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PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE FIFTH MEETING

held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 26 September 1988, at 3 p.m.

<u>President:</u>	Mr. CAPUTO	(Argentina)
later:	Mr. BORG OLIVIER (Vice-President)	(Malta)
later:	Mr. DLAMINI (Vice-President)	(Swaziland)

- Address by Mr. Jaime Lusinchi, President of the Republic of Venezuela
- General debate [9] (continued)

Address by Mrs. Gro Harlem Brundtland, Prime Minister of the
Kingdom of Norway

Statements made by:

Mr. Seng (Singapore)
Mrs. Ruiz Cerutti (Argentina)
Mr. Bedregal Gutierrez (Bolivia)
Mr. da Luz (Cape Verde)

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

ADDRESS BY MR. JAIME LUSINCHI, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF VENEZUELA

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Venezuela.

Mr. Jaime Lusinchi, President of the Republic of Venezuela, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations the President of the Republic of Venezuela, His Excellency Mr. Jaime Lusinchi, and to invite him to address the General Assembly.

President LUSINCHI (interpretation from Spanish): It is a happy and memorable coincidence that at this forty-third session two Latin American citizens hold posts of honour: one is President of the General Assembly and the other is Secretary-General.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Argentina, Mr. Dante Caputo, and the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, are distinguished representatives of our people, heirs to the best ideological and republican traditions which created the Latin American nationality.

When we joined the international community, after the historic changes generated by the French Revolution - now nearing its bicentennial - there was in our continent a feeling of identity, unity, mutual interest in solidarity, and brotherhood in the face of the sufferings of the war of emancipation and of outside threats.

Today, after many difficult years of being divided by foreign interests, of inflamed prejudices among ourselves, of painful interruptions to our expression of the democratic will as peoples, Latin America, almost in its entirety, is able to present itself to the world once again, as it is doing at this Assembly, with a

(President Lusinchi)

feeling of solidarity and a community of ideals. I have no fear that I may be mistaken, or arrogating the right of another, when I affirm that we, the nations of America, are undergoing a period of far-reaching changes which we cannot, nor shall, this time leave to the vagaries of circumstance.

"Security" is usually defined in terms of custody, preservation and promotion of a country's basic interests. For Venezuela, together with what is inherent in our national being, its security also means democracy, by virtue of the provisions and mandate established by its Constitution. It means the freedom of its citizens to dissent, under the rule of law, to be able to prosper and satisfy their material and spiritual needs with autonomy and independence. Nevertheless, in a contemporary world such as ours, our security and the security of our countries are threatened from outside. So it is high time to make this charge, and there is no more appropriate forum in which to do so than this, at this rostrum open to all the peoples of the world.

Today, the legitimacy of our fundamental rights as nations and peoples, as communities and individuals, is being challenged. There is no other way to explain the lack of definitive solutions to problems such as the problem of external debt, which drains our countries' economies and deprives them of the right to a stable future.

The external debt problem acts as a stranglehold today on the economic and social development of the vast majority of the peoples of the world. It is essential to overcome it if we are to achieve more just and humane social development. We must begin to tackle it recognizing that we shall find a lasting solution only when we face up to its true causes and admit the failure of the strategies so far followed in our attempt to manage it.

(President Lusinchi)

Among the basic causes of the external debt crisis are the serious errors made by banks and lenders when they set aside the very principles on which private credit activities operate and try ineffectually to supplant the development financing institutions and take over the functions assigned to them.

Secondly, immediately following this, there occurred another very important change: the Governments and monetary authorities of some of the countries in which the creditor banks operated, to defend their currencies and fight inflation, took the political decision to raise interest rates to levels far above the average inflation rates, without taking into account the devastating effect that this step would have on the debtor countries.

The result has been that some loans that were contracted at interest rates at a level in balance with inflation rates have to be serviced at an almost impossible level of interest, because there is no economic activity that can generate enough wealth to cover that imbalance, which is the result of a political decision taken by the Governments of developed countries.

The logic of international financial capitalism is unethical and immoral. An economic system cannot function indefinitely on the basis of such a mechanism. Nor can it be claimed that it is reasonable for the expectations of our peoples to be subordinated to the covetousness of the most crass mercantilism. And it is far less reasonable that nations which profess to be our allies and friends should seek not only to justify but to impose such logic, using the most blatant euphemisms.

We have seen, in the schemes so far presented, one refinancing negotiation following another, with adjustment policies in the debtor countries and protective policies for the financial systems in the creditor countries; interventions by the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the regional development banks; one international conference following another, with specific plans from developed

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countries - all with no practical result. The fact is that for both the countries that have paid and those that have not, the situation is untenable.

Debt can never be repaid by means of more debts. The traditional scheme is bankrupt and the old timetable appears to us now to be a harmful and grotesque ritual.

Where do we expect this road to lead us? Let us remember that there are limits which cannot be crossed with impunity, and the limits include that concept of security and that right to development and social justice which we shall never tire of claiming to be inalienable.

(President Lusinchi)

The dramatic, compelling fact of the matter is that social problems are becoming more acute and that there are no more adjustments to be made; the net flow of capital from debtor to creditor countries continues; countries service their commitments and, with very few exceptions - and so far Venezuela has been one of them - debts rise, interest is paid on interest, and the dilemma of the debt is further compounded.

The policy of gaining time, hoping for a financial miracle that will make it possible for the debt to be serviced under current terms, has had its day. We have to grasp this fact and act accordingly, and very quickly. Let us recall the crisis of the 1930s when more than half the countries which were then in the League of Nations filed for moratoriums on their debt; and let us also remember all the consequences, with the world-wide effects that sprang from not having acted in time. It is therefore our duty to try agreed solutions that will lead to international agreements under which the debtors will obtain conditions that are reasonable in relation to the size of their debts; and real schedules and interest rates will be established that will enable them to pay and at the same time develop their economies.

There is no other solution. Let us not delude ourselves. If we are not able to devise a multilateral mechanism to meet these objectives, we shall become passive witnesses to an economic and social disaster that will embrace all countries, whether developed or not.

It is not possible to remain wealthy for long if that wealth is based on the ruin of others; far less so in today's interdependent world.

The economist and university professor Carlos Diaz Alejandro once said:

"To blame the victims is a tempting way to shirk responsibilities, especially when the victims themselves are far from virtuous."

(President Lusinchi)

We have repeatedly maintained that debt is a joint responsibility and that, accordingly, seeking solutions to overcome its traumatic effects must necessarily also be a joint decision, one that is rational and equitable, agreed to by creditors and debtors.

We, the developing countries, are the victims: of that there can be no doubt. It is likewise true that we are not virtuous. We are not virtuous victims. Yet, in this case, the sins are not the sins only of just some but the sins of one and all. We cannot therefore accept that our peoples alone should bear the punishment. They most certainly are not to blame.

Nor is this a unilateral plea for our peoples. We are certain that the perils of the future will not spare those who now have the power to take the major decisions. This is the message that I wish to place on record here before this forum on behalf of the people of Venezuela, a message which is, or should be, the sum and conscience of mankind.

A few days ago, meeting at the Regional Conference on Poverty, Latin American representatives observed that 61 million Latin Americans lived in a state of poverty which did not even allow them to satisfy their basic need for food. Faced with this reality, which could easily be observed even more dramatically in other developing regions, it is fitting to ask oneself: What right can be invoked, what obligations can be adduced, that transcend fundamental human rights? It can, of course, be argued that it is up to each Government to deal with the problems of the society it represents and that its responsibilities cannot be transferred to others. True, yes, but only when those responsibilities are theirs alone.

No one can claim that it is so. The existing interrelationship between the development of our economies and the international economy is a fact of life which, instead of leading us on to progress, seems to lead us to backwardness. Is this, or is it not, a collective responsibility?

(President Lusinchi)

A very recent diagnosis of the Latin American economic situation produced by the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA), indicates that since the region has had to make thorough adjustments which give priority to the balances in external accounts, the end result is that we may be in a position to overcome the stagnation in growth and recover greater price stability; but in order to do so, it is vital to put an end to, and reverse, the transfer of resources to which our economies have been subjected. In our view, this situation can be achieved only if the debt problem is approached and managed in a radically different way.

Venezuela - and I am saying this on its behalf with full moral and political authority - considers that the efforts made have been more than enough.

We cannot envisage staying where we are as the scenario for our society in the future. We have reached the point at which development and foreign debt have become the antithesis of each other in a contradiction which we cannot evade indefinitely.

Venezuela has made praiseworthy efforts to restore to its economy a stable and predictable frame of reference. The internal reorganization and adjustment which it has carried out have been beneficial in so far as they have been able to stimulate the strength and reserves of our society. To be able to bring this to fruition now, we must avoid the risk of inflation, reactivate investment processes, improve productivity, and raise the standard of living of our people, all of which depend on the level of resources we can invest in our own progress and on whether or not we are able to guarantee stability and predictability, which every economic activity and social advance require.

Like the majority in our region, we stand a chance of coming out of this crisis successfully. It is accordingly imperative that we should not allow

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ourselves to slump in inertia and that we should take advantage of this transition. In order to do this, we need full understanding on the part of the international community, and of the developed countries in particular, of what is at stake. It is impossible to imagine that their exercises in co-ordinating their economic policies are in themselves efforts which we could consider to be consonant with the circumstances facing the rest of the world; nor to imagine that our problems will be solved in this way.

We welcome the apparently greater clearheadedness of the discussion at the Toronto meeting regarding the realities facing the developing world, but since there has been no constructive dialogue or short-term operational measures, we believe that we are entitled to reserve for ourselves the right to explore the possibilities that may prove to be needed.

In Latin America a group of countries have been thinking along these lines. The Acapulco Commitment to Peace, Development and Democracy, which we eight Latin American Presidents signed last year, is the expression of our shared concerns and our common purposes. We have set ourselves the necessary goals in the three fields covered by our commitment, and we intend to further and enlarge them. We shall soon be meeting again in fraternal Uruguay to refine our perceptions and take note of the degree of acceptance and understanding which our assessments have received.

Venezuela is prepared to make its contribution to ensure that Latin America will not be relegated from the world which, it seems, is being forged at the current time.

The relaxation of tensions and the beginnings of solutions to grave international conflicts in various parts of the world are not fortuitous, just as the tensions and confrontations which provoked them were not.

The great Powers have entered into a process of dialogue and disarmament. We congratulate them and trust that this will be sustained and extended further.

(President Lusinchi)

Countries in confrontation, zones in conflict, are beginning to feel the results of those agreements, and at last recourse is being made to the multilateral institutions which were created to promote peace. In this context, allow me to congratulate the Secretary-General for his efforts and convey our sincere wishes that they may be supported and sustained by all in this Organization.

From this process, which we trust will be successful, there will emerge once again the possibility of channelling more resources to development. It is inconceivable that material backwardness and human misery should continue to exist; and there is no possible justification for their increasing in a world whose global wealth is unprecedented. Will the international community ever be able to channel its resources in a constructive direction? When we celebrated the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations, we all had in mind the tragic economic, social and political conflicts from which the Organization was born. To date, however, we have for the most part been incapable of overcoming the lack of understanding which prevails as to how to bring prosperity within the reach of all.

The economic conflict still remains unchanged and is growing steadily worse. Imbalances in the world economy will lead us to disaster if the main countries involved do not assume their responsibilities with a full sense of obligation towards the international community.

