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Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Wednesday, 27 September 1989, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. GARBA (Nigeria)
later: Mr. ADOUKI (Congo)
(Vice-President)

- Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations
- General debate [9] (continued)

Statements made by

Mr. De Michelis (Italy)
Mr. Genscher (Federal Republic of Germany)
Mr. Major (United Kingdom)
Mr. Pinheiro (Portugal)
Mr. Malmierca Peoli (Cuba)
Sir Satcam Boolell (Mauritius)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m

AGENDA ITEM 129 (continued)

SCALE OF ASSESSMENTS FOR THE APPORTIONMENT OF THE EXPENSES OF THE UNITED NATIONS
(ARTICLE 19 OF THE CHARTER) (A/44/535/Add.1)

The PRESIDENT: Before calling on the first speaker this morning, I should like to draw the Assembly's attention to document A/44/535/Add.1, which contains a letter addressed to me by the Secretary-General informing me that, since the issuance of his communication dated 19 September 1989, El Salvador has made the necessary payment to reduce its arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter.

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of this information?

It was so decided.

AGENDA ITEM 9 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. DE MICHELIS (Italy): Sir, I should like to congratulate you on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly. I am particularly happy to do so because you represent a friendly country and have both the will and the ability to continue the highly valued work of your predecessor at an important juncture in international affairs.

I should also have wished to see here, beside me, someone whom so many of you will remember as a friend and firm supporter of the work of the United Nations, Ambassador Migliuolo, who passed away the other day. I think of him with deep sorrow and affection, recalling his dedicated commitment, both personal and professional.

The countries of the European Community have broadly similar views on the main foreign policy issues. As these views have already been expressed by France, there is no need for me to reiterate Italy's position.

(Mr. De Michelis, Italy)

Instead, I should like to voice my concern that our countries should fully appreciate the international changes currently taking place and draw the proper conclusions. Indeed, in the next few years we shall be required increasingly to choose between two policies or approaches. One I would call "integration" and the other "disintegration". Choice of the former course would mean a policy of co-operation, co-ordination and the progressive transfer of national sovereignty, while the latter choice would tend to aggravate conflicts and tensions, inhibit dialogue and weaken the impact of the major international organizations. Our future depends on our ability, through integration, to reconstruct the one world glimpsed as no more than a brief illusion in the immediate post-war period.

From this very rostrum President Gorbachev announced last December that the Soviet State had abandoned its philosophy of distinctiveness, dating from its inception, in favour of the idea of interdependence, which is a prerequisite for any form of integration.

The Western countries belonging to the European Community and the Atlantic Alliance responded promptly to this long-awaited change of course. The results are now apparent to all. Countries from opposite - although no longer actively antagonistic - blocs are meeting in Vienna to reduce the size of their conventional arsenals. The Atlantic Alliance is sending out new signals calling for the gradual substitution of political confrontation for military confrontation. The industrial democracies are making a concerted effort to assist the Eastern countries in their difficult transition to pluralism and a market economy.

In North-South relations, too, the climate of sterile debates, ideological recriminations and illusions of self-sufficiency is slowly dissipating. We are pleased to see that the principle of integration has prevailed in the Final Document of the Non-Aligned Conference held at Belgrade.

(Mr. De Michelis, Italy)

With the increasing renunciation of the use of force in international relations, the search for areas of complementarity and convergence is intensifying. We are emerging from a period of appallingly destructive and tragically pointless wars. Wars can no longer be won, as we have seen in the conflict between Iran and Iraq, which even now has not yet ended in a true and lasting peace. For one generation, at least, the memory of this senseless slaughter will be a further incentive for compromise.

(Mr. De Michelis, Italy)

On the other hand, the increasing uselessness of military strength for purposes of prestige and domination has helped to start a promising trend towards growing co-operation among peoples. This will determine the success of the important negotiations on disarmament ranging from talks between the major Powers on the reduction of nuclear weapons to multilateral discussions on the total elimination of chemical weapons and on drastic cuts in offensive capabilities also in the field of conventional weapons. The substantial progress made in the latest US-USSR talks shows the validity of the goals which are also being pursued by Italy in Vienna and Geneva, where we expect conclusive results in the course of the next few months. The significant proposals announced to the Assembly by President Bush will help in this direction.

