholding the purposes and principles of the Charter. We also commend the comprehensive report he has presented to the Assembly. It is especially pleasing to note the progress that is being made in respect of the situations concerning Afghanistan, the Iran-Iraq conflict, Namibia, Kampuchea and Cyprus.

But his report also underlines other pressing issues, including disarmament, trade, finance and human rights, where more resolute international action is required. We remain convinced of the need for a strengthened United Nations system

(Mr. Somare, Papua New Guinea)

to play a central role in promoting peace and security and more equitable economic relations between developed and developing countries.

Our own region in the South Pacific is comparatively free of major conflicts. Indeed, the region continues to enjoy peace and stability. But there are some changing trends and, unlike the past, more countries and organizations beyond the South Pacific are showing an interest in engaging actively with the region. The South Pacific is not immune from the effects of international tensions and many of the worrying trends in the world economy. Our region is one where in some parts colonialism has not been brought to an end, where in other parts nuclear activities continue to be conducted, despite strong protests from Governments of South Pacific nations, and one where there are growing tendencies for big-Power rivalry.

The South Pacific community is made up of many small island States scattered in a vast expanse of ocean, which depend on only a small number of agricultural and marine products for their livelihood and export income. I am pleased to be able to say that there have also been some positive trends in the South Pacific since the last session of the General Assembly.

In New Caledonia, constructive progress has been achieved by the French administration in re-establishing dialogue between different ethnic groups in the Territory. One year ago, my predecessor drew the Assembly's attention to the presence of a large number of French security personnel stationed in New Caledonia which, among other things, served to intimidate the Kanak people in their just struggle to seek independence from France.

In April this year, Papua New Guinea and other island nations were outraged by the merciless killing of 16 Kanaks by French security forces and the build-up of tension in the Territory. We are pleased that the Rochard administration has now set in train a process that will bring about positive changes for the better.

(Mr. Somare, Papua New Guinea)

The framework agreement concluded in Paris in August provides a basis on which the different communities in New Caledonia can work together in a spirit of reconciliation and understanding to achieve independence. But not all causes of tension have been removed. New Caledonia is on the United Nations list of Non-Self-Governing Territories. The Assembly, therefore, has a responsibility to continue monitoring developments in New Caledonia. We also hope that the administering Power will live up to all its responsibilities and obligations as provided for in the Charter of the United Nations.

Papua New Guinea has also closely followed developments in other Territories in the Pacific. In the case of the Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of Marshall Islands, we believe that the people of those States have expressed their wishes on their political future. Political evolution in those States has been consistent with United Nations principles and practices. Papua New Guinea has therefore established full diplomatic relations with the Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of Marshall Islands. We urge other Member States of the United Nations to do the same. We hope that the way will be clear for the people of Palau and the United States Administration to resolve outstanding matters affecting Palau's political future.

Papua New Guinea is a full and active member of the South Pacific Forum, the major regional organization of the South Pacific. We continue to work with other member States of the South Pacific Forum in opposing nuclear testing and the dumping of nuclear wastes in our region.

The South Pacific Nuclear-Free-Zone Treaty and the South Pacific Regional Environment Protection Convention are the two most important instruments established to safeguard the environment of our region. Papua New Guinea will shortly ratify both these Treaties.

(Mr. Somare, Papua New Guinea)

The decision by the Governments of the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China to ratify Protocols 2 and 3 of the South Pacific Nuclear-Free-Zone Treaty is a welcome development. We urge other nuclear Powers similarly to ratify the Protocols and to respect the operation of the Treaty in the South Pacific.

At a recent meeting of Heads of Government of South Pacific nations in September it was decided to put in place a number of new arrangements to facilitate more constructive dialogue and exchanges with other countries and organizations. A Forum institutional network has been created to bring together all regional bodies operating in the South Pacific for improved co-ordination and collaboration. Regular high-level consultations between the nations of the South Pacific and interested third countries are proposed to take place each year immediately following the annual meeting of Heads of Government. These arrangements are intended to draw greater international attention to the development needs and constraints of the island nations of the South Pacific, to draw attention to our resource potential and to mobilize appropriate resources to contribute to economic development, self-reliance, capacity building and the social progress of our people.

(Mr. Somare, Papua New Guinea)

The entry into force in June this year of the multilateral fisheries arrangement between the Government of the United States and the Governments of Pacific islands nations has been an important step forward not only for the development of the region's principal resource - fisheries - but also for the expansion of economic relations in our region. Papua New Guinea would welcome similar fishing arrangements with other major fishing nations. We urge the Government of Japan to continue the dialogue with island States with a view to concluding a multilateral fishing arrangement soon.

The South Pacific region is relatively unknown among the majority of the States Members of the United Nations, and to many United Nations agencies. The needs of the island communities in the South Pacific are great. The South Pacific Forum has taken important initiatives to encourage other nations and organizations to contribute to the development of our region in fields where they are able to assist. Other important regional initiatives are to follow, in arrangements dealing with trade, transport and telecommunications.