(President Lusinchi)

Perhaps the time has also come for the Secretary-General to take in hand the quest for a dialogue that will ensure that the international community takes a definite course of action to meet this unsatisfied need, a course of action in which external debt would occupy a prominent place. We certainly cannot go on having these kinds of parallel monologues in which the developed and the developing worlds have become entrenched. Perhaps we should renounce our traditional procedures and, through the Secretary-General's activity, bring the item before the highest political bodies and attempt to revive the philosophy and practice of co-operation to ensure development through joint agreement.

Economic problems are not unrelated to a host of others which we could begin to tackle in the same context. It has been said that Latin America is being absorbed by the underground drug economy. Radical measures have been required to deal with the crop areas, and, with increasing emphasis, relations between countries are to be made conditional on the eradication of this activity. Venezuela, which has earned an authoritative position in the anti-drug struggle, is determined to act on all fronts, as we demonstrated in 1984 when we placed before the General Assembly the idea of adopting a convention against the traffic and consumption of illicit drugs - a convention that was subsequently approved unanimously. But we notice that no-one has taken the trouble to point out the existence of and to act against an economic situation that is nourished by and profits systematically from the drug economy, which fosters the creation of economic power centres and consolidates them and, in practice, serves as its financial agent.

It would certainly be relevant for the United Nations to reveal the linkage between some members of the international financial world and the underground drug economy. We might likewise explore the traffic in toxic wastes, which has now

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taken on special dimensions in that attempts are under way to transport to earth-based reservoirs - for the most part in the territories of developing countries - the garbage of a wasteful consumer society imposed on us as a model; transferring, hand in hand with that, habits of corruption to facilitate the continuance of this illicit, repugnant business.

As members will have been able to appreciate, my message to the General Assembly endeavours to take up again, on an ethical basis, some of the challenges we face. We should never lose sight of this, because civilization and its progress are inconceivable if they are not linked with the most intimate aspirations of our individual and collective being. In this constant pursuit of the most elementary rights of States and men, we have all relied on the United Nations - as the appropriate forum not only for conveying our concerns but, what is more important, for channelling resources and establishing competent bodies and mechanisms.

United Nations efforts have made progress possible in matters to which we are particularly attached. I should like to mention some items which perhaps the distortion of priorities has downgraded to routine questions but which are still fully valid from our point of view. As is well known, Venezuela recognizes and promotes the interdependence of all human rights: political, economic, social and cultural. There are situations which constitute a permanent threat to those principles. Venezuela confirms its rejection of racial discrimination in South Africa - of which the classic example is Mandela's martyrdom - and affirms its solidarity with the people of Namibia, while urging that the talks and negotiations now under way should bring about the independence of that country.

For all those reasons, and because of the outstanding role the United Nations has played in bringing about peaceful solutions to international disputes, I reaffirm our solidarity with the Organization, express renewed faith in its

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principles and offer our best efforts in the service of the cause of peace and the coexistence of peoples.

Along those lines, I should like to emphasize the achievements of the United Nations in its endeavours to put an end to conflicts in regions that are particularly dear to us - such as the peace agreement in Afghanistan and the end of hostilities between Iraq and Iran, countries with which we maintain cordial and constructive relations.

It has been made evident that it is only the resolute will of the States involved that is capable of creating conditions favouring the attainment of specific objectives. For that reason, noting that in other regions there are definite prospects for peace, we urge the five Central American countries signatories of the Procedure for the Establishment of a Firm and Lasting Peace in Central America to devote themselves to complying with their commitments, regardless of the interference of elements alien to the area. The political dialogue between them should be restored genuinely and promptly, with a large dose of determination and with each party doing its share to put an end to a conflict that is being needlessly prolonged. We trust that reason will prevail, that peace and friendly coexistence in freedom and democracy will be the symbols of that cherished region.

We know that all United Nations organs are prepared to continue performing the tasks entrusted to them and to face in a constructive way any situation that threatens the well-being of mankind. Nevertheless, it is fitting to recall the serious financial difficulties which the United Nations has undergone - difficulties that require our utmost attention. It is clearly understood that it is the duty of all its Member States to contribute to supporting it on a permanent basis.

(President Lusinchi)

My final words today, as the representative of a country that is democratic in spirit and in action, are to wish the United Nations success in its primary purpose of ensuring peace and security for the world. Venezuela will always stand by the United Nations, devised and created for the sake and the benefit of universal mankind.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Venezuela for the important statement he has just made.

Mr. Jaime Lusinchi, President of Venezuela, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

AGENDA ITEM 9 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE

ADDRESS BY MRS. GRO HARLEM BRUNDTLAND, PRIME MINISTER OF THE KINGDOM OF NORWAY

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Norway.

Mrs. Gro Harlem Brundtland, Prime Minister of Norway, was escorted to the rostrum.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): I have great pleasure in welcoming the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Norway, Mrs. Gro Harlem Brundtland, and inviting her to address the General Assembly.

Mrs. BRUNDTLAND (Norway): On behalf of Norway I add my congratulations to those of the speakers who have preceded me, Sir, on your election as President of the forty-third session of the General Assembly.

The community of nations is looking to this forty-third session of the General Assembly with high hopes and great expectations. After years of decline in multilateral co-operation, are we finally witnessing the turn of the tide? The conspicuous, constructive role that the Organization has lately successfully played with regard to many regional conflicts clearly demonstrates the need for an effective United Nations. We, who as a matter of policy and conviction have always supported the United Nations, are encouraged to see it resume its rightful role as the protector and promoter of peace and stability, a centre where nations harmonize their policies and actions in favour of a more secure world based on social and economic justice.

As policies and positions of nations change we must have one focal point in the world which is constitutionally and permanently charged with the task of searching for negotiated solutions to political, economic and social conflicts.

There have been long periods when the United Nations has suffered from the divisions between blocs, and in particular from the lack of dialogue and

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co-operation between the United States and the Soviet Union, but the post-war bipolar world has yielded to a multipolar one. The major Powers are gradually realizing that it is in their own interests to maintain a more effective world Organization.

The improved bilateral relations between the United States and the Soviet Union, epitomized by the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles - the INF Treaty - will undoubtedly have positive effects on the ongoing endeavours for substantial arms reductions. It remains a primary concern for the Norwegian Government to capitalize on what has been achieved and to work towards agreements on deep cuts in strategic nuclear weapons, a comprehensive test-ban treaty, a ban on chemical weapons and the elimination of asymmetries with a view to establishing a balance of forces on a lower level of conventional armaments. This is particularly important in Europe, where the concentration of weapons is the largest and the most threatening to peace and stability.

Disarmament and arms control is a matter of global concern. The United Nations has an important role to play in encouraging, supporting and supplementing disarmament negotiations conducted in other forums - multilateral, regional and bilateral.

An encouraging feature in today's improved international atmosphere is the willingness to address serious regional conflicts in a new and constructive manner. We welcome the fact that the various parties are increasingly making use of the good offices of the Secretary-General, thus allowing the world Organization to serve as a real catalyst for progress towards a more peaceful, just and safer world.

I should like to pay a tribute to the Secretary-General. Years of patience and hard work are now paying dividends. Stalemate and setbacks are giving way to

(Mrs. Brundtland, Norway)

meetings of minds and to progress. We have witnessed this new attitude in the Geneva Accords on Afghanistan, in the success in bringing about a cease-fire in the Iran-Iraq war and in the progress towards peaceful solutions in the Western Sahara, Kampuchea and Namibia.

In other areas of conflict, progress is desperately needed. We welcomed the Esquipulas Agreement of last year. Expectations were high that the five Central American Presidents would themselves find solutions to the problems of that troubled region. The present stalemate is, however, severely prolonging the plight of the peoples of Central America. We urge the parties to return to negotiations and to continue the implementation of the peace plan.

In the Middle East the state of chronic unrest in the Israeli-occupied territories underscores the need for Israelis and Arabs to make genuine and determined efforts aimed at achieving a lasting and comprehensive peace. The Norwegian Government supports the convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East under the auspices of the United Nations. We believe that such a conference, with the participation of all parties directly concerned, represents the best way to achieve a negotiated settlement. Meanwhile, Israel has a special obligation under international law to protect the civilian population in the occupied territories and to secure their human rights.

In South Africa the apartheid system is still being upheld in defiance of basic principles of civilization. The apartheid system must - and will - come to an end. Apartheid, representing institutionalized racism, cannot be reformed: it must be abolished. International pressure on South Africa must be increased. Ten years have passed since the United Nations was able to agree on limited mandatory sanctions against the Government in Pretoria. Now we need to move towards the adoption of comprehensive and effective sanctions, and we need to move now.

(Mrs. Brundtland, Norway)

We are encouraged by the Secretary-General's optimism concerning the improved prospects for the independence of Namibia. We welcome the news that an advance team can now be sent to Namibia to prepare for a United Nations military and civilian presence in the Territory as it assumes its rightful role and place amongst the sovereign and independent nations of the world. Norway will stand firmly by its commitment to participate in the United Nations Transition Assistance Group.

The system of apartheid, wars and natural catastrophes in southern Africa have produced millions of refugees and displaced persons. An international conference held in Oslo last month focused on the situation for those unfortunate and deprived people. The conference stressed in particular the need to cater for displaced persons, who at present fall outside the responsibility of United Nations agencies. It also underlined the need for emergency programmes, contingency plans and early-warning systems. We must all support the programme of action adopted at that conference.

It is a paradox that at a time when the political climate in the United Nations has improved considerably the Organization should be threatened with financial bankruptcy.

(Mrs. Brundtland, Norway)

The financial crisis facing the United Nations is unacceptable from every point of view. It impedes planning; it creates a bad climate for the implementation of reforms; and it undermines the morale of the staff of the Organization. Unilateral withholding of contributions undermines multilateral co-operation. All Member States must respect the United Nations Charter and meet their financial obligations. We urge all countries to settle all their debts promptly.

We are living in an era of rapid change. In general terms the peoples of the industrialized countries have experienced a rapid improvement in their living conditions. For the developing countries this is not so. While the 1980s may be a decade marked by real progress in respect of international peace and security, the decade is one of lost opportunities for the third world. Very little has been done to prevent the gap between the rich and the poor countries from widening. As we approach the turn of the millenium, we face the major challenge of overcoming the global development crisis. We must launch a victorious battle against the poverty that continues to tie hundreds of millions of people to an existence that cannot be reconciled with human dignity.

Stability, prosperity and social and economic justice are coming to different parts of the world at different speeds. Corrective action needs to be taken. The challenge that confronts us is ethical as well as political. We can safeguard the future only by working together: we cannot safeguard it at each other's expense. The future will depend on how successful we are in adopting common attitudes towards our common challenges.

Most of the developing countries are witnessing a reversal of the earlier more hopeful trends in growth performance. A sharp deterioration in the international economic environment has played a major role in triggering the acute crisis which

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now afflicts the third world. This was clearly established once again during the mid-term review of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Recovery and Development 1986-1990 conducted here in New York over the past two weeks.

The critical economic situation for the developing world is characterized by unsustainable, crushing burdens of external debt; a substantial decline in export earnings due to severely depressed commodity prices and to increasing protectionism; a significant decline in flows of resource transfers, in particular with regard to private lending and investment; and the chronic instability of the international currency market; as well as abnormally high real interest rates.