Integration is achieved through the exercise of freedom, democracy and pluralism - in essence, the rights first codified at the international level by the United Nations. Freedom, complementarity and solidarity must be the guiding principles of a new coexistence. Since the meeting in Vienna of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, it is harder to evade the obligation to respect fundamental freedoms by invoking national sovereignty, for verification measures are being perfected just as much in this area as in weapons control. Respect for human rights, among other considerations, makes the continued existence of such punishments as the death penalty unacceptable in our view. Italy is actively involved in efforts to facilitate the approval of the Second Optional Protocol on the abolition of the death penalty. Similarly, we feel it would be most appropriate to agree to a moratorium on the execution of death sentences already passed or of those pronounced during the next three years. Italy would also like to see the adoption of the international convention on the rights of the child.

(Mr. De Michelis, Italy)

The logic of integration is negated when countries import technology while ignoring the fact that economic progress and democracy are two sides of the same coin. And then there are cases where, on the pretext of alleged racial differences, unnatural segregation measures are imposed, and human beings are denied full recognition of their dignity, even though some changes in the right direction can be discerned, for example, in South Africa. In the Arab-Israeli conflict, each of the contending parties may be tempted to resolve the issue by disregarding the other side and its rights, so that the growing toll of bloodshed and violence could set back any hopes of peace for years and generations; whereas it is only through dialogue that Manichaeian opposing views can be set aside. The latest proposals of President Mubarak have our full support, as they open up prospects for the future which, as they are not of unlimited duration, must be promptly utilized. We are dismayed at the danger of disintegration facing Lebanon, where the tangled web of animosities and extraneous involvements has thus far prevented the achievement of the necessary conditions for the restoration of order and justice. Unfortunately, in the Horn of Africa, Cyprus, Central America, Afghanistan and Cambodia, a general peace settlement remains an unattained objective, although to differing degrees.

Integration, in short, is lacking wherever there is a temptation to engage in protectionism and an unawareness of the fact that economic growth phenomena are inevitably interlinked, and that our general well-being will be substantially influenced, in years to come, by the way in which they interact. Integration must be sought gradually and pragmatically wherever and whenever it can be accomplished by suitable means. This is also the reason why Italy welcomes, promotes and supports regional groupings - the existing ones to which it belongs, and those still at the embryonic stage, yet full of promise, which we see emerging on all

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sides, including the other side of the Mediterranean Sea. The new trend towards forming regional associations, on a direct and immediate basis, without jeopardizing the equilibrium of States belonging to different international groups, should be welcomed. On our continent the formation of national States has partly submerged regional realities, but these will have to utilize Europe, and not just the Europe of the Community, as a space in which to regain their identity and ethnic and cultural diversity, without encouraging disgregation.

Public opinion in the Western countries perceives those ills that cross national boundaries - such as organized crime, drug trafficking, the spread of major infectious diseases and the destruction of the environment - as a threat to survival. Responsibility for co-ordinating action to combat evils that could affect the entire world lies primarily with the international organizations. The survival of our planet therefore calls for the strengthening of our multilateral institutions, for they help us to rid ourselves of ambitions and fears, to reorient our perception of danger and to decide on the reallocation of resources, which is especially important when we consider the amounts wasted on the arms race. As Lester Brown said, "To persist in investing in military security while ignoring social, economic and environmental needs is tantamount to destroying a house in order to build a surrounding wall."

The deterioration of the environment is a problem that transcends ideologies and differences in political systems. It is not just a specific consequence of an obsession with profits, but is also found where public opinion exerts insufficient influence and where technological backwardness damages nature in ways that have yet to be fully explored. The five warmest years of the century all occurred in this decade, and the Earth could not withstand the pressure that would result from extending traditional development to the two thirds of mankind that have not

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yet experienced it. All too often the impulse to destroy arises from the quest for immediate gains, possibly to meet scheduled dates for the repayment of debts. The wealthier countries must sometimes choose between recovering a credit and giving up a vital dose of oxygen.