Regional co-operation has been a corner-stone for the development of many United Nations programmes. We see a pressing need for many of the United Nations organs to be more sensitized and reoriented to the real needs and aspirations of the island nations of the Pacific.

Papua New Guinea's interests extend beyond the South Pacific region. We seek to strengthen our ties with the countries members of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN). Our ties with ASEAN have steadily expanded in recent years. We continue to value our special observer status at the annual meetings of ASEAN foreign ministers. My Government is pleased also that the ASEAN nations have agreed to our request to be allowed to accede to the Treaty of Amity and Co-operation in South-East Asia.

(Mr. Somare, Papua New Guinea)

The situation in Kampuchea continues to give cause for concern. My delegation notes with guarded optimism the developments and initiatives seen in the past 12 months relating to the Kampuchean problem. The informal talks held in Jakarta, Indonesia, by all the parties concerned with the Kampuchean issue are a welcome development. My delegation believes that the Kampuchean problem will be resolved not only by the unconditional withdrawal of Vietnamese forces but also by the prevention of the return of the genocidal policies and practices of Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge. Papua New Guinea commends the efforts of the ASEAN group of countries to resolve this outstanding problem of our region.

The situation of the Korean peninsula is also of concern to my Government. We appeal to the Governments of the People's Democratic Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea to continue to seek ways whereby dialogue and reconciliation can prevail. My delegation notes favourably the recent initiatives contained in the July 1988 Declaration issued by the President of the Republic of Korea aimed at enhancing the prospects for reunification. We urge the Governments of both countries to reflect the wishes of their people, who earnestly hope for early reunification. My Government is of the view that the admission of the People's Democratic Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea to the United Nations has the potential for opening up an additional avenue for dialogue. My Government associates itself with the growing number of Governments that wish to see North and South Korea join the United Nations.

The Iran-Iraq war represents one of the most unfortunate and saddest mobilizations of people in recent times. The unnecessarily prolonged conflict has cost so many lives and inflicted misery on so many persons. My delegation joins other delegations in welcoming the 20 August cease-fire. In that connection, we commend the tireless efforts of the Secretary-General, Mr. Perez de Cuellar.

(Mr. Somare, Papua New Guinea)

The members of the Security Council have demonstrated the necessary political will to find an early solution to the Iran-Iraq war, and we commend them also. The leaders of Iran and Iraq owe it to their people to restore peace and harmony as soon as possible. Security Council resolution 598 (1987) provides a sound basis for the early resolution of the unfortunate conflict.

Recent events in the Middle East call for more efforts to be made to address the underlying causes of tension and conflict. My delegation believes that the Palestinians have a right to a homeland. Israel, too, has a right to exist within secure borders. Those two conditions are fundamental to any lasting solution to the problem.

The situation in Central America, especially in Nicaragua, deserves the understanding of the leaders of that region and those who are in a position to influence the outcome. We commend those leaders in that region who have demonstrated foresight and sensitivity to the problems in their midst. My delegation recognizes the value of the regional approach to the problems there.

Every year we have come to the General Assembly with expectations that some concrete measures would be taken in response to the problem of apartheid in South Africa. But, despite many resolutions by the United Nations, the problem still exists. My delegation believes that the option of mandatory sanctions against South Africa holds some prospects for success. We acknowledge that such a course of action, if adopted, could create economic hardship. But what other options are there? Economic hardship can be corrected over time, but left unattended apartheid will continue to create oppression and suffering.

Recent signs that the people of Namibia could regain their freedom and sovereignty give us some hope. Papua New Guinea urges all parties that are in a position to bring about a favourable outcome to spare no effort to facilitate progress towards Namibia's long-awaited achievement of independence.

(Mr. Somare, Papua New Guinea)

We in the Pacific are made up of mainly small States; yet we are linked with the international community in many significant ways. Our environment may be less troubled than perhaps that of others, but we continue to be highly vulnerable to influences of the international environment.

Keeping our region free of big-Power rivalry and of nuclear activities is an issue to which Papua New Guinea continues to attach considerable importance. The conclusion last December by the United States and the Soviet Union of the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles is an important step forward in disarmament and arms control. But more can and should be done in this area by all those who possess nuclear weapons. Like other representatives who have addressed the Assembly, we believe there is a pressing need for further steps to be taken if effective disarmament, arms reduction and arms control are to be achieved.

As I have sought to set forth earlier, vulnerability stems also from limited opportunities to promote economic development. Papua New Guinea attaches importance to international efforts aimed at dealing with the growing problems of trade protectionism, debt-servicing and the slow-down in financial transfers to developing countries.

(Mr. Somare, Papua New Guinea)

We have taken full account of the many comments that delegations have made in relation to the role and effectiveness of the United Nations at the present time. While the Organization has not been able to deal with all problems affecting the international community, there are positive signs that the United Nations machinery has been given a chance to work. Some momentum has developed in tackling a good number of problems for which solutions have been sought for a long time. Let us not waste this opportunity.

Mr. JONES (Grenada): I bring greetings from the Government and people of my country. My delegation joins, Sir, in the many expressions of esteem, felicitation, confidence and goodwill addressed to you as you assume the high office of President of the forty-third session of the General Assembly, to which the world looks with high expectancy and fervent hope for abundant success.