Is it not politically, morally and economically perverse that there has been a net transfer of resources from poor countries to rich countries totalling over \$100 billion in the past few years? Is it not appalling that while close to a billion people are living in poverty and squalor, the per capita income of some 50 developing countries declined last year?

These trends will have to be reversed, not only because the situation in itself is unacceptable, but also because it is in the self-interest of all developed countries - West and East.

There is a need for a fresh start in international development co-operation. Development aid and lending must be increased. I emphasize this, and I see no reason to conceal the fact that while Norway in recent years has given around 1.1 per cent of its gross national product (GNP) in official development assistance (ODA) to developing countries, we are disappointed that at the same time the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) average has declined to a meagre 0.34 per cent. Clearly, many countries can and must do better, much better. We call on those donor countries which have been lagging behind in their ODA transfers to make renewed efforts commensurate with their abilities.

(Mrs. Brundtland, Norway)

There is a need for a double-track approach: the development and the debt crisis have to be urgently and effectively addressed. The two are interlinked and they are equally acute. Many countries are caught in the vicious circle of having to service, reschedule and refinance their external debt while necessary investments and reforms are being suffocated. Urgent action is now needed to alleviate the debt burden in ways that represent a fairer burden-sharing between debtors and lenders. Norway has taken concrete steps to alleviate debt, and strongly advocates further multilateral co-ordinated debt-relief measures.

It is obvious that the heavily indebted low-income countries will never be able to repay their debts. We must fully recognize this and deal with it accordingly. We cannot continue to maintain iron codes that carry with them the risk of political destabilization and increased suffering for the most vulnerable groups, codes that negatively affect women and children, block the development of human progress and human resources, curtail investment and innovation and make it virtually impossible for many debtor countries ever to assume their rightful place in the international economy.

The decisions taken at the Toronto economic summit brought some new hope that the major economic Powers are willing to act upon these issues. Although they have recently agreed on some further steps, in particular with regard to Africa, much remains to be done by the large industrial countries to alleviate the debt problem.

The recent proposals by the Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) are steps towards a real solution of the debt crisis, which is indeed a common crisis - both for the North and for the South.

The industrialized countries of the North must now demonstrate that they see the poverty of the third world as their common challenge. We need a more equitable world order based on common responsibility, on mutual respect and solidarity, and on the fundamental principles of human rights.

(Mrs. Brundtland, Norway)

The protection of human rights is a matter of priority concern for the Norwegian Government. To work for human rights is to work for democracy, development, solidarity and progress. Unfortunately, systematic and persistent violations of human rights still occur in many countries. We must work tirelessly to counter these violations and to strengthen the instruments of implementation that we have created. This year we celebrate the fortieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It gives us an opportunity to reconfirm our obligations and to redouble our efforts to upgrade our civilization.

The world's population may double by the middle of the next century. It is clear that meeting the needs of present and future generations will require forceful, sustainable economic growth supported by a world-wide campaign to protect the environment and our natural resources.

(Mrs. Brundtland, Norway)

In the 1970s, environment and development were seen by many as plainly contradictory. At that time, environmental concerns were considered as something only the rich could afford. Today they are concerns no one can afford to ignore.

The time has come to start this process of change that is needed. We need a new sense of mission and we need a vision of a better future. We need a common framework and concepts that can unite us.

The threats to the ozone layer have opened even more eyes to the fact that no single country can protect its environment in isolation. Global problems require global solutions. The Montreal Protocol of last year needs to be followed by further agreements on measures to protect the atmosphere.

The problem of dealing with hazardous and nuclear wastes and recent cases of dumping in the third world clearly show that a strict international régime is required also to protect the developing countries from becoming a dumping ground for industrial excesses in the North.

In the ongoing negotiations led by the United Nations Environment Programme the developed countries must now sensitize themselves towards the just demands of the developing countries with a view to adopting a global consensus early next year.

At the Oslo Conference in July this year, the Heads of 22 United Nations agencies discussed the follow-up of the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development. They agreed with the Commission that to achieve sustainable development, environment and development policies must preserve peace, secure growth on a sustainable basis and alleviate poverty.

At last year's session of the General Assembly, the proposal was put forward to hold a global follow-up conference in 1992. Norway supports the proposal to hold such a conference, which should focus on the broad issues of sustainable development.

(Mrs. Brundtland, Norway)

One hundred years ago the Norwegian writer Henrik Ibsen said: "Nothing is more powerful than an idea whose time has come." Sustainable development is such an idea. Together we must make it a reality.

Humankind is exposed to risks - political and economic risks - and we are becoming increasingly aware that we run the risk of an ecological disaster comparable in scale and impact to large-scale nuclear destruction. The next decade will be crucial. Vital and difficult decisions will have to be taken. We have the capacity to destroy life on this planet, but we also have the capacity to save and to enhance it. To achieve the necessary changes we need a stronger commitment to the international institutions we have created. We need a coalition of reason and a real co-ordination of policies. The Secretary-General of the United Nations must have our firm support. He must be accorded the authority and the resources necessary to promote the basic objectives for our own survival: peace, development and environment.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Spanish): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Norway for the important statement she has just made, a statement which offered an encouraging and hopeful message to the developing world.

Mrs. Gro Harlem Brundtland, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Norway, was escorted from the rostrum.

Mr. SENG (Singapore): For the past few years, we have been meeting here with the financial crisis hanging over the United Nations like the sword of Damocles. Today the financial crisis continues unabated, primarily because of the reluctance of a few Member States to meet their legal dues, but the sword of Damocles has vanished. There is now widespread global recognition that the United Nations is an indispensable instrument in the search for peace. After the

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Afghanistan and Iran-Iraq agreements, the critics of the United Nations have been silenced, at least for quite a while.

Under these auspicious circumstances, I am pleased to see you, Mr. President, presiding over a General Assembly session which will mark a turning-point in the history of the United Nations. With your extensive international experience and your country's commitment to the ideals of the United Nations, I have no doubt that you will bring to this session the right measure of fairness, firmness and guidance. I would also like to place on record our appreciation for the excellent work done by your predecessor, Mr. Peter Florin, who presided over one of the busiest years in the life of the United Nations.

There is no doubt that 1988 will go down as one of the most remarkable years in United Nations history. Seemingly intractable problems are now making gradual progress at the negotiating table. A large part of the credit for this must go to the United Nations Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, who never lost faith in the United Nations ability to contribute to peace even in some of the recent dark days of the United Nations history. His courageous and dedicated efforts, combined with his unflagging patience, resulted in the agreements on Afghanistan and the cease-fire in the Iran-Iraq war. We applaud his commitment to finding solutions to the other equally intractable problems in the Middle East, southern Africa, Cyprus, Western Sahara, and especially Kampuchea.*

We are troubled that the hints of peace we get from Viet Nam on the Kampuchean problem remain meagre and uncertain. As long as the invasion and occupation of Kampuchea continues to threaten the peace and stability of South-East Asia, we are gratified that the Secretary-General and his Special Representative,

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

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Mr. Rafeeuddin Ahmed, continue to work on the Kampuchean issue. We also believe that the United Nations commitment to the search for peace in Kampuchea is in full conformity with the letter and spirit of the principles of the Non-Aligned Movement, which declared in its latest Summit Meeting, in Harare, that

"the United Nations represented the most appropriate international forum with the central role in the maintenance of international peace and security and peaceful settlement of international disputes and crises ...". (A/41/697,

Political Declaration, para. 314)

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While the remarkable political developments of 1988 deserve our full attention and scrutiny at this General Assembly, they will not be the focus of my remarks. These recent developments represent significant changes in the political currents. Underneath these currents there are more significant tidal changes taking place which could significantly alter the political and economic landscape of our globe. These deep tidal changes are more difficult to perceive than the swift changes of currents we see on the surface, but their impact could be more enduring and perhaps determine the shape of the twenty-first century.

These tidal changes are manifesting themselves in the remarkable change in the attitudes of all the major Powers and richer and more developed nations. In the past few decades the conventional wisdom in most multilateral forums was that it was the poorer, struggling nations of the South that faced a precarious and uncertain future. The richer and more developed nations of the North, viewing the future with greater self-confidence, were expected to channel their resources, imagination and energy to helping the South.

Quite suddenly, in the past few years, it has been the richer nations of the North which have begun to speak and behave like endangered species. All these major Powers, perhaps with the rare exception of Japan, are now afraid that unless they make dramatic adjustments in their economic policies they may slip badly behind in the new industrial and technological race that has been unleashed. Nations that are able to ride on the new technological wave will assure themselves of a privileged place in the twenty-first century; those that are not will be considerably weakened.

It is this realization that explains, for example, the dramatic reforms being undertaken in the Soviet Union under the banner of perestroika - a word that is now as easily recognizable in the English language as in the Russian. Any nation that worries about its future today should attempt to carry out equally bold

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restructuring, or perestroika, of its social, economic and political systems. There is no other choice, as demonstrated also by another large and important nation, China, which is attempting equally dramatic and no less visible changes in its economic system.

Significant as these developments have been, they are dwarfed by the changes taking place in the even more developed economies. The largest bilateral trading relationship in the world is between the United States and Canada, with trade totalling \$130 billion per year. This trading relationship is likely to be further strengthened with the expected ratification of the United States-Canada free trade agreement by the two countries, resulting perhaps in the creation of a single, enormous North American market.

Large as this market may become, it could still be smaller than another giant economic animal that will emerge in four years' time: the single European market. The decision in 1987 of the 12 Parliaments of the European Community to ratify the Single European Act virtually guaranteed the market's creation by 31 December 1992. The progress towards it may be slow, since the process of formulating it will be based on 300 directives, 200 of which have been put to the Council of Ministers of the European Community and 69 of which have been passed. The political will to create a single European market is manifest.

The economic benefits of such a single market could be immense. Today the Community has a total population of 320 million and a combined gross national product of \$4.6 trillion. One study, by the Directorate-General for Economic and Financial Affairs of the European Commission, entitled "The Economics of 1992" and published in 1988, predicted an increase of gross domestic product when the single market is created of between 3.2 per cent and 5.7 per cent in the medium term, a 4.5 per cent to 7.7 per cent decrease in consumer prices, and the creation of between 1.3 million and 2.3 million new jobs. Other equally important changes will

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be taking place with the creation of the single European market, in the form of the gradual removal of the administrative barriers that separate the 12 nations.

In 1992, or a little later, it will be possible for goods and services to flow freely among the 12 countries - perhaps an unprecedented development in the history of man, since a similar removal of national barriers has been accomplished in the past only through empire-building. Today these barriers are being removed voluntarily. For the citizens of the European Community this means that they will be able to go to college, work or retire in whichever European country they choose; to travel around without having to show passports; and to save their money in any of the 12 currencies, which may eventually become one currency.

We can imagine what the world would look like if the other subregions were to attempt equally dramatic reductions in the artificial barriers that separate nations. Here again, the established wisdom is that it could not happen in other parts of the world, which are beset by national, ethnic or territorial conflicts. This may be so. Yet it may be salutary to remind ourselves that only 44 years ago the battlefields of Europe were drenched in the blood of millions of soldiers trying to defend or extend frontiers. If some of those soldiers are alive today, and some of them surely must be, they must be puzzled that the frontiers they defended with blood and enormous sacrifice are now being voluntarily dismantled in some significant respects.