What can be done in a world that is changing so rapidly before our very eyes? Western Europe must continue its progress towards a new supranational identity. Many things depend, both within and outside our continent, on the success or failure of this revolutionary project. The success of this integration and of its extension to the Eastern countries in Europe will be crucial to the restoration of Europe's centrality after a long partial eclipse. The European Community is the result of a generous impulse to project well-being beyond national boundaries. It would not be true to its origins if it retreated into its shell to become a fortress of privilege, and if growth in its internal cohesion were accompanied by a distancing between the Twelve and the surrounding world. The European Community must make an effort, in the years to come, to identify new forms of co-operation, including institutional co-operation, with countries that are too similar not to wish to join or, if dissimilar, too dependent not to want at least to be associated. It can avail itself of the means provided by article 238 of the Treaty of Rome, which seems to me to be particularly helpful for the extension of the co-operation effort to two regions, Central Europe and the southern shores of the Mediterranean.

Central Europe is the ideal place for the formation of political, economic and cultural ties in such a way as to smooth the path of continental integration and avoid any sudden changes too traumatic for a world in need of gradualism after the divisions of the past.

(Mr. De Michelis, Italy)

During this month of September, with its bitter anniversaries for Europe, it is significant that in Poland and Hungary, an omnipresent totalitarian power structure, in existence until just recently, should progressively make way for alternative methods of government based on Parliaments and the popular vote. The industrial democracies must give concrete proof of their readiness to contribute to the economic costs of this transition, even though there are other, even needier, cases elsewhere in the world deserving of their support. For its part, my country wishes to promote in Middle Europe a special co-operation effort between Italy, Yugoslavia, Austria and Hungary.

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Nor can the European Community turn a blind eye to its southern borders, where a gathering wave of malaise is threatening its less well endowed neighbours. By the end of this century the population on the southern shores of the Mediterranean Sea will have increased by 60 million. If the Mediterranean is not to become an area of permanent instability, Europe and the African countries will have jointly to tackle the problems of trade, investment and immigration, with a view also to promoting sufficient development to root labour forces in their country of origin.

We shall all have collectively to consider Europe's capacity to absorb poor and vulnerable foreign population groups, to ensure that they do not end up facing a new marginalization in our countries. Italy is already studying this question at the national level.

It would be tragic to succumb to inertia in the face of the drug scourge. A long, hard war lies ahead, and the outcome is uncertain. We are fighting a faceless adversary, without uniforms or frontiers, feeding a silent subterranean river of death.

We must study the circuits of international finance and reconstruct the routes used to recycle the proceeds from drugs, which now exceed earnings from the sale of weapons, and we must create an international legal arena in which the judiciary and the police can operate as they would in a single country. These objectives are laid down in the United Nations Convention of December 1988, which must enter into force without delay and be implemented in full.

In the meantime, we must help countries like Colombia, which, in order to uproot structures that threaten their sovereignty, have courageously decided to break the pattern of silence and complicity.

Italy therefore undertakes to support the plan for a war on drugs, put forward recently by Prime Minister Manley of Jamaica. The plan provides not only for a series of measures in such areas as information, development and rehabilitation,

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but for the creation, under United Nations auspices, of a multinational strike force to take action against drug trafficking organizations.

It will also be necessary, of course, to remove the roots of the evil by providing farmers, particularly in Latin America, with the means of planting alternative crops. This applies particularly to Bolivia, Peru and Colombia. Italy is redirecting its own development co-operation, to which it is devoting increasing resources, in the light of the new forces threatening international public order. However, we feel that the resources of the United Nations in this field should be strengthened as well.