Additionally, grateful appreciation is extended to your immediate predecessor, Mr. Peter Florin, Deputy Foreign Minister of the German Democratic Republic, for his skilful and expeditious conduct of the historic forty-second session of the General Assembly.

My delegation wishes to place on record its pride in and gratitude for the outstanding contribution that the Secretary-General is making to the international community through his sound, skilful, judicious, committed and unobtrusive leadership.

It is no accident that in many areas of the world peace appears to be springing forth. This can be attributed to the realization that there is nothing to be gained by the indefinite prolongation of conflicts within and among nations. On the contrary, so much is lost in terms of human lives and scarce resources that if conflicts are allowed to continue indefinitely, there can be neither winners nor losers in the end.

(Mr. Jones, Grenada)

The wind of change that is blowing in the direction of peace in the international community provides a favourable climate for its enhancement. The Secretary-General, a tireless disciple of peace, in his report on the work of the organization, dated 14 September 1988, said of the United Nations:

"the small boat in which all the people of the Earth were gathered seemed to have caught a light but favourable wind." (A/43/1, p. 2)

Continuing that nautical metaphor, permit me to quote the words of the immortal William Shakespeare:

"There is a tide in the affairs of men,

Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;

Omitted, all of the voyage of their life

Is bound in shallows and in miseries." (Julius Caesar, IV: iii)

The pieces of peace - if I may be permitted this clumsy pun - that are breaking out in certain regions of the world, afford the international community, whose prestige is on the rise, the opportunity to sail with the flood tide in the pursuit of peace.

Grenada reaffirms its unswerving commitment to the United Nations, the Organization of American States, the Commonwealth, the Caribbean community and all other regional or international organizations which assist us in achieving our foreign policy objectives, the centrepiece of which is peace.

My delegation notes with profound satisfaction the new détente and rapprochement between the super-Powers, whose relationship has for so long been a cause of concern in the international community. We hope that the improvement in relations will continue and serve to reduce tensions around the world. We take this opportunity to congratulate President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev on their contributions, and to urge them to continue their dialogue so that the

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process now begun may lead to a significant and internationally acceptable level of arms reduction, both nuclear and conventional - the kind of contribution to international peace and security that the world so desperately needs.

Against this background, the international community notes with pleasure the strides made in the past months to secure peaceful solutions to seemingly intractable situations in certain regions of the world.

In Afghanistan, the Geneva Accords, negotiated under the auspices of the Secretary-General and guaranteed by the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, afford the region the first real opportunity for the peaceful resolution of the conflict, which can provide the basis for self-determination by the Afghan people.

The cease-fire, on 20 August, in the long and costly Iran-Iraq war, followed by face-to-face talks five days later in Geneva between high level representatives of the two countries, with the Secretary-General as mediator, gave hope to the world that at long last a long and costly conflict would finally come to an end. I wish, however, to remind the Assembly of the continuing plight of the members of the Bahai faith in Iran. They continue to suffer persecution and death because of their religious belief. The continuance of that problem will always be a hindrance to the attainment of peace and stability in that country, and I again call upon this body to take such steps as would cause the Iranian Government to grant to the Bahais their God-given right to the sacred freedom to worship God in their own way.

The quadripartite discussions taking place among Angola, Cuba and South Africa, with the United States as mediator, offer some hope that with goodwill, good

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judgement and, whenever possible, resort to non-confrontational and non-adversarial positions, the independence of Namibia may be possible without further bloodshed or delay.*

In the interval between the last session of the General Assembly and the present, the situations in Cyprus, Kampuchea and Western Sahara have shown encouraging signs of peaceful resolution through political and diplomatic negotiations.

*Mr. Borg Olivier (Malta), Vice-President, took the Chair.

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There remain, however, other regional problems of concern to the international community. In the Middle East the festering relationship between Israel and the Palestinians has been further exacerbated by recent events on the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip. It is the hope of my delegation that those who preside over the destiny of nations, espousing first as individuals peace in their own hearts, will be capable of devising a formula that will be acceptable to all parties, that is to say a formula that satisfies the quest of the Palestinians for a homeland and protects their right to self-determination and recognizes the existence of Israel as a sovereign, independent State and also its right to exist within secure and recognized boundaries.

The situation in Central America, where it was hoped that the signing of the Guatemala Procedure in August 1987 by the five Central American Presidents would quickly bear fruit, remains a matter of cautious optimism.

Nevertheless my delegation views with a tremendous measure of satisfaction the efforts of the people of the region collectively to assess and define their security needs and to minimize the threat to the peace and stability of the area. We laud the leaders of the region for their initiatives to resolve their problems within the framework of consultation, co-ordination, co-operation and joint endeavour.

The fate of the Korean peninsula - basically one family, now divided into two parts as a result of the Second World War - is a perfect example of the futility, idiocy and tragedy of war. This dichotomous arrangement has resulted in prolonged human suffering of the most heart-rending kind, where families related by affinity, consanguinity and spiritual relationship have been torn apart with only occasional opportunity to visit one another.