All countries which are at war today should pause to reflect on the the European experience. If the armies of Viet Nam - to cite one example - were to return to their national frontiers and Viet Nam were to live peacefully with its neighbours, it could easily become a dynamic and prosperous nation. Instead, its people are today suffering considerable economic misery and deprivation, leading to

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the severe outflow of economic migrants, who have put a heavy burden on the rest of South-East Asia. The choice is clear: do we want to go the way of Europe or the way of Indo-China?

Although we commend the growing integration of developed economies, we are mindful of the dangers it could pose for the global economy. One fundamental reason why the global economy has enjoyed relatively steady and constant growth rates has been the creation of an open and fair trading system under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), which has been in force since 1 January 1948. If the new economic giants of North America, Western Europe and Japan were to try to build economic fortresses that divided up the global economy they could well increase the vast gap between the rich and the poor nations. Members of the United Nations should be vigilant and ready to defend the open global economic system. It would be ironic and tragic if the economic integration designed to remove national economic barriers ended up by creating even more formidable economic barriers which shut most developing countries out of the global economic system.

These are some of the major challenges that we shall face in the years to come. The United Nations has adjusted well to the new political currents sweeping across the globe today. It needs to pay equal attention to some of the major tidal changes that are forthcoming. If this General Assembly session could begin to focus its attention on some of these issues, it might well make a historic contribution.

Mrs. RUIZ CERUTTI (Argentina) (interpretation from Spanish): In recent years those of us who have taken part in these debates have normally begun by giving a pessimistic description of the world situation and a list of conflicts and situations threatening international peace and security. The persistence of centres of tension and unjust situations and the emergence or worsening of certain disputes justified this gloomy picture and to some extent caused our warnings, our feeling of hopelessness faced with what appeared to be problems without a solution, to become a habit.

The United Nations was not spared that criticism. There was scepticism because of what was regarded as a paralysis of the Organization's capacity as a mediator. We believe that the facts show that the criticism was groundless, and that, as we have affirmed in the past, this alleged weakness of the United Nations was caused only by a lack of agreement or in many cases the feeling of resignation of its Members.

In international relations there are two alternating tendencies: a period of co-operation follows one of conflict, like swings of a pendulum, though in practice the periods often overlap. It would seem that in recent years there has been a change from the phase of conflict towards that of co-operation.

The United Nations has played a part in this new dynamic. In fact, in many instances it has created the necessary framework in which the way towards a final settlement of long-lasting conflicts may at last be found, through dialogue and negotiation.

This year, and particularly in the last few months, a number of breakthroughs have taken place which can be attributed largely to the Organization. It gives me great satisfaction to begin this statement by expressing the recognition of the

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Argentine Government of the key role played by the Secretary-General.

Mr. Perez de Cuellar has succeeded in giving orientation and drive to the trend of co-operation to which I have referred.

On the question of Afghanistan, after six years the determination and perseverance of the Secretary-General and of his Special Representative, now Ecuador's Foreign Minister, Mr. Diego Cordovez, led to the signing in Geneva of the agreement between Afghanistan and Pakistan, guaranteed by the Governments of the United States and the Soviet Union.

In the case of Iran and Iraq we have also arrived at a cease-fire. Argentina, a non-permanent member of the Security Council, reiterates its commitment to the establishment of a just, honourable and lasting peace within the framework of Security Council resolution 598 (1987), and urges both parties to redouble their efforts towards building the future of peace and co-operation that both nations deserve.

I consider it appropriate to emphasize at this point the momentum gained lately by the United Nations peace-keeping forces. In recent decades we have actively co-operated in various peace-keeping operations. Also, as an additional contribution to this undertaking, the Argentine Government today contributes personnel to the United Nations Iran-Iraq Military Observer Group.

Within this framework we also notice positive signs in the Maghreb region, and we welcome the resumption of diplomatic relations last May between Algeria and Morocco. We also view with hope the development of the process of consultations by the President of the Organization of African Unity and the Secretary-General of the United Nations with the countries of the region. We trust that just and lasting solutions to the question of Western Sahara may be found.

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We cannot fail to mention the encouraging aspects of certain other major issues. I refer here to the new talks that are taking place on Cyprus and South-East Asia and between the two Koreas.

Recent developments also make it possible for us to look hopefully towards the future in southern Africa. We must not slacken our efforts until a just, democratic and egalitarian society has been established in an independent Namibia. The only internationally agreed basis for the peaceful settlement of that question is the United Nations plan for the independence of the Territory, contained in Security Council resolution 435 (1978). All the relevant conditions for implementing the plan have been met. We hope that the talks engaged in by the Governments of Angola, Cuba, the United States and South Africa may be a sign of a change in the attitude of South Africa, marked so far by defiance of the international community. However, if that is not so, and if, on the contrary, South Africa seeks to perpetuate illegally its policy of colonial occupation of the Territory of Namibia, the United Nations must take the necessary steps, including those provided for in Chapter VII of the Charter, to achieve its goal of making Namibia independent.

In parallel with these situations, we cannot but regard with concern the persistence of certain problems, with respect to which we must redouble our efforts, so that they are not left out of the phase of co-operation that I have mentioned.

The events that have been taking place since last December in the occupied Arab territories have added another element to the already unstable and explosive situation prevailing in the Middle East. A just and lasting solution to the situation in that region can be reached only if it includes both acknowledgement of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to live in their territory, with

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the authorities and form of government that they freely choose, and the right of all States of the region, including Israel, to live within internationally recognized boundaries. Argentina considers it necessary to open channels of negotiation in order to find viable formulas for all the parties concerned. In this context, the convening of an international conference, under the auspices of the United Nations, with the participation and consent of all the parties, could be an appropriate mechanism.

The situation in Lebanon is again causing particular concern to the people and the Government of Argentina and occupying their attention. The Lebanese people must be able to exercise their inalienable right to live free of all foreign interference, thus recovering their full sovereignty.

Another question is that of ending the apartheid régime of the South African Government. The rejection of apartheid has been clearly reflected in many General Assembly and Security Council resolutions. There will be no peace in southern Africa until it is totally and definitively eradicated. The most appropriate, effective and peaceful way to achieve that is to apply mandatory sanctions against the Government of South Africa, under Chapter VII of the Charter.

I should now like to refer to the situation in Central America, a question in which my country has a direct interest, and which affects in a special way the whole continent. Last year in this debate we highlighted the political will of the five Central American Presidents, who confronted the regional crisis by signing the Guatemala agreement.

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Our country, a member of the Contadora Support Group, has worked, and is continuing to work, towards a peaceful and negotiated solution to the problems of that region. We understand that the objectives sought by the United Nations can be achieved only if the principles of non-interference and self-determination are respected, without delays or conditions.

We believe that peace is directly linked to the concept of development. That is why we have sponsored the plan of assistance and co-operation for Central America worked out by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and adopted by the General Assembly this year. Since the signature of the Esquipulas II agreement, the countries of Central America have taken important steps towards peace. That shows that the way that has been chosen is the right and the only appropriate one consonant with the principles of the United Nations.

The difficulties that have emerged in recent months must be dealt with in the same spirit. We the countries of America that feel committed to contribute towards a solution to this crisis, are convinced that force, threat and economic coercion must be left behind - indeed, that they have become a thing of the past.

Only through co-operation, increasing integration and effective political will will it be possible to initiate economic development, which is the key to any future stabilization. We are convinced that Latin America has entered upon a period of active solidarity in the solution of its problems. The initiatives of the Contadora Group and the Support Group resulted in the creation of the permanent mechanism for consultation and concerted political action. The Presidents of the Group, at their meeting at Acapulco, established a dynamic system for unifying the criteria for consultation and negotiation, with the basic aims of promoting the peace, development and democracy of our peoples, aims that are in agreement with the basic principles of the United Nations.

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Our work also includes other fundamental areas in which we must strengthen the co-operate phase upon which we have now entered: I am referring to disarmament, to social and humanitarian affairs, and to international economic relations.

Disarmament, while it contributes to détente, ought also to be its logical consequence. The heads of State and Government of India, Greece, Mexico, Sweden, Tanzania and Argentina have continued to work actively in the Group of Six on the initiative for peace and disarmament, particularly in the priority task of nuclear disarmament.

The implementation of the Treaty banning intermediate-range nuclear missiles is, undoubtedly, an important step in the process of disarmament. The possibility of reaching agreement on the reduction of strategic nuclear weapons is, in turn, another auspicious element in the area of bilateral disarmament. Both will undoubtedly benefit international peace and security. However, this new atmosphere is not yet reflected on a multilateral basis. We believe that the present session is a propitious occasion to reflect the possibilities offered by this new situation in the field of disarmament.

The convergence in political will should allow the Conference on Disarmament to make progress on such priority issues as stopping nuclear-weapons tests and preventing an arms race in outer space, as well as on the early conclusion of the preparation of a convention banning chemical weapons on a non-discriminatory basis.

With regard to Argentina, we cannot, in dealing with this central issue of the United Nations over-all policy on disarmament, fail to mention the situation in the South Atlantic. Our country has fully and resolutely supported the initiative of the General Assembly, as reflected in resolutions 41/11 and 42/16, in which the South Atlantic has been declared a zone of peace and co-operation.

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The South Atlantic has been subjected to an unjustified militarization by nuclear-weapon States, which have established bases, carried out manoeuvres and moved their naval units in the area without restrictions, thereby adversely affecting the security of the region as a whole.

For that reason a firm and vigorous response was called for. The States that co-sponsored the resolutions to which I have referred have worked actively towards the establishment of a concrete and effective means of consolidating peace and security in the region pursuant to General Assembly resolution 42/16. The final document produced by those countries and signed at Rio de Janeiro last July sets forth some basic principles: the issues of peace and security are linked with those of development and militarily significant Powers are urged to reduce their military presence and show restraint in this regard, banning the introduction of nuclear armaments.

In the social and humanitarian field, my delegation wishes to associate itself with the celebration of the fortieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Nor can we fail to refer to the question of drug trafficking. We are resolutely determined to fight against that scourge, and we acknowledge the effort being made by our Latin American brothers, despite the difficult economic circumstances they are experiencing.

Progress in the political field is in sharp contrast with the prospects for international economic relations. The truth is that, with regard to the question of development, little or nothing has been accomplished in the past few years. The main consequence of this omission during the present decade has been that the developing countries, particularly those of Africa and Latin America, have not been

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able to contribute to the growth of the international economy in a manner proportionate to their potential.

The growing external debt of those countries has caused a massive reverse flow of financial resources that is setting up insurmountable barriers against the imports of the developing world and is posing a formidable obstacle to the growth of world trade. Sharp increases in interest rates, restrictions on commodity trade and protectionist measures in the industrialized countries, along with the enacting of subsidies for their own agricultural exports, indicate the lack of a global development strategy.

As part of any global strategy it is essential that substantial progress be made towards the liberalization of international trade at the new round of multilateral negotiations under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), for which the mid-term review, to be held at Montreal in December, should agree, as suggested by the Cairns Group at its meeting at Bariloche, upon long-term reform in agricultural policy, a contractual freeze and a gradual reduction in agricultural support and subsidy measures and other policies that cause the greatest amount of economic distortion.

The new strategy for global development must focus on a lasting solution to the problem of debt, which encompasses, on the one hand, a continuing process of structural reforms in the debtor countries and, on the other hand, the reduction of the total amount of indebtedness and a real transfer of financial resources towards those countries.