If human beings are not to be overwhelmed by the destructive forces of nature, we must be mindful of Bacon's maxim "Nature is not governed except by obeying her". It is hard to follow this injunction after decades and even centuries of disobedience. But it would be unforgivable if environmental concerns were allowed to widen the gulf separating South and North. The Western countries, which have enjoyed the greatest production success in history, are calling for environmental measures without overlooking their own serious flaws. Nor are they unaware of the fears of the poorer countries concerning the impact of environmental measures on the pace of their own development, on their still elementary infrastructural levels and on the growth of consumption, if not their very survival.

Here, too, the logic of integration must be made to prevail by the joint elaboration of a code of conduct, possibly through an international authority responsible for drawing up and implementing a new law of the environment, an initiative already planned by the European Community. Nowadays it is more necessary than ever to envisage the legal definition of a new kind of crime - crime against the natural environment. Italy is organizing an international forum on the international legal aspects of the environment to be held in Siena next spring.

(Mr. De Michelis, Italy)

This, we hope, will help to make the world conference on the environment and development, to be held in 1992, a success and not an occasion for new disagreements.

On the question of the environment, Italy particularly wishes to foster co-operation between the Mediterranean countries, under the relevant existing plan of action, and it is also planning with Yugoslavia a common strategy for the Adriatic.

No development is possible without eliminating, or at least reducing, indebtedness - an evil which overshadows so many economies and which in Latin America threatens to reactivate the recurring cycle of fragile democracies followed by harsh military dictatorships.

The Brady plan represents a political turning-point, but we must go further and reverse the unnatural flow of resources still pouring into the richer nations from the poor countries. This flow amounted to \$43 billion last year alone.

Recent progress from mere debt management to debt reduction was made possible by various case-by-case solutions. The conclusion of negotiations between certain countries and creditor banks confirms the merits of this strategy when reinforced by contributions from the financial institutions, whose resources must be increased to equip them for their new role.

Italy intends to show the consistency of its policy by taking a further step to help the poorest nations. It will immediately waive repayment of development loans amounting to some \$2 billion and will in future conduct its co-operation with those countries exclusively by means of grants.

The problem of indebtedness must be dealt with in the framework of more active participation by the developing countries in trade, especially as we are preparing, in the Uruguay Round, to redesign structures for the exchange not only of goods, but also of investments, services and technology, to ensure that the poorest countries play a meaningful role in the international economy. With regard to the

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General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, we feel that institutional strengthening is necessary to give the organization a political dimension and enable all to participate in a multilateral trade system, following modalities that take account of different situations and levels of development.

On the more general problem of development, I feel that the time is ripe for an exercise in reflection at the highest level, in the light of the many new developments of this decade. Further consideration should be given to a new North-South meeting, adequately structured and prepared, to initiate the political dialogue eagerly awaited by the emerging countries, on a realistic and constructive basis.

The new world is not just around the corner, but if we want to start building it today we must make the United Nations the chief instrument of global integration. The Organization enables us to develop a diplomacy for the prevention and settlement of political disputes as well as a common strategy for development. It must be reinforced both as an irreplaceable channel for mediation and as a valuable means of safeguarding agreements reached. With their ever-increasing commitments, the peace-keeping forces must be strengthened, not only by securing wider participation, but also by improving the machinery for the recruitment and employment of troops.

Particularly out of place in a world moving towards gradual integration are, in our opinion, such resolutions - adopted in a different climate - as the one equating Zionism with racism. We believe that that resolution should be rescinded.

(Mr. De Michelis, Italy)

In United Nations bodies the influence of the southern hemisphere is sometimes felt, while in the financial institutions the counsels of the affluent world prevail, not without excessive resentment in the one case and excessive selfishness in the other. United Nations bodies would be better balanced if the Soviet Union were able to participate in international economic institutions. Also with this in view, the Western industrialized nations are contributing to reforms in that country to facilitate such participation. We also feel that an intensive dialogue in the framework of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development would help the Eastern countries towards a better understanding of the need for their progressive involvement in multilateral co-ordination.

(Mr. De Michelis, Italy)

An improved balance in the structures designed with such foresight just after the Second World War will enable the United Nations to perform its role as the prime mover in international integration. Perhaps the time has also come to reappraise the relevance of existing decision-making mechanisms, including voting procedures, to new conditions and responsibilities.