My delegation spoke in the general debate last year. We expressed the view that, through the universal medium of sports and through the universal language of

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music, the world stood the best chance of attaining the universal goal of brotherhood. My delegation is still of that opinion. This reference was made in connection with the XXIV Olympiad recently completed in Seoul. We extend heartfelt congratulations to the Government and people of the Republic of Korea for successfully hosting the twenty-fourth Summer Olympic Games in Seoul, substantially free from politically motivated boycotts and tragedies.

Moreover, it is the prayer and hope of my delegation that the inclusion of the item entitled, "Promotion of peace, reconciliation and dialogue in the Korean peninsula", in the Assembly's agenda at this session will be debated constructively, rationally and in the spirit of conciliation, to the end that a satisfactory resolution of the Korean dichotomy might appear on the horizon. In the case of the Korean peninsula, as in the case of so many areas of conflict, we need to explore the many hidden similarities in our apparent diversity. Let us concentrate on our collective strength rather than on our individual frailty.

In view of the recent successes of the United Nations in mediating disputes in the international community, the time has come for us to consider seriously whether or not the objective of attaining national reunification between North and South Korea through dialogue and negotiation would be realized if both countries were granted full membership of the United Nations. We have a moral obligation to attempt to ensure that peace, stability and reconciliation do not continue to elude the people of the Korean peninsula. I therefore wish to propose that this question of membership be given immediate consideration so that the over 70 million people of the peninsula could be accorded their right to representation among the membership of this Organization.

I crave the indulgence of delegations to speak a few words with respect to my country, Grenada, five years after it was rudely and abruptly thrust upon the national and international scene following the execution of the Prime Minister and

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a number of innocent citizens as a result of a vicious intraparty struggle for power. This dramatic and cataclysmic episode took place on 25 October 1983. After law and order were restored, an interim administration was created. Its main term of reference was to create the climate and prepare the country for general elections and the return to pluralistic, participatory, parliamentary democracy, which Grenada had always enjoyed except in the period 1979 to 1983, when ideological bigots came into power, having overthrown the elected government by force. In the general elections one year later, in December 1984, the people of Grenada elected my party by an overwhelming majority. I am happy to report to this fraternal forum of the United Nations that today Grenada is at peace and that human rights and individual freedoms are scrupulously guaranteed.

A few cardinal principles inform and constitute the basis of our conduct within the global family, that is, equality, respect for the sovereignty and independence of States and for their right freely to choose their social and economic systems. Grenada does not subscribe to reproach and recrimination in pursuit of its international relations.

My delegation wishes to refute as utter nonsense the propaganda of a few disgruntled members of this fraternal forum to the effect that there are still foreign forces in my country. The few countries which persist in this course of conduct have neither a democratic experience nor a democratic culture. I am pleased to report that the ballot-box replaced the gun as the ultimate instrument of political discourse in Grenada and to state boldly, categorically and without fear of challenge that there are no foreign troops in my country and that this has been so since 1985.

Grenada shares the concerns and suffers the consequences of the vulnerability of island developing countries, in particular, and of developing countries, in

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general. With regard to the question of the specificity of the problems of island developing countries, the destruction recently visited upon Jamaica by Hurricane Gilbert also brings into sharp focus the vulnerability of islands to natural disasters.

It is to be hoped that in devising a strategy of emergency assistance to Jamaica the international community would bear in mind the fragility of island economies. Moreover, under agenda item 82 (b), the General Assembly is being called upon to countenance a series of measures that could alleviate the problems experienced by this specific category of developing countries.

My delegation issues a call to United Nations agencies and individual nations to respond more favourably to our valid appeals for special consideration.

The General Assembly should also be cognizant of the threat to the ecosystem of island developing countries posed by coastal pollution resulting from the dumping of wastes at sea. Indeed, the recent unpleasant experiences of marine pollution in several parts of the world have highlighted the deleterious effects of resorting to the ocean as a giant dumping-ground.

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Thus, over and above the concerns being addressed under agenda item 64 (k), it is imperative that a programme of action against all types of dumping of harmful wastes at sea - be they nuclear, industrial or medical - be devised, thereby saving future generations from potential environmental suicide.

In the matter of the effective functioning of the United Nations my delegation would like to register its concerns regarding the financial situation of the Organization. The fact that there are in essence two agenda items which address the issue, items 50 and 116, is indicative of the paramount importance of the question. It is to be hoped that any revision of the scale of assessments will adhere to the principle of "equitable apportionment" and will respect the capacity of Member States to pay. There should not be the anomaly of developed countries benefiting from a reduction in their scale of assessed contributions, while certain debt-distressed developing countries are burdened with an upward revision of their financial obligations to the Organization.