Development is also necessary to ensure global security, within the framework of interdependence which I mentioned earlier.

This analysis of the international situation and the dynamic process in which we are immersed leads to me share with you some thoughts about the internal

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functioning of our Organization. In 1985, the United Nations decided to initiate a process of reform that would enable it to respond to the challenges facing it with the greatest effectiveness and efficiency. Since then many efforts have been exerted in the search for formulas acceptable to all. However, much remains to be done. We believe that if we are to rely on the United Nations as a suitable instrument capable of meeting the needs of our times, we must as soon as possible move beyond this transitional stage. We are convinced that we will find solutions satisfactory to all. To achieve that, we are willing to make our contribution and to co-operate in the quest for agreements that will enable us to implement the objectives we set forth in General Assembly resolution 41/213.

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At the same time it is indispensable that the Organization be provided with stable financing so it may be in a position to give us what we expect from it. Otherwise, we alone shall be to blame. Thus, each Member State must continue to make every effort to fulfil its obligations without imposing conditions not provided for in the Charter.

I wish to conclude my statement by referring to two matters on our agenda that are of special importance to my country.

The first is the question of Antarctica. Argentina is linked to that continent by sovereignty, history and continuity. As an original signatory of the Antarctic Treaty, Argentina has participated actively in creating an effective and flexible system, open to all States, which has kept the continent free from conflicts, ensured that it be used exclusively for peaceful purposes and prevented it from becoming a setting for international discord.

The second is the question of the Malvinas, an old colonial issue that has existed since the earliest stages of Argentina's independent development. A settlement became a real possibility with the advent of the decolonization movement encouraged by the United Nations. The Assembly is aware of, and has shown unmistakable signs of agreeing with, the constant willingness of the Argentine Government to achieve a just and final solution to this matter, which has high priority in my country's foreign policy.

Since 1965 a succession of resolutions have called for negotiations between Argentina and the United Kingdom to reach a peaceful solution of outstanding problems, in particular the problem of the future of the Malvinas Islands. These resolutions lay stress on Argentina's efforts to comply with the demands of the international community, but so far these have been repeatedly thwarted by the position of the British Government, which has refused to begin comprehensive

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negotiations, despite the efforts of the Secretary-General, whose mission of good offices to bring together the parties to the dispute has been and continues to be acknowledged by Argentina.

The recent heightening of tension in the area owing to measures that deepen the differences between the two countries is another source of concern for the region and the world; this makes the prompt resumption of bilateral contacts even more essential.

While reaffirming its sovereign rights over the Malvinas, South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands and the adjacent seas, Argentina reiterates its willingness to enter into a dialogue with the United Kingdom, a wide-ranging, sincere dialogue, without pre-conditions, which would take into account and respect the interests of the inhabitants of the islands so as to ensure their well-being and prosperity.

On this issue, as well as on other regional and global problems, my country is ready to co-operate actively in fulfilling the fundamental purposes of this Organization.

Mr. BEDREGAL GUTIERREZ (Bolivia) (interpretation from Spanish): I wish first of all to congratulate Mr. Dante Caputo, Minister for External Relations of the Argentine Republic, an illustrious exponent of Latin American diplomacy and intellectual traditions, on his well-deserved election to the presidency of the Assembly.

I take pleasure in expressing here my affection and respect for Ambassador Nita Barrow, whose attributes and diplomatic experience are a credit to our region.

I wish also to pay a tribute to the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, for his tireless and effective quest for peace and harmony among nations, and to assure him of my admiration and support.

(Mr. Bedregal Gutierrez, Bolivia)

The Government and the people of Bolivia wish to express, through me, their solidarity and sympathy with the Governments and peoples of Bangladesh, Jamaica and Mexico in connection with the natural disasters of recent weeks, which caused such serious loss of life and material damage.

The forty-third session of the General Assembly is beginning its deliberations within an auspicious framework of profound changes in world politics. The East-West agreement on disarmament and understanding has opened up the prospect of lasting and beneficial peace by initiating a broad process of dialogue and negotiation which we hope will help put an end to the insanity of the nuclear arms race. Dialogue has begun to eliminate, we hope for ever, polarization based on the fragile theory of peaceful coexistence - polarization that has put at risk the system of international security. We are living in a new era of reason, of faithful and sincere relations among States, which give a fresh impetus to dialogue and strengthen the political will of States to consolidate peace and effective co-operation to overcome hegemony and irrational pressure and thus create a world order based on the dignity of the individual.

The changes that have taken place will be to the common benefit in the context of the objective of beginning a new era in North-South relations on the basis of symmetrical interdependence, so that well-being will no longer be an exotic flower that blooms only in industrialized countries, which are wealthy because they are industrialized, and which monopolize the magic of technology.

The understanding between the super-Powers on the establishment of this historic foundation of peace will test our will to co-operate in the service of those on the neglected fringes of the world who are tackling the obstacle course of development in the face of brutal frustration and at the cost of enormous social sacrifices.

(Mr. Bedrocal Gutierrez, Bolivia)

In recognizing the blessings of nuclear disarmament, we must acknowledge the peace efforts of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. These reflect the humanistic idealism of the San Francisco Charter, which advocates a just and harmonious international society, and are based on the philosophical foundations laid at Bandung and Belgrade.

The solidarity of the weak countries of the third world has undoubtedly helped to promote the cause of mankind, which has been strengthened by East-West co-operation, thanks to the theory and practice of active neutrality in a world which until recently lived in fear induced by nuclear terror and which still suffers from the devastating scourge of the absolute poverty affecting two thirds of the world's population. This last challenges the very survival of mankind.

The future of the developing countries will be at serious risk until stable conditions are established to foster their development and provide a political solution to the problem of external debt. Early in this century force was used to make a Latin American State discharge its public obligations, and it was then that the Drago doctrine emerged, which made recovery of such debts by coercion illegal. Today there are more subtle ways of putting pressure on States, particularly those of Latin America, the Caribbean and Africa. These create intolerable financial strangulation, cause developmental regression and impoverish the peoples concerned.

(Mr. Bedregal Gutierrez, Bolivia)

In these times, it is quite incongruous to accept the principles of protectionism in the face of this heavy burden borne by the third world. And, of course, the threat or use of force in any form is unacceptable. This matter is in essence political, and involves the responsibility of both creditors and debtors. Despite its struggle to free itself from the worst hyperinflationary crisis that any country of Latin America and the Caribbean has ever suffered, Bolivia recognizes the existence of this financial obligation.

We have been negotiating the buying-back of our commercial debt on terms acceptable both to us and to the creditor banks. We have met our payments to multilateral official financing agencies, and on the bilateral level we have been flexible in our approach to negotiations with the Paris Club.

However, these efforts and this true demonstration of our good faith and of our recognition of what we owe should not lead anyone to take unilateral decisions of non-payment. But the sacrifice borne by our people is overwhelming because the servicing of this debt involves more than 25 per cent of the value of our exports, which imposes a stranglehold on my people's right to strive to achieve disarmament and to combat poverty. This situation is repeated mutatis mutandis in almost all the debtor countries. As a result, the entire world community - and particularly the creditor countries - must become aware of this grave matter, and undertake the realistic and practical measures needed to prevent this question of debt from becoming a political and financial disaster of unforeseeable consequences for the whole world. The negative burden of debt on the economy of my country is revealed in tragic terms in a document which I have annexed to my statement and which will be distributed with the official version of my address.

(Mr. Bedregal Gutierrez, Bolivia)

I have referred in some detail to the problem of external debt because this is the most obvious link in the chain which binds the Third World to a cruel and unjust destiny that must be overcome. But, unfortunately for us, it is not the only link. We suffer from acute problems and shortages with respect to external financing for development, and in terms of trade, to mention only two aspects of a very gloomy and multifaceted picture.

It is not possible for the flow of capital to run from an impoverished South to a prosperous North. Latin America and the Caribbean alone contribute, through interest payments and other obligations, close to \$2 billion per year more to the creditor countries than they receive. We must ask ourselves: Who is contributing to the greater development of whom?

Although Bolivia appreciates and is grateful for the technical and financial co-operation which it receives from bilateral and multilateral sources, and which goes towards its development, this is patently insufficient and not consonant with our determined resolve to escape from our current stage of underdevelopment. And in this forum it is appropriate to mention the co-operation of agencies of the United Nations system, such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Fund for Drug Abuse Control (UNFDAC) and others. But it is also necessary to state our hope that they will participate at a higher level of resources in my country's development endeavours.

There can be no doubt that the heterogeneous and pluralistic make-up of international society does not make it possible for there to be absolute agreement on assessments of world and regional problems. But we must recognize that in many cases this play of interests has a disruptive and decisive effect on the internal policies of States.

(Mr. Bedregal Gutierrez, Bolivia)

However, we are borne up by the conviction that it is not on the basis of prejudiced attitudes and preconceptions that we shall be able to improve international relations. For we believe that, if we come together each year in this forum, we do so in order to find appropriate solutions to the problems and conflicts facing it, and not to deepen our differences further. There are universal ethical values which are in keeping with the very essence of the dignity of a human being, whatever his or her culture, education, or national identity. These values encompass the will and resolve of all peoples of the planet to achieve peace, individual and social freedom, the right to development, and the full validity of international law.

The peace solution in Central America can no longer be deferred. This abode of humanity, this Continent of Hope, with which we have the warmest solidarity, has been suffering the consequences of fratricidal struggle for so many years, and to date it has not been possible to eliminate the violence.

Perhaps it might be appropriate for new diplomatic initiatives to be taken, designed to put into effect the very fruitful work carried out by the Contadora and the Support Group to ensure that the negotiating framework among the Central American Governments may really come into proper effect immediately. This is a matter of urgency, and there is a valid solution to it: a worthy and fair political formula which will bring about a cessation of hostilities and promote understanding on the basis of practical implementation of the principles underlying the thinking of this world Organization and its regional branch, the Organization of American States (OAS). It is not inappropriate to mention, in connection with this matter, the analogy which may be traced to the results achieved in promoting peace in other regions of the world, which are very fresh in our memories.

(Mr. Bedregal Gutierrez, Bolivia)

One of the principles of international law - perhaps the most important and fully valid one - rejected at a very early stage the colonialist policy which prevailed at that time, regarding as an execrable practice the extension of sovereignty over Territories and populations that were beginning to form their own socio-historical identity. For this reason, we reject any formula that springs from the colonialist mentality, which still persists and continues to trample underfoot the dignity of certain nations.

The General Assembly of the United Nations has on many occasions condemned the continuing imposition of the colonial power of the United Kingdom on the Malvinas Islands, and on this occasion my country renews its support of the historical rights of the Argentine Republic over this southern island Territory occupied by Great Britain, and our support for the resumption of negotiations designed to find a peaceful solution to this conflict.

With the same pan-American awareness, Bolivia's support of the Panamanian Republic over the canal continues to be constant, and it is imperative for the international community to guarantee the fulfilment of the Torrijos-Carter Treaty.

There are discrepancies in other latitudes that have been the subject of General Assembly resolutions, and we should be resolved to safeguarding the principle of independence which cannot be trampled underfoot by foreign interference. We are referring to the conflicts in Kampuchea, Cyprus, Lebanon, Namibia and the Western Sahara.