The problems confronting us are too complex for us to believe any longer in miraculous solutions and instant formulas. Only a partial, persevering and gradual effort inspired by the principles I have only briefly outlined can ensure that our countries, in full awareness of the tasks awaiting them, have both the courage needed at this point in history to shoulder them fully and the ability to accomplish them.

Mr. GENSCHER (Federal Republic of Germany) (spoke in German; English text furnished by the delegation): I congratulate you, Sir, on your election as President of the General Assembly. Your experience and the esteem in which you are held as the former Foreign Minister of Nigeria, as its Permanent Representative to the United Nations and as Chairman of the Special Committee against Apartheid guarantee that you will excellently perform the duties of your office. At the same time I wish to pay deepest respect to your predecessor, Mr. Dante Caputo of Argentina, and thank him for the exemplary and successful conduct of his functions.

Foreign Minister Dumas of France presented the views of the members of the European Community yesterday. I thank him for his clear statement.

Now, at the closing of this millenium we are moving towards a new phase in world politics. The old structures still largely determine the political scene,

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but new structures are already becoming visible everywhere. We are confronted with global challenges. The natural sources of life are increasingly being jeopardized. In the last two years, world food production dropped for the first time. Plants and animals are becoming extinct. New epidemics are spreading. A large part of mankind lives in dire poverty. Terrorism and illicit drug trafficking call for joint action by the international community. Underdevelopment and the debt burden deprive a large section of mankind of any hope. Excessive armaments and regional conflicts, as well as violations of human rights and of the right of nations to self-determination, require fundamental new thinking and actions. In Europe there is fresh hope for a better future. This will have positive effects on the entire world.

In the year 2030 there will be 10 billion people on earth. For their sake - and it is not for distant descendants whose faces are hidden from us by the mist of distant centuries; it is for our children, our grandchildren - we must today lay the groundwork so that the globe will remain habitable. No single country on Earth, however rich and powerful, is able to handle this task by itself and through its own ability. Joint efforts by all mankind are needed. First and foremost this means that we must move away from confrontation towards co-operation. We require co-operative structures.

Precisely because we Germans are aware of our responsibility for the Second World War we perceive our duty to work for a better world, for a world of peace, democracy and solidarity between nations, for a world of freedom and human rights, for a world at peace with nature. The Polish nation was the first victim of the

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war deliberately unleashed by Hitlerian Germany 50 years ago. And I am turning to you Mr. Skubiszewski, Foreign Minister of the new Poland, to say that the Polish people are assured that their right to live in secure borders will not be called into question, not now nor in the future, through territorial claims by us Germans. The wheel of history will not be turned back. Together with Poland we want to work for a better future for Europe. The inviolability of borders is the basis of peaceful relations in Europe.

Ever since its inception the Federal Republic of Germany has framed a European peace policy. As a member of the European Community and of the Atlantic Alliance, we belong to the family of Western democracies. To the United States we are linked through deep friendship, through the Alliance and through a commitment to common values. President Bush impressively reaffirmed this in his speech at Mainz. With France we have established a unique partnership and co-operation, as reflected in the Franco-German Treaty and in our day-to-day politics. This points to the future. The groundwork for the developments we are today witnessing in Europe, for the prospects that are now discernible, was laid by the founding of the European Community, by the treaties of Moscow and Warsaw, by the treaty with the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, by the Basic Treaty with the German Democratic Republic and by the Helsinki Final Act. These are European paths that come towards each other; they must therefore be strengthened and extended. Nobody will be allowed to stray from them. We shall remain committed to the letter and spirit of those treaties.

Major elements of that peaceful order are the European Community and the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe process. The European Community,

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which is heading for a European union, sees itself as a factor for economic and political stability in the world. It maintains close relations, including those based on agreements with its neighbours in Europe and with States and groupings of States in all other continents. It strongly promotes voluntary regional associations in other parts of the world. It has to be open to multifaceted and broad-based co-operation with those countries of Central and Eastern Europe that desire it. New forms of co-operation and exchange are required. EUREKA is an offer open to all those who are interested. The new environment agency set up by the European Community can become the starting-point of new pan-European co-operation in the area of the protection of the environment.