The external debt problem with its adverse global economic consequences, especially in the developing countries, is a perfect example of how international peace and security can be threatened by a situation which can have dire social, political and economic consequences. Debt repayment and debt-servicing pose a hardship for, and stranglehold on, the economies of many developing countries, akin to a millstone around their necks. While the repayment of debt is a legal and moral responsibility of the debtor, debt relief should be a humane and moral consideration of some of the creditors, who, in the context of the present global situation, may be practising simple justice, by putting back into the good earth a little of what has been taken out. History is replete with examples of how exploitation and injustice could have contributed to the debt problem.

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To the least developing countries, whose social and humanitarian programmes are held in abeyance because of debt repayment and debt-servicing, the cynicism mingled with humour of a socio-economist can be applied, namely that the inherent vice in some economic systems is the unequal sharing of blessings, while the inherent virtue in others is the equal sharing of miseries. In the final analysis, if the external debt problem is allowed to remain unsolved and unmitigated the economies of both developed and developing countries stand to suffer.

An area of global interest and common concern is the illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances which, like the plague, is spreading over the face of the earth and gnawing at the very fabric of society. Concomitant with the craze for these dangerous substances is the proportionate increase in the level of violence which is fast becoming a seamy sub-culture in some societies. It is generally believed that drugs and international terrorism have a direct relationship. This twin menace is growing bolder every day and wreaking havoc on innocent and unsuspecting people. We favour a multidimensional approach to the tackling of this awesome problem involving the agencies of education, health and law enforcement in the three crucial areas of the production, trafficking and consumption of drugs.

Another area of global concern is the rapid spread of the acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS), which, like a scourge, is approaching pandemic proportions. In this regard the United Nations prestigious World Health Organization (WHO) should continue to focus on the aetiology, prognosis and therapy for this health hazard, which has dangerous social consequences.

The odious and pernicious practice of racial hatred, apartheid, in South Africa remains the greatest impediment not only to peace in southern Africa but to world peace generally. This institutionalized and systematized phenomenon of racism

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attempts to place a stranglehold on democratic advancement in southern Africa and continues to deprive the black man of his rights to freedom and self-determination.

If our response is to apply pressure on the South African Government to dismantle the apartheid system, then towards that objective my delegation favours the employment of collective, comprehensive, mandatory sanctions against South Africa. We are not persuaded by the arguments advanced by a few influential actors in the international community that sanctions will adversely affect the black majority in South Africa. We observe with interest that the imposition of sanctions is a potent and attractive option which is applied selectively as a punitive measure or as one designed or calculated to draw concessions. In any event, it is folly and presumptuous on the part of other countries to attempt to speak on behalf of the black majority of South Africa. Rather, their concerns should be reflected in concerted appeals to the authorities in South Africa to initiate negotiations with the legitimate leaders of the people.

If it is determined that a spokesman is required, then pressure should be directed at the South African Government to release, unconditionally, the most articulate and authoritative spokesman of the black cause, Nelson Mandela. This drum major for justice in South Africa has been imprisoned unjustifiably for 26 years. We call upon the Government of South Africa to free him now so that he may be able to participate effectively in shaping the destiny of his country and his people.

We call on South Africa to suspend armed intervention in the front-line States and to respect their sovereignty and territorial integrity. Tremendous progress towards a peaceful and amicable resolution of the regional conflict could be achieved with the speedy implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 435 (1978) for the independence of Namibia which, in my delegation's view, constitutes the only real basis for the attainment of this objective.

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Finally, the curtain has risen on the forty-third session of the General Assembly under favourable auspices. The contours of peace are beginning to appear in many regions, the erstwhile battlegrounds of ideological conflicts and actual war. Just as we know in the physical sciences that to every action there is an equal and opposite reaction which can be measured quantitatively, so too, to a limited extent, we can extend the same idea to the social sciences in which peace is central, by applying a qualitative measurement of the promising peaceful events taking place in many regions of the world. The centrifugal forces of discord and disquietude are beginning to yield to centripetal forces of peace and concordance within nations and among nations.*

*Mr. Pejic, (Yugoslavia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

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The Washington and Moscow summit meetings between President Ronald Reagan and General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev and the signing of the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles, with verification provisions, are factors which we hope will contribute further to long-term global peace. My delegation wants to believe, however, that the triad of disarmament, development and solidarity, which have a syllogistic relationship, affords humankind the best hope of attaining the universal goal of peace and brotherhood for which the world has been waiting so patiently and so long.

May God bless us and guide us as we continue our deliberations in pursuit of these lofty aims.

Mr. BWANALI (Malawi): It gives me pleasure to join those who have spoken before me in extending to Mr. Dante Caputo, on behalf of the Malawi delegation, heartfelt congratulations on his election to the presidency of the forty-third session of the General Assembly. Preceding speakers have eloquently spoken of his long experience of international affairs, his deep commitment to the promotion of international peace and co-operation and his great diplomatic skills. On our part, we have already observed the effective manner in which he has been conducting the business of the Assembly. We are therefore confident that under his leadership and guidance the Assembly's deliberations will come to a successful conclusion. I therefore wish to assure him of my delegation's full co-operation at all times.