In the same spirit, we appeal to the parties concerned to achieve unification in Korea on the basis of dialogue.

Fortunately, and thanks to the endeavours of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the war in the Persian Gulf, which so greatly disturbed world peace, is approaching its end. This is a historic achievement by the United

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Nations, which has solidly established itself as the highest and most trustworthy world-wide machinery for managing, negotiating, and bringing about the achievement of peace wherever it may be interrupted or disrupted.

We should also welcome the beginning of the process of withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan, and the respect shown for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of that country. That, too, is an achievement of this world Organization.

The policy of apartheid of the South African Government is an abominable scar on the face of human society. It is repugnant to the legal and ethical conscience of the world that this racial segregation should continue to be practised with impunity by the Government of this country. And that Government should be the subject of the strongest possible sanctions for its conduct, which runs totally counter to all the codification of international law in the area of the validity and respect for human rights.

Recent months have been fruitful, in the sense that the conflicts have been controlled and fresh conflicts prevented. The United Nations' activities have shown it to be a great neutral and trustworthy participant, helping to create conditions that should lead to dialogue and the resolution of conflicts. There is a promising atmosphere for the "creation of peace", with love, reconciliation and good faith.

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A new spirit has emerged, a spirit that will lead to the creation of peace through the broad avenues of negotiation, which will, in turn, provide incentives to the economic and social, political and moral sectors of our society, doing away with the need for and the possibility of violence. These are mechanisms which are based on the principle of the maintenance of peace, and States have begun once again to believe in and trust the bodies of the United Nations system, whose impartiality and neutrality can be relied upon.

The item on development and strengthening of good-neighbourliness between States undoubtedly is the one that most strikingly demonstrates the need to foster and further friendly relations between States bound by geography and common borders. This period in man's history is a time of physical and economic integration. A happy example of reconciliation and the establishment of lasting peace for mutual benefit is that of Europe and the Economic Community. In Latin America and the Caribbean we are striving eagerly to achieve that goal of political reintegration and economic integration. That is the path of unity and the quest for a common destiny.

This item should be tackled with total intellectual honesty, defining the causes which at times make it impracticable to maintain friendly relations between neighbouring States when unnecessary conflicts await solution - conflicts which need to be overcome precisely because of the people's new objectives of peace and development, within the framework of imaginative diplomatic activities and with the creativity consonant with the changes now taking place in all parts of the world.

We must increase the ability of the United Nations to achieve its purposes. All initiatives designed to strengthen the system of international peace and security deserve our warmest support, because we are convinced that we have not yet

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succeeded in adopting an efficient system that will avert conflicts and provide for the solution of disputes. Solutions can be found if we continue to work faithfully within the framework of the competence of United Nations bodies and the principle that an appropriate solution should be found for any conflict within a reasonable period. It is in the interest of the international community to find machinery and procedures that facilitate the implementation of General Assembly resolutions on the peaceful settlement of disputes.

To this end, the intervention of the Secretary-General can be decisive, as has been demonstrated in practice, in promoting dialogue between the parties or in proposing alternative formulas, so that all conflicts are solved satisfactorily.

The item relating to the peaceful settlement of disputes among States Members is of particular interest to Bolivia and we have therefore sponsored draft resolutions urging all States to fulfil and comply in good faith with the Manila Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of International Disputes.

Once again we reaffirm this juridical position, which is of enormous moral significance in terms of the prestige of the world Organization since the United Nations and the regional organizations were established precisely to maintain international peace and security. That objective is being achieved through good faith and frankness, in keeping with honest statesmanlike conduct, by means of General Assembly and Security Council resolutions on the peaceful settlement of disputes.

Within the framework of these universal principles and in the light of American regional policy, Bolivia has proposed, since 1979, a solution to the problem of the landlocked status imposed on it as the result of armed aggression in 1879. The world public knows that my country achieved independence in 1825 with a Pacific Ocean coast, the coastal province covering an area of approximately 160,000

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square kilometres. The coastal mutilation was never accepted by my country and for more than a century we have been making persistent efforts to find a solution to this problem through direct negotiation and, from 1979 onwards, with the participation and diplomatic and political support of the Organization of American States (OAS).

Bolivia needs sovereign control over access to the Pacific Ocean that will restore its original status as a coastal country. To this end, we have carried on intense diplomatic activity, which has created a genuine awareness of this problem among the world public. During these multilateral diplomatic activities, and particularly in the regional framework of the OAS, a number of resolutions have been adopted in which the parties involved in the dispute have repeatedly been urged to begin negotiations designed to find a just solution to this problem.

It will be understood how much political, economic and moral damage my country has suffered as a result of this despoiling of its marine patrimony at a time, fortunately long past, when might was the supreme law of nations.

This outstanding issue has a political and diplomatic basis on which we seek to redress a historic injustice. We are not seeking to deny the legal validity of longstanding bilateral agreements, but today they need to be supplemented and brought up to date in the light of the present realities of international life. It is no answer to offer mere free transit as a substitute for the return of usurped territory. That is why successive Bolivian Governments have sought a just solution based on Latin American brotherhood. This is not an issue that can be clouded by casuistic speechifying and claims based on historical situations that are fossilized and out of date.

In keeping with the resolutions of the Organization of American States, in 1987 Bolivia put a proposal for the solution of the conflict to the Government of Chile as the basis for negotiations. Those direct negotiations between the two

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States took place in Montevideo in April of that year. Unfortunately, that basis for an understanding to our mutual benefit, which would have opened up the prospect and great possibilities of integration, peace and development, was arrogantly rejected, to the surprise even of the people of that country.

Despite the continuing aggressive and arrogant policy of the present Government of Chile, my country will continue its efforts until it exhausts the regional resources available to it in the OAS before transferring the problem to the United Nations.

Bolivia cherishes the hope that international solidarity and the practical viability of calm and up-to-date bilateral diplomatic negotiations will make it possible for our country to regain access to the Pacific Ocean by means of this policy of peace, integration and development.

We are certain that all Member States are carrying on a whole-hearted struggle against drug trafficking, which in the last two decades has assumed unprecedented proportions owing to the stubborn attitude of the criminals engaging in this very lucrative business, who challenge the capacity of State institutions, for action and control because they are able to draw on considerable economic power. This is a crime against mankind which we must eliminate. Its perverse and insensate nature goes beyond any reasonable considerations and our purpose must be to eliminate all aspects of this inhuman activity. The international community simply cannot live with drug trafficking and its consequences.

In the face of this inescapable fact, Latin America and the Caribbean, the Movement of Non-Aligned States and the international community have been the first - and this has been accepted by all States - to put forward the principle of collective, shared responsibility in the struggle to eradicate this scourge once and for all.

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The new definition of the crime does not separate the developing countries, which have been capriciously called producer or transit countries for narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, from the developed countries, which, in similar fashion, have been characterized as consuming countries. The problem of the criminal activity of drug trafficking affects everyone equally, with its attendant negative impact on economies and the scourge of drug addiction.

We should note the steps taken as a result of genuine international solidarity in the struggle to combat this evil through the activities of the United Nations Fund for Drug Abuse Control and the United Nations Development Programme, as well as the United States of America and the countries of Europe, which have announced, and in many cases put into effect, programmes of economic assistance for those countries that are affected by production, so as to enable them to attack this problem effectively.

Despite good intentions, the degree of co-operation is still quite low and does not encompass the minimum needs of existing plans to deal with this problem.

Bolivia has just promulgated a strong law which it is applying in this unequal struggle against the power of drug traffickers: "Law governing coca and controlled substances". It is one of the most modern laws ever adopted in recent years in the area of positive anti-drug law. Its special characteristics combine harsh penalties with the replacement of coca crops by means of planned alternative development aimed at agricultural substitution and providing the necessary economic incentives to those farmers affected by the elimination of the traditional or transitional crops.

The positive aspects of that law have clearly achieved encouraging results: while the confiscation of cocaine paste has increased substantially, many of the most powerful drug traffickers have been arrested and hundreds of cocaine factories

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have been destroyed. In addition, thousands of hectares of coca cultivation have been eradicated in compliance with our international commitments: But it is clear that these efforts could be undermined if the industrial countries, such as the United States of America, do not effectively contribute in a timely manner the financial resources they have pledged. In this connection, my country calls on the international community to make a decisive contribution to the eradication of improper use and illegal trafficking of drugs and redouble its efforts, without applying pressure or setting conditions, because our decision to continue the fight to final victory is being demonstrated daily.

In conclusion, I wish once again to reaffirm our unswerving commitment to the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and our conviction that mankind must, with the support of all, pursue the course that has been so auspiciously begun in recent times towards its glorious destiny of peace and justice.

May God bless world peace.

Mr. da LUZ (Cape Verde) (spoke in Portuguese; interpretation from French text furnished by the delegation): It is with great satisfaction that we welcomed the election of Mr. Caputo to the presidency of the General Assembly at its forty-third session. We are convinced that his professional experience and sound political and diplomatic sense will bring success to our work. Through his august person, it is to today's Argentina that we now convey the sentiments of brotherhood and friendship of our people which, from the other side of the Atlantic, has followed with renewed sympathy and confidence the democratic progress of the peoples of Latin America.

To Mr. Caputo's predecessor, Mr. Peter Florin, we wish to offer our gratitude and appreciation for the excellent work he did as President during his term of office at the forty-second session.

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I also wish to congratulate Secretary-General Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar for his praiseworthy efforts to find peaceful solutions to the many problems which affect the functioning of this Organization, and in particular his fruitful diplomacy in the quest for peaceful solutions to regional conflicts.

Year after year the Republic of Cape Verde has intervened in the general debate of this Assembly to state its position on the major problems of concern to mankind.

From disarmament to decolonization, from international peace and security to the fight against desertification, my country has always joined its voice to those of the majority of the members of this Assembly, sharing their concerns and their ideas, and making suggestions and proposals to solve these problems.

Today, we should like to concentrate on some questions which in our opinion merit special attention from the United Nations at this historic phase in international affairs, a time when profound changes are occurring in the world, in the life of the Organization, in the international economic situation and the peace process in southern Africa.

The world is witnessing changes of fundamental importance in various fields of international affairs. At the threshold of the year 2000, the major challenge facing mankind is its ability to steer these changes in such a way as to ensure the perpetuation of life, peace, development, justice and progress for all.

In the economic sphere, the changes in recent decades which are characterized by the emergence of new poles of development have taken the form of a dynamics capable of leading to a recasting of the economic international system and the withdrawal of the most pronounced aspects of the bipolarization of the world that has characterized post-war international relations.

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Such a change in international economic affairs causes profound alterations in the orientation of political régimes in many parts of the world, both domestically and internationally.

The mounting interdependence of international economic relations is another important aspect of current changes that derive basically from economic needs which, in combination with the development of new technology, also make it essential for there to be mutual understanding of the interests of all countries and systems at the economic as well as political and social levels.

Current developments require that the results of negotiations in the various international multilateral forums take account of the new realities, for these cannot be steered towards a positive evolution except through the real democratization of those relations and the advent of a new international economic order.*

* Mr. Dlamini (Swaziland), Vice-President, took the Chair.

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The tendencies which can now be observed towards a multipolarization of the world in the economic field and the parallel aggravation of the crisis in the international economic system have had a direct impact on the conduct of the various economic partners. If, on the one hand, such a situation leads to protectionism and other similar phenomena, on the other it stimulates new experiments in North-South and South-South co-operation.