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Republic of Germany)

Transport structures covering the whole of Europe are needed. We are receptive to ideas and suggestions from others. The trade limitations introduced for strategic reasons must be adapted to the changed quality of political, security-policy, economic and technological co-operation between West and East. They must not become an obstacle to a far-sighted policy.

East and West have opted for the path of co-operation. That is a source of hope for the nations of the world - not only the nations of Europe. The vision of a peaceful order in Europe, from the Atlantic to the Urals - as the West proposed in the Harmel report as early as 1967, and as recurs in General Secretary Gorbachev's concept of the common European house - is opening up. The bold reforms in the Soviet Union, in Hungary and in Poland point in that direction.

We agree with our Western friends that the reform processes in Central and Eastern Europe are in the interests of all Europe and of the world. They deserve our support, not least through common, co-ordinated action, through a plan of solidarity for Europe. This process of reform in Central and Eastern Europe is not a case of one side's opinion being adopted by the other; it is a process of self-reflection on the common foundations of European culture and European history, to which all European nations have made great contributions. The reforms have become irreversible because man's yearning for more freedom is irreversible, but the developments are not immune to standstills, or even setbacks. In the long run, however, no country can evade this development. Anyone who hopes that the reforms will fail will be overtaken by the development.

In the West, too, nobody should underestimate the new possibilities; instead, people should make resolute use of them for the benefit of all Europe. History tends not to repeat the opportunities it offers. I appeal to the countries of

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Europe not to let this historic juncture slip by. We Western democracies offer stable-framework conditions for this reform process. Statesmanly foresight and statesmanly responsibility are required now on all sides. Nobody can want others to be destabilized.

The Federal Republic of Germany regards a peaceful order in Europe as the framework also for the goal defined in the Letter on German Unity:

"to work for a state of peace in Europe in which the German nation will recover its unity in free self-determination".

We want to attain this goal while fully observing the treaties that we have signed. That can be achieved only together with all other States in Europe - not against them. Nobody in Europe has cause to fear our policy. Our policy is linked to the destiny of the entire continent. It is a European peace policy. This precludes any national solo efforts. We consider it our task to work for a pan-European peaceful order from which no country may be excluded or may exclude itself. Our foreign policy, in accordance with the dictates of our Constitution, rejects any kind of power politics. It is a policy of responsibility; it is determined by the fundamental values of our Constitution; it is based on unconditional fidelity to treaties.

The Federal Republic of Germany, as a country situated in the heart of Europe, brings all its weight to bear for the purpose of co-operation, understanding and disarmament conducive to a better Europe. This includes co-operation with the German Democratic Republic. The two German States are aware of their responsibility for peace in Europe. This responsibility weighs more heavily than do those things that divide us. On the basis of this common responsibility, the two German States have already made substantial contributions towards détente and

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disarmament in Europe. In particular, the people in our States have benefited from this. In these endeavours we act on the foundation of the basic Treaty with the German Democratic Republic and are guided by the joint declarations issued by Chancellor Kohl and General Secretary Honecker on 12 March 1985 and 8 September 1987. New and closer forms of co-operation are needed in many fields - economic and technological, scientific and cultural, transport and protection of the environment.

The two German States - each in its own fashion - must contribute towards overcoming the things that separate Europeans from each other. They must face the new developments occurring in the whole of Europe and work for their success. The Federal Republic of Germany wholeheartedly supports the process of European unification within the European Community, as well as the efforts of European countries aimed at reform. The German Democratic Republic, under its own conditions, can contribute, through reforms, towards greater openness in Europe, just as the Soviet Union, Poland and Hungary are doing already. We have been deeply moved as we have witnessed, in recent weeks, the fate of young people who are sorrowfully leaving their home and familiar surroundings. Nobody can want such a development. A policy of reform would open up new prospects for the people of the German Democratic Republic, as in other Central and Eastern European countries. These would encourage the people to stay where they grew up and where they are at home.