The forty-second session was perhaps among the busiest sessions in recent years, as the Assembly had to be called back so many times in resumed session. The Assembly was also called upon to deal with many very complex issues, some necessitating late-night sessions of the plenary in search of solutions. Fortunately for us, we had in Mr. Peter Florin, Deputy Foreign Minister of the German Democratic Republic, a President whose outstanding fortitude, exemplary

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dedication to duty and inexhaustible patience, confidence and good humour made the work that was before the Assembly easier. My delegation extends its best wishes to Mr. Florin, and congratulates him on his successful accomplishment of his duties and responsibilities.

The Malawi delegation has pleasure also in expressing its best wishes to the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar. We have noted with much satisfaction the many achievements scored by the United Nations during the past 12 months. Among the most outstanding are the successful negotiations leading to the Geneva Agreements on Afghanistan and to the cease-fire in the eight-year war between Iraq and Iran. Those achievements have clearly vindicated those who, despite the doubts expressed by some in recent years about the Organization's relevance to today's international political environment, continued to believe that the United Nations remained the most appropriate forum for the search for solutions to international disputes, and also that, given the opportunity, it could be a very effective instrument for resolving conflicts between States.

Mr. de Cuellar has never wavered in his belief in the efficacy of the United Nations, nor has he ever doubted the Organization's potential as an instrument for bringing about peace. We thus consider the award of this year's Nobel Peace Prize to the United Nations peace-keeping forces to be a most fitting recognition of Mr. de Cuellar's personal efforts in keeping the United Nations at the centre of international affairs and a long overdue but welcome tribute to the outstanding contribution of the United Nations towards international peace during the past four decades. My delegation joins others in expressing to Mr. Perez de Cuellar and, through him, to the peace-keeping forces, well-deserved congratulations.

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A writer in one of the local newspapers observed this past summer that "peace has broken out". Although his comment was made rather cynically, in fact it aptly designated the extraordinary phenomenon of the past few months. Indeed, throughout the summer we marvelled as almost everywhere came news of breakthroughs in deadlocks long considered intractable. For once it did seem as though peace had, finally, been declared.

We in Malawi welcomed the news of the successful conclusion of the Geneva Agreements, under which it was finally possible for foreign troops that had been in Afghanistan for eight years to withdraw from that country. We hope that the withdrawal of those forces will be completed as agreed in the Agreements so that the people of Afghanistan may move on to the important process of determining their country's political future and embark on the urgent tasks of rehabilitation and reconstruction.

In the Persian Gulf we note that, following acceptance of Security Council resolution 598 (1987) by both Iran and Iraq earlier this summer, a cease-fire came into force on 20 August. We further note that negotiations towards a permanent peace agreement between the two former belligerents are continuing under the auspices of the United Nations. The road towards that goal will not be an easy one, but we believe that the parties concerned understand the high cost of failure.

When the Malawi delegation addressed the Assembly last year, we noted with regret that the flurry of diplomatic activity earlier in 1987 centred on the question of Kampuchea appeared to have led to no change. My Government has therefore been encouraged by recent signs of the apparent beginnings of a genuine dialogue between the various parties concerned. We note, for instance, that following the meeting held in July, under the auspices of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), all the parties have indicated their readiness

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to continue the search for a mutually acceptable solution. Allow me to express my Government's full support for those efforts and its sincere hope for a positive outcome.

In the first direct political contact between the two countries in years, parliamentarians of North and South Korea met in August to discuss relations between the two sides of their divided motherland. My Government was pleased to learn that further talks could take place very soon. Malawi supports the decision by the two sides to keep their lines of communication open so as to facilitate the continuing search for a peaceful solution. We remain firmly convinced that through honest dialogue between North and South Korea a viable solution can be achieved. Meanwhile, Malawi welcomes South Korea's call for the cessation of hostilities between North and South Korea. Malawi also welcomes the other proposals by the two sides for easing tension between them.

Malawi has followed very closely the quadripartite negotiations involving representatives of the United States, South Africa, Angola and Cuba with the ultimate aim of bringing about the independence of Namibia, within the context of Security Council resolution 435 (1978). In this connection, my Government has been greatly encouraged to learn that, if everything goes well, implementation of the transitional process envisaged in resolution 435 (1978) could begin as early as next month, with independence elections coming by 1 June 1989.

Whilst its optimism is tempered somewhat by the experience of the international community in having come to the well more than once before and drawing no water, my Government would like to look forward to Namibia's independence and to welcoming Namibia as a fully-fledged member of the international community. My Government therefore hopes to join other members in welcoming the new independent State of Namibia as a participant, in its full sovereign right, at the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly next year.

(Mr. Bwanali, Malawi)

In 1986, for the first time in nearly 40 years, and also last year, the Assembly was seized of the question of the dependent Territory of New Caledonia, where the indigenous people and the administering Power were deadlocked over the question of the Territory's political future. We now understand that the administering Power, having reviewed its policy on the Territory, has recently reached agreement with representatives of the indigenous people on a formula for a solution which envisages the early granting of independence to that Territory. My delegation welcomes these developments. We applaud the Government of France for its courage in not only conceding the right of the New Caledonian people to self-determination but also in acknowledging its obligations towards the realization of that right. Malawi looks forward to seeing New Caledonia take its rightful place as an independent and sovereign Member of the community of nations, we hope in the very near future.