In the political sphere, we are also witnessing important changes. The resumption of dialogue and the intensification of co-operation between the two greatest Powers constitute an important axis for those changes.

The summit meetings between the leaders of the Soviet Union and the United States of America, and the conclusion of the Treaty on the Elimination of their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles (the INF Treaty), are decisive contributions to the establishment of an atmosphere of détente in international relations, introducing as they do an element of rationalization, which is contrary to interventionism and could lead to the strengthening of the principle of the non-use of force in the settlement of disputes. The INF Treaty is a major step in disarmament and we believe that other important steps in the nuclear field should also be taken in order to eliminate from the face of the Earth the danger of a holocaust. We are convinced that both the United States of America and the Soviet Union are determined to bring about the full realization of this grand ideal and that they will be able to refrain from placing in space what they have decided to eliminate on Earth.

Aware that this Agreement concerns only a tiny part of existing nuclear arsenals, but with confidence in the dynamic that has been set in motion and the political will underlying it, we believe that the international community should not be excluded from this dynamic. On the contrary, it should encourage the two

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great Powers to redouble their efforts towards the complete elimination of nuclear weapons.

On the regional level, we have been following with much interest the changes which have occurred in regard to the peaceful settlement of disputes. From Afghanistan to Kampuchea, from southern Africa to the Gulf, the message of peace and of negotiated solutions has been predominant in the last few months. The international community cannot but welcome this atmosphere which opens up new prospects for progress.

Cape Verde wishes to express its great satisfaction with these developments, remembering that as a member of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, Cape Verde has always advocated the course of dialogue, of relations based on mutual respect and sovereign equality of States, and of co-operation based on solidarity. In today's world everyone stands to lose when negotiated solutions are discarded and force is relied on instead.

We firmly hope that this trend will spread to all the conflicts which for so many years have taken so many lives and spread desolation, stifling the hopes of man. We encourage the parties to the peace negotiations to press on with their efforts to achieve peaceful and lasting solutions.

The encouraging developments to which I have referred notwithstanding, the international political situation is still precarious. The changes which are now taking shape in the quest for solutions to regional conflicts need to be consolidated. We hope that today's political détente will help consolidate peace and that peace will not be jeopardized by tactical and short-term concerns which might compromise the gains made in international security.

At the same time, it is with satisfaction and renewed hope that we see, particularly in Central America and southern Africa, the carrying out of a process,

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which is increasingly well organized and institutionalized, whereby neighbouring countries and others have helped eliminate the hot beds of tension that still exist.

The participation of countries of the same region or on the same continent in this venture reflects the existence of new forms of solidarity with the peoples of countries threatened with destabilization or countries which have been victims of prolonged conflicts. It also indicates a new global awareness of regional security and a renewed collective political will, which are most conducive to peace and give evidence of the renewed determination of the international community to resolve conflicts.

Members of the international community, particularly those with major responsibilities in the maintenance of peace, must continue to press ahead towards the negotiated solution of conflicts and do their utmost to refrain from any interference which might be damaging to the ongoing peace process or which might jeopardize the initiatives taken by the Secretary-General to bring about negotiated solutions to conflicts.

In today's international scene, we believe that all countries, all Governments and all leaders must do their part in consolidating peace and promoting development, thus opening up new prospects for progress and the emancipation of peoples with justice and social well-being.

Multilateralism is thus of great importance in the quest for solutions to global problems. It is a crucial instrument within the framework of the changes taking place today, leading to a better appreciation and definition of the contours of the world over the next few decades.

In recent years Cape Verde has been one of the countries which have sought to emphasize the importance of the United Nations as an institution that is

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indispensable in a world such as the one in which we now live, a world in which global problems affecting the whole can be discussed and resolved by the collective effort and action of all Member States.

We remain firmly convinced that the United Nations provides a reliable and suitable framework for debate on the major problems facing mankind. We are also convinced that if we want to live in peace and resolve our common problems by peaceful means, there is practically no alternative to the United Nations.

As we see it, the work done by the United Nations has been meritorious, ranging from decolonization to the protection of human rights, from peace-keeping forces to economic development assistance. The major contribution made by the United Nations, or through it, to the building of a more peaceful and more humane world, is beyond the shadow of a doubt.

The tasks which still face the United Nations in the future are colossal. Its success in the completion of those tasks requires, at each phase, a re-thinking of its methods and the adapting of its methods to the evolution of the prevailing trends in international relations, of which it is and must be a reflection, and at the same time a privileged instrument.

We believe that the success of the United Nations in the attainment of the ideals and noble objectives in its Charter will depend on its ability to mobilize mankind for peace and to make the peoples of the world aware of the need to arrive, by overcoming the obstacles, at solutions to the problems of hunger, development, illiteracy, the emancipation of peoples, and also the defence of human rights in its many dimensions.

The prospects of peace now taking shape in southern Africa are expressed mainly in the solid will for peace which inspires the peoples and countries that have been victims of the destabilizing strategy of the South African régime, which

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is yet another result of a mature, determined diplomatic effort put forth over many years and which is distinguished particularly by the Lusaka Compromise and the Nkomati Agreement.

The desire for peace manifested at all times by Angola and Mozambique, to which my country can rightly bear witness, has been an important and decisive factor in making it possible - despite the logic of the confrontation imposed from outside - to persist in the negotiated search for a solution to this conflict, in accordance with the resolutions of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the United Nations and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

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We thus welcome today the withdrawal of South African military personnel from Angolan territory, the solemn reaffirmation by the South African President of the validity and current significance of the Nkomati agreement, and Pretoria's commitment to initiate on 1 November this year the implementation of United Nations resolution 435 (1978) with a view to bringing about Namibia's independence.

The caution which the negotiating process in southern Africa has always aroused in us, the fact that the relevant United Nations resolutions have repeatedly proved to be dead letters and the lack of respect for the rule of law and international public opinion should not lead us to minimize the importance and the dimensions of the current diplomatic success in the region.

These are important victories of international law, of which the United Nations is the global guarantor. These diplomatic successes are the outcome of the combined efforts of the members of the international community, which have repeatedly brought pressure to bear on the South African régime in order to lead it to heed the voice of reason and realize that international coexistence in today's world is subject to certain rules which cannot be breached. Also, we cannot disregard the beneficial influence of the general climate of détente in international relations, which has been made possible by the closer understanding between the great Powers and the mounting awareness of interdependence as a predominant factor in today's world.

South Africa is thus in a situation in which it can either live up to the commitments it has entered into, thereby restoring its credibility in negotiations, or decide to violate them yet again, thereby entrenching itself in an isolation that will be a grave burden on a society whose contradictions have already assumed serious proportions.

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The Pretoria régime must realize that by persisting in its racist practice of denying the elementary civil and political rights of the majority of the population and by drawing up and implementing a policy that is hostile to the neighbouring African countries, it has excluded South Africa from the community of African nations to which it belongs.

By rehabilitating itself as an African nation, through democratic racial coexistence, good-neighbourly relations and non-interference, diplomatically or militarily, in the domestic affairs of the neighbouring countries, South Africa would be able to participate fully and with the weight of its economic and technological potential in the exalting task of the development of Africa.

Apartheid continues to be a challenge to mankind, and primarily to Africans. This system is an aberration and must be eliminated. The persistence of this régime, which denies to Africans their rights and their ability to govern themselves, makes any agreement with South Africa precarious and brings to bear on the neighbouring countries a constant threat of interference and aggression.

In the light of the recent results achieved in the process of negotiations in southern Africa, the international community must redouble its efforts to ensure ever-greater solidarity with the struggle of the South African people and the intensification of international pressure to compel Pretoria to free Nelson Mandela and other black leaders, to recognize the African National Congress and the other democratic forces and to start talks with credible representatives of the black majority. That peaceful path is the path of reason, for it is the only one capable of saving that country from the cycle of violence and self-destruction.

By agreeing to implement the plan contained in United Nations resolution 435 (1978), relating to the independence of Namibia, South Africa has a unique opportunity to make a start on its rehabilitation within the United Nations

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system. Co-operation with the Organization in the impartial supervision of this process, and abstention from any act that might impede the transfer of power to the legitimate representatives of the Namibian people - which the entire international community hopes will be peaceful and democratic - would constitute an earnest of the good faith of the Pretoria régime and could have a beneficial influence on the inevitable future internal talks with the representatives of the black South African majority. The process of Namibian independence thus can be seen as a decisive test which will influence the future attitude of the international community, and above all the African community, towards South Africa.

The Government of Cape Verde is convinced that we are approaching the end of a long and painful period for the South African people and the neighbouring countries. We hope that the international community will support the peoples of southern Africa in the difficult reconversion of a regional system based on confrontation and discrimination to a system of co-operation and healthy racial integration.

Decolonization has gone down in the annals of contemporary history as a noble undertaking, successfully accomplished under the aegis of the United Nations. As a matter of fact, even if the United Nations had no other merits, its establishment would be fully justified by the tremendous legitimate contribution it has made to the liberation of peoples from the colonial yoke, to their emancipation and to the elevation of the universal idea of justice and freedom.

This historic phase of its international activity having now passed, the United Nations faces a major undertaking that is no less noble and worthy: the struggle for human rights. At a time when we are commemorating the fortieth anniversary of the Declaration of Human Rights, the United Nations must make the

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protection of human rights one of the fundamental and priority items on its standing agenda.

Over the past 40 years many legal instruments for the protection of human rights have been adopted. Among them, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is without any doubt an important landmark in the modern movement to protect, enhance the dignity of and ensure respect for human beings, for their fundamental rights and freedoms. Putting its stipulations into effect, articulating its principles with national policies and implementing its provisions are historical necessities which all countries must keep in mind.

Much has been done towards raising the universal consciousness, particularly with respect to the need to protect and respect fundamental rights and freedoms. The results achieved in the context of the struggle against racial discrimination and for equal rights for women are among the specific pieces of evidence of that progress. But much remains to be done in various fields of the protection of human rights. Indeed, the first fundamental right, the right to life, is still insufficiently protected in many parts of the world. Universal and unwavering respect for that right must be a constant concern of this Organization.

In this connection, the Republic of Cape Verde is proud of the position it has taken never to introduce the death penalty into its penal legislation. We have done that fully by choice, aware that it is society that produces the individual; we are placing our bets on human beings and their ability to overcome.

In my country we also assess the international situation in terms of its specific and tangible impact on domestic life, on the climate of peace and harmony and on the colossal tasks of development and the combating of the scourges that beset mankind.

(Mr. da Luz, Cape Verde)

Last year we identified the problems affecting the developing countries adversely, and we put forward ideas and suggestions that could, we believed, help to find a collective solution. One year later we note that nothing, or very little, has been done in the direction of solving those problems. Indeed, since then the obstacles to development have only increased, and hunger continues to devastate the peoples of a number of countries.

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The persistence of this situation in various corners of the world runs counter to the positive developments observed in the international political climate since the last session of the General Assembly and continues to be a challenge to this Organization's capacity and the determination of the international community to find real and lasting means of satisfying the aspirations of our peoples. We take the view that the solution of the problem posed by questions of peace and international security necessarily involves the solution of problems posed by underdevelopment, hunger and poverty. The resolution of regional conflicts does not in itself necessarily imply the existence of a climate of international peace and security. The principal causes of instability and the threats to regional and universal peace lie in unjust international relations and poverty affecting the majority and in the unequal distribution of the earth's resources. It is in the interests of the whole of the international community to work and co-operate with a view to assisting the countries of the third world to find solutions to their problems, problems which we all share.