Today, East and West no longer discuss only the problems that have accumulated between them since the War. They jointly focus their attention also on those tasks of the future which, as is stated in the joint German-Soviet Declaration of June 1989, can be mastered only through concerted action by all States and

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peoples. The Moscow Treaty continues to form the foundation of the relationship between our two countries. The German-Soviet Declaration underscores the importance of German-Soviet relations for the whole of Europe. This calls for new thinking by everyone and for everyone.

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That declaration defined goals to which we have long been committed along with our Western partners: the preservation and shaping of peace; the settlement of existing conflicts; the right of nations to self-determination; the precedence of international law in politics; international co-operation in the economic, scientific and technological fields, the results of which should benefit all mankind; the preservation of the natural environment and the overcoming of hunger and poverty in the world; and the combating of new threats such as epidemics and international terrorism.

A peaceful world of free people subject only to the rule of law and whose dignity is no longer impaired by hunger and poverty: that is seen as the true goal of politics.

In that way, the design of a peaceful order for all Europe, the architecture of a pan-European house, is becoming clearly visible.

Through arms control and disarmament we want to reduce the military elements of the East-West relationship. We want to demilitarize East-West relations, just as international relations must be demilitarized. We want to create an increasing number of co-operative security structures. We welcome and support the efforts of the United States and the Soviet Union to achieve co-operation marked by increasing mutual trust.

An entire continent is seriously committed to agreed and controlled disarmament. The Treaty on intermediate-range nuclear forces - the INF Treaty - was an important step towards that end. The two sides accept the principle that whoever has more weapons must disarm more. The aim is to ensure that the armed forces of the two sides have the capability of defence only and not of attack, especially surprise attack and large-scale offensive action. Ever more

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co-operative security structures will emerge, thus providing additional guarantees of security. The negotiations in Vienna on conventional stability and confidence-building measures, as well as the global prohibition of chemical weapons, will lend a new quality to those security structures. The meetings between Secretary of State Baker and Foreign Minister Shevardnadze have provided further signs of hope. In Vienna, Western proposals have created the conditions for far-reaching conventional disarmament. Given good will on the part of all concerned, an initial agreement could be achieved as early as 1990.

We strongly support the United States-Soviet negotiations in Geneva on nuclear and space weapons. By reducing their nuclear weapons, the nuclear Powers are living up to their responsibility towards the international community. The need for all countries to accede to the non-proliferation Treaty is becoming all the more urgent.

The negotiations on a comprehensive, global and verifiable ban on chemical weapons must finally be completed. Only in that way can the spread of those barbaric weapons be prevented. President Bush's declaration here at the United Nations that his country is ready to destroy over 80 per cent of its existing chemical weapons stocks even before the conclusion of a chemical weapons convention, provided that the Soviet Union reduces its chemical weapons to the same level, is unprecedented in the history of disarmament negotiations. The Federal Republic of Germany has constantly striven for the successful completion of the Geneva negotiations. President Bush's remarks concerning verification of compliance with a future chemical weapons convention have a significance that goes far beyond the scope of disarmament negotiations. Openness is becoming a guiding principle in dealings between countries. In fact, every step towards a more open world is a step towards the new world we seek.

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Republic of Germany)

The recent Canberra Conference made an important contribution in support of the Geneva negotiations. All producers are called upon to control trade in chemical substances and facilities that are suitable also for the manufacture of chemical weapons. The Federal Republic of Germany has considerably tightened its own control laws; as acknowledged in the final declaration of the Canberra Conference, it has thus made an advance contribution to the implementation of a future chemical weapons convention.