We have followed closely the Secretary-General's continuing efforts to find viable formulas for solutions to the questions of Cyprus and Western Sahara.

With regard to Cyprus we have noted that the apparent emergence of a congenial atmosphere in relations between certain parties whose role would be most vital in assuring any solution has seemingly brought about a positive change in the attitudes of the leaders of the Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities. In this connection we note that both parties have declared their readiness to co-operate with the Secretary-General in facilitating the resumption of the intercommunal talks and that formal talks have already been scheduled for early in 1989. My Government welcomes these developments, for Malawi remains convinced that only a formula arrived at by or through the participation of the Cypriot people themselves can produce a meaningful and permanent solution to that country's political problems.

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On the question of Western Sahara, my delegation wishes to reiterate Malawi's support for the right of the people of that Territory to self-determination, whether as an independent sovereign State or otherwise. We therefore support the Secretary-General's initiatives on this issue and are pleased to note that the proposals which he recently presented to both the Government of Morocco and the POLISARIO provide for a referendum to enable the Sahraoui people to indicate their preference as to whether they should be part of Morocco or have their own independent sovereign State.

We have noted particularly the similarity between the Secretary-General's proposals and the formula adopted on the same question by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) almost 10 years ago. The OAU formula has as a main principle the holding of a referendum supervised by the United Nations. My Government is therefore happy to learn that both the POLISARIO and Morocco have now accepted the Secretary-General's proposals and we hope that this clears the way for the early holding of a referendum on Western Sahara.

At the forty-second session of the General Assembly, the Malawi delegation joined others in welcoming and expressing support for the peace plan for Central America initiated by the Costa Rican leader, President Oscar Arias, and agreed to by all the leaders in the region. Despite the promise held out by the plan, it would now appear that some parties would have the plan abandoned, seemingly condemning it to the heap of so many other doomed initiatives. Notwithstanding the set-backs which may have been encountered in its implementation, we believe that the Arias plan still represents the best formula for achieving peace in that region. My delegation wishes therefore to express Malawi's support for those leaders who are continuing to seek ways of facilitating the implementation of the plan.

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Preceding delegations have already observed that if today we can speak of breakthroughs with regard to the various international problems that once seemed insoluble it is because of the positive interventions, direct and indirect, of the two super-Powers, the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Significantly, it has been noted that these positive developments have occurred following the apparent improvement in relations between the United States and the Soviet Union.

We have always been of the view that whenever the two super-Powers agree to co-operate they can contribute immensely to the common good of the entire international community. That is why my delegation wishes to take the opportunity to express the hope that the two super-Powers will find it equally possible to work together in the search for solutions to the other regional conflicts and areas of tension which continue to threaten international peace and security. The most urgent of these are the situations in South Africa and the Middle East.

While developments on the Namibia question have provided the most positive news to come out of the southern African subregion in almost a decade, the news from South Africa is that of a rapidly deteriorating situation. The root cause of the problems of South Africa is apartheid, but we believe that neither the use of force by the South African authorities to maintain the policy of apartheid nor the resort to violence by the opponents of apartheid will resolve this problem. That is why the Malawi delegation would like to reiterate its call to all the parties to the conflict to enter upon a genuine national dialogue. We are convinced that even at this late hour it would still be possible to achieve a peaceful solution if only all the parties concerned would have the courage to place the wider long-term interests of their country above the short-term interests of their respective constituencies.

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Contrary to expectations of a possible movement forward - raised by the overwhelming support declared during the past two years by the majority of the Members of this Assembly - towards the holding of an international conference on the Middle East, the past 12 months have seen the situation in the area deteriorate to perhaps its most precarious level in many years.

A sharp escalation of violence in the occupied territories, resulting from a campaign of resistance to Israeli authority, and the increased use of force in order to reaffirm that authority on the part of the Israeli Government have led to great loss of life as well as a deepening of animosity and suspicion. Meanwhile the decision by the Government of Jordan to withdraw its authority over parts of the occupied territories which it had previously administered has increased the uncertainty and anxiety about future developments.

In our view, any solution to the Middle East conflict must necessarily focus on two central issues if it is to be viable: fulfilment of the right of the Palestinian people to an independent homeland on the one hand and a guarantee of the right of the Israelis to live within recognized and secure boundaries on the other. Those elements have been of primary importance in all the main resolutions on the Middle East question since the General Assembly adopted resolution 181 (II) in 1947.

Viable solutions to the questions of the Middle East and of South Africa must ultimately come from, or be found with the direct participation of, the respective peoples concerned. However, my delegation is also of the view that there are certain other countries which, through their special relations and influence, could facilitate the early achievement of such solutions. That is why my delegation wants to appeal to these countries, which include the two super-Powers, to use their influence positively with those parties which, because of mistrust or insecurity, have been reluctant to take measures that are necessary in order to

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move forward. The intervention of these countries on other questions has led to positive results. We are convinced that they could contribute to similar results with regard to the issues of the Middle East and South Africa.