Developments in the world economic situation are of concern to us because while, on the one hand, the industrialized countries are registering heartening rates of economic growth, we are once again forced to acknowledge that in the developing countries, and in Africa in particular, it has scarcely been possible to curb the negative tendencies which continue to keep millions of human beings in an intolerable state of poverty. Millions of men, women and children annually pay with their lives the price of the world imbalance, an imbalance for which they are not to blame.

The world's conscience is challenged by the contrast between the prosperity of some on the one hand and the abject poverty that we see in other areas. While the present situation is favourable to certain countries and to the detriment of the

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developing countries, it is certainly not to be encouraged in the near future, even in the case of those who are at present drawing some advantages from it. In order for the world economy to improve - and this is something we all wish to see - there is a vital need for evidence of a shared and powerful political will, a will based on the sacrificing of short-term gains, which stifle the healthy development of international economic relations. It is the African continent which continues to present the most desolate economic and social picture and which offers the most uncertain prospects. The special session of the General Assembly in 1986 devoted to consideration of the critical economic situation in Africa provided a framework and an opportunity for a contract of solidarity, which might have renewed the hopes for economic recovery in the African continent. However, two years later an assessment of the measures taken in that direction obliges us to acknowledge that, despite the efforts made by a great number of African countries and the important initiatives carried out at the international level, the results continue to be insufficient and far from encouraging.

The conclusions of the mid-term review of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990 demonstrate that a great deal remains to be done. Many African countries have undertaken structural adjustment programmes in accordance with the requirements of the International Monetary Fund, thus exposing themselves to serious risks of social and political disruption. At the same time, the insufficiency of financial flows, the continued worsening in the terms of trade and the unbearable burden of debt continue to act as powerful elements, the effects of which are cumulative and interrelated, neutralizing the tremendous sacrifices being made by the African peoples in the quest for valid and lasting solutions.

(Mr. da Luz, Cape Verde)

Cape Verde has not been spared the problems affecting the least developed countries of the African continent. Despite the difficulties it is facing, the Government has directed its activities towards a policy of austerity, seeking to limit the volume of external debt, which for a poor country constitutes a heavy burden. We regret that at the international level the volume of debt has not been considered sufficiently significant to be included in the framework of the special-treatment programmes. This means, paradoxically, that a country is penalized for having taken the course of a prudent and austere economic policy. We wish to remind this Assembly that in its second national development plan, covering the period 1986 to 1989, the development priorities of Cape Verde are set out and their implementation will be jeopardized without substantial support from the international community. It is essential and vital that the fresh winds which are bringing hopes of peace to the world should also bring changes in the world economic order, changes which would lead to the design of new machinery and the mobilization of fresh resources to reduce the gap between prosperity and poverty, establish international relations on a moral basis and help effectively to build universal peace. We cannot conceive of a world of peace and concord while imbalances persist which place a great part of mankind on the fringe of progress and outside the general well-being.

We sincerely hope that the détente in relations between the two great Powers and the positive climate currently prevailing, which favours the peaceful solution of conflicts, may herald a new era of co-operation and dialogue in international relations. The life of peoples on this planet is a tribute to their capacity for collective survival. Their history, marked by violence, destruction and war, has taught us from the very beginning that the course we are now following in the international community is the only possible course if we are to continue to carry

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out the marvellous work of creation. Conditions exist for us to make the twenty-first century the century of development for all. That is our obligation towards future generations, to begin now to take the concrete steps necessary to bring about this new era. Our collective survival requires it and our highest spiritual values justify it.

The PRESIDENT: I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

May I remind members that, in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to five minutes for the second and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. DAZA (Chile) (interpretation from Spanish): I sincerely regret that the delegation of Bolivia, through its Minister for External Relations, deemed it necessary to draw attention in the General Assembly this afternoon to an issue which affects my country. I therefore feel obliged to respond at this point.

I am not going to give the Assembly a historical account or an interpretative view of history, but I do wish to affirm that truth can be distorted, not only when inaccuracies are put forward, but also when half-truths are spoken or when truth and facts are glossed over. Such elements appear in the statement of the Minister for External Relations of Bolivia who, regrettably, also made accusations against the Government of Chile which I categorically reject.

I wish to reaffirm here what we have said on other occasions: that the boundaries between my country and Bolivia were established once and for all in a peace treaty signed 84 years ago. That treaty set the boundaries, as did many treaties linking countries represented in this Assembly.

(Mr. Daza, Chile)

Thus, there are no issues outstanding between our two countries. The Treaty set forth responsibilities and obligations for both countries. Under this Treaty my country undertook important responsibilities, which it has been carrying out at all times and in accordance with which Bolivia is acting. The Treaty not only resolved the issues at the time it was signed but also established a permanent basis regulating relations between my country and Bolivia. Based on that instrument, we have, over the past 84 years, signed a number of various instruments which have served to supplement and enrich the 1904 Treaty - on free transit, railway operations, economic co-operation, and so forth. Consequently, Bolivia receives favourable treatment in Chile in a manner that goes far beyond what is provided for in that peace Treaty.

Hence the 1904 Treaty has been a permanent instrument of peace, a flexible instrument capable of improving relations between the two States, and it has eliminated whatever hint of controversy between them. So there is no dispute whatsoever between Chile and Bolivia.

It is absurd and illogical to maintain that the legitimate exercise of rights stemming from an international Treaty, and the arduous work of Chileans in a territory that belongs to them, could cause a dispute. There is no such dispute. There has been no arrogance by Chile; it has always been our intention to seek understanding and good will.

The right of a Government to assess negotiations and to take a decision accordingly is an essential part of the exercise of State sovereignty. No one, save the people of Chile, has the right to question such a decision.

By virtue of that Treaty which binds us, the present Government of Chile - and I want to make this emphatically clear - has always been and continues to be ready to find any possible way or means to improve free transit, to work imaginatively

(Mr. Daza, Chile)

towards integrating the economies of our two countries and to make progress towards modern and effective forms of co-operation that will enable our two nations to plan for the future.

Mr. OJARA (Bolivia) (interpretation from Spanish): The version to the effect that there is no maritime dispute between Bolivia and Chile still requiring a solution is a subterfuge designed to confuse international public opinion. The maritime dispute is at present within the institutional framework of the inter-American organization.

The quest for a negotiated solution to Bolivia's maritime problem by way of whatever peaceful means required in order to find a satisfactory formula enabling my country to return to the Pacific Ocean in sovereignty forms the basis of my country's consistent policy for resolving the land-locked state in which it finds itself as a result of armed aggression carried out against it in 1879.

This just policy, which is in consonance with contemporary international law, was clearly set forth in this world forum by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bolivia in his statement this afternoon in order to place before world public opinion the facts about the efforts we have been making to resolve this century-old dispute. Notwithstanding the failure of the various negotiations entered into, my Government has not lost hope that Chile will come to agree on the need for an open, frank dialogue based on the resolutions adopted by the Organization of American States. If necessary, my Government will appeal to the world body so that it may also be seized of this grave problem.

On this occasion it is not our intention to call into question the 1904 Treaty, which sealed the mutilation of Bolivia's maritime sovereignty. The peoples and the Governments of Latin America and others condemned it for its excessive harshness, a fact which makes clear that it was imposed by force.

(Mr. Ojara, Bolivia)

There is no doubt that in order to restore a balance we need the intervention of the Organization of American States and possibly in future that of the United Nations within the framework of the respective competence of these two forums concerning the political settlement of international disputes. We consider that the Government of Chile should not reject the exercise of that competence which is indispensable for the maintenance of peace.

My Government urges the Government of Chile to live up to the obligations contained in the Chapter on the peaceful settlement of disputes. We do not seek a judicial process in respect of the 1904 Treaty, but the land-locked state of my country, caused by armed aggression, has to be modified in order to make possible the practice of peace and friendly and good-neighbourly relations between two neighbouring Latin American countries.

The PRESIDENT: I call on the representative of Chile, who has asked to speak a second time in exercise of the right of reply.

Mr. DAZA (Chile) (interpretation from Spanish): I shall not prolong this debate unduly. I wish not to make a subjective assessment, but simply to present the facts because, as has been stated many times, facts are neutral.

It is clear that during the last century we had a war with Bolivia, but wars in our continent during the last century were hardly exceptional. In Latin America they were the rule, and many wars took place. The Peace Treaty that ended the state of war between Bolivia and Chile was not imposed by force; it was signed 20 years after the cessation of hostilities, following proposals made by Bolivia itself to the Government of Chile. It was a Treaty that, apart from fixing the border once and for all between my country and Bolivia also, to ensure that there would be no dispute, set out serious obligations and rights as far as Chile is concerned, in accordance with which Chile is acting, pursuant to the Treaty.

The Treaty provided Bolivia with the widest free transit through Chilean ports. Under the treaty we undertook to build a railway, since handed over to Bolivia, linking Bolivia to Arica, and assumed responsibility for financing the building of Bolivian railways.

Although it seems paradoxical, Bolivia had no contact with the sea and it was the 1904 Treaty that gave Bolivia contact with the sea. We are prepared to improve on that Treaty and take all necessary steps out of goodwill, to enable Bolivia to have more effective access to the sea.

Bolivia is not a land-locked country; it is a country that has the most favourable system of free transit in the world, as has been recognized not only by Chile but also by international bodies.

I have here the agreement concluded at a meeting of the Afro-Asian Legal Committee held in Arusha, Tanzania, in which the question of land-locked countries

(Mr. Daza, Chile)

is addressed. It states that the bilateral agreements between Chile and Bolivia are very interesting for the basic reason that they grant the most fundamental right of free transit to any land-locked country.

The treaty of 1904 established once and for all the border between my country and Bolivia, and accordingly there is no dispute.

The representative of Bolivia has said that he is not challenging the 1904 Treaty in any respect. Of course, he cannot do so because his country benefits from the Treaty. It establishes the border and through that Treaty, Bolivians now have rights which they exercise on Chilean territory, a Territory that has always been populated by Chileans, that has been developed thanks to the toil and the sweat of Chileans and that without any contribution from the Bolivians.

The PRESIDENT: I call on the representative of Bolivia who has asked to speak for a second time in exercise of the right of reply.

Mr. OJARA (Bolivia) (interpretation from Spanish): I am very sorry to have to say that the representative of Chile is utterly cynical in his latest remarks when he states that Bolivia never had a sea coast and that it was the transit facilities that gave it contact with the sea.

The representative of Chile refers frequently to the 1904 Peace Treaty. That Treaty, which was so ominous for my country, was signed precisely as a consequence of the armed aggression perpetrated by that country in 1879, as he himself mentioned.

The delegation of Bolivia wishes to terminate this discussion by inviting the Government of Chile to return to the negotiating table to continue the negotiations which were so abruptly broken off by it in April 1987. Those negotiations were

(Mr. Ojara, Bolivia)

necessary pursuant to the resolutions which, since 1979, have been adopted by the Organization of American States and which urge both countries, Bolivia and Chile, to engage in negotiations aimed at arriving at an equitable and mutually satisfactory solution.

The meeting rose at 6.15 p.m.