Last October the Malawi delegation joined others in welcoming the conclusion between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics of the Treaty on the Elimination of Their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Nuclear Missiles - the INF Treaty. The Malawi delegation observed that that Agreement constituted the first major step towards the elimination of all nuclear arms. At the same time we expressed the hope that the Treaty would give an impetus to ongoing negotiations on other classes and types of arms, especially chemical weapons, so as to hasten the achievement of the ultimate goal - complete and comprehensive disarmament.

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The Malawi delegation, further, drew attention to the fact that international security is of concern to all States, big and small alike. In this connection, the delegation reaffirmed Malawi's belief in the need for a multilateral approach to disarmament and for the United Nations to be associated with all initiatives on disarmament.

We thus considered it a happy coincidence that the proposed date for the formal signature of the United States/Soviet Union agreement should have fallen just a month before the start of the General Assembly's third special session on disarmament, which was held here in New York in June this year.

However, my delegation regards it as a matter of deep regret that the third special session could not agree on the final document and thus adjourned without a formal conclusion. Nevertheless, we believe that the session was still useful in providing an opportunity to assess progress achieved since the two previous sessions. We are certain that the conclusions that were drawn from the session will prove invaluable as we plot the way forward.

My delegation has on several occasions declared the Malawi Government's conviction that international security cannot best be assured by the size or quality of the arsenals that countries may possess. Rather, we believe that genuine international security lies in all States respecting each other's independence and sovereignty, regardless of size or economic and political strength.

We have therefore been alarmed by certain developments during the past 12 months which seemed to suggest that some States might want to return the world to that era, long thought to have disappeared for ever, when might was right, and bigger States assumed for themselves the right callously to intervene in the internal affairs of the small and weaker ones.

(Mr. Bwanali, Malawi)

My delegation wishes to reiterate its appeal for respect among States for each other's sovereignty, strict adherence to the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of others, and respect for the principle of the non-use of force. Only in that way can we assure international peace and security.

Among the subjects which the General Assembly will consider during the current session is the critical economic situation in Africa. Before it will be the report on the mid-term review on the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990. My delegation looks forward to the discussions on this report.

I should like, however, to express our disappointment at the fact that despite the solemn undertaking by the international donor community to enhance its assistance to Africa with specific regard to the implementation of the Programme of Action, and in spite of the efforts that African States have exerted in fulfilment of their own obligations, at times with great risk to national political stability, very little international assistance has been forthcoming. In the meantime, unfortunately, the economic crisis in Africa has worsened further, and more aid than was projected in 1986 will now be required to meet the Programme's original goals. It is our sincere hope that the results of the mid-term review will be taken seriously by Africa's partners and that concerted efforts will be made by them to fulfil their obligations during the second half of the Programme's projected five-year span.

Meanwhile, we have noted with interest the measures adopted recently by some of the developed countries with a view to helping ease the financial burden facing developing countries, especially the least developed countries. We welcome these moves. However, we would like to join others in reiterating that the economic

(Mr. Bwanali, Malawi)

problems of developing countries need to be addressed in a global manner if lasting solutions are to be found.

Before concluding my statement, I should like to take this opportunity to express my Government's gratitude to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and other agencies of the United Nations for the invaluable assistance they have provided to enable the Government of Malawi to cater for our brothers and sisters from Mozambique who have come into Malawi during the past two years. These refugees now number over 600,000, which is equivalent to about 8 per cent of our national population. We are particularly grateful for the Secretary-General's timely initiative in sending last year a multi-agency team to study this problem with a view to determining how best to assist Malawi to deal with both the short-term and the long-term needs arising from this situation. Malawi's economic capacity is very limited and the sudden surge in population has seriously strained the country's socio-economic infrastructure.

Malawi is also grateful to the many countries and the other international organization's that have contributed so generously in various ways towards enabling us to provide for our brethren.

In this context, I should like to express Malawi's satisfaction at the outcome of the International Conference on the Plight of Refugees, Returnees and Displaced Persons in Southern Africa, held in Oslo, Norway, last August, with the full support of the United Nations. It is our hope that the principles enshrined in the Oslo declaration and plan of action will receive full international support. It is therefore my delegation's hope that the General Assembly will endorse the Oslo declaration and plan of action.

The PRESIDENT: I call on the representative of France who wishes to speak in exercise of the right of reply. I remind him that in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401 statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. BROCHAND (France) (interpretation from French): The French delegation regrets the remarks made a short time ago by the representative of Papua New Guinea in referring to events in New Caledonia last April. These were all the more regrettable in that the political context in New Caledonia has changed for the better since then, following the signing on 20 August of an agreement between the two principal political parties in the Territory, one in favour of and one opposing independence under the auspices of the French Government. The new directions then set down for the future of New Caledonia, to which I note the representative of Papua New Guinea paid a tribute, should make it possible to avoid the recurrence of a confrontation, which no one in New Caledonia or anywhere else wishes to see.

The meeting rose at 5.20 p.m.