Disarmament is a task not for the industrial nations alone. The developing countries spend \$200 billion a year for military purposes. That is four times the official development assistance they receive. Moreover, those resources are unavailable for their development. Regional theatres of conflict are exacerbated by the unbridled trade in arms. The arms trade must become more transparent to the international public. Such transparency forces both the importers and the exporters to account for and justify their actions, which itself has a moderating effect. The wholly disproportionate level of arms in all parts of the world makes disarmament a global task which must be dealt with by the United Nations.

A country's attitude towards disarmament is the most reliable measure of how far it is prepared to abandon old thinking. A State's attitude towards human rights is the most reliable measure of its stance on the inalienable dignity of each individual. A peaceful order in Europe - a peaceful order in the world - can rest only on the universal application of human rights and on the right of nations to self-determination. The future Europe is thus to be a large heterogeneous area based throughout on the rule of law.

To us, respect for human rights is the indispensable basis for any policy. In our view, there is still an urgent need to appoint a United Nations high commissioner for human rights and set up an international court of human rights.

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Republic of Germany)

We ask that our initiative on abolishing capital punishment be supported also by those countries which, frequently for religious reasons, want to retain such punishment. The form of optional protocol we have chosen leaves the door open to those States that are not yet able to decide in favour of signing it.

International terrorism world wide and international drug crimes constitute aggression against human dignity and against mankind. They threaten every political and social order. In future, countries will have to be measured by their efforts in this fight. Anyone who provides refuge for terrorists or spares those who commit drug crimes is placing himself outside the community of nations. The drug problem, that scourge of mankind, has become a global challenge.

(Mr. Genscher, Federal
Republic of Germany)

This demands resolute co-operation by all countries. The common fight against illicit drug trafficking must be stepped up. Co-operation among all countries in combating cross-border illicit drug trafficking must be intensified. The social causes of drug production must be eliminated in the relevant countries through common efforts, and the social causes of drug dependence in the consumer countries must be eliminated as well.

We shall survive the third millenium only if all countries - large and small, weak and strong alike - unconditionally make international law the yardstick of their political actions. We must overcome force, both within and between States. The decade ahead of us must be a decade of pacifying regional theatres of conflict.

A historic opportunity is emerging for the Central American peace process. All Governments interested in the fate of Central America have in the meantime fully endorsed the Esquipulas peace agreement. The Government of the Federal Republic of Germany supports the United Nations contribution to that process.

Namibia, the last colony in Africa, will gain independence in a few months' time. The Western Contact Group, to which we belonged, initiated this process and participated substantially in shaping it. We are convinced that the Secretary-General of the United Nations and his special representative will bring the peace process in Namibia to a good conclusion. In so doing, they have the full confidence and support of the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany. Our participation in the United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) reflects this. We all hope that an independent Namibia that espouses democracy, pluralism and human rights will send signals to the Republic of South Africa that cannot be ignored. Apartheid is inimical to human rights. It cannot be reformed. It must be eliminated. We call upon the South African Government to terminate the state of emergency, to release all political detainees, Nelson Mandela in the first place,

(Mr. Genscher, Federal
Republic of Germany)

and to admit the opposition. That must pave the way for negotiations involving all the country's political forces for the purpose of developing a just constitutional order. We shall do whatever is possible to help bring about round-table negotiations.

In the Middle East the objective continues to be a peaceful settlement that guarantees the right of all States in the region, including Israel, to live within secure and recognized boundaries and that enables the Palestinian people finally to exercise its right to self-determination. During the past few months there has been some movement in the Middle East conflict: the Israeli plan for elections in the occupied territories and President Mubarak's proposal to open up prospects for talks between Israel and the Palestinians.

The suffering of the Lebanese nation must be ended through a political solution. The cease-fire brought about by the Arab League's Committee of Three is an encouraging signal. We support all suitable efforts aimed at national reconciliation in Lebanon and the restoration of the country's full sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence.

In view of the dangers constantly generated by regional conflicts, a far-reaching improvement of the United Nations instruments for coping with those conflicts is needed. The Declaration on the prevention of conflicts, which we helped to draft in the Special Committee on the United Nations Charter and which was unanimously adopted at the forty-third session of the General Assembly, is a step towards that end. We have launched a new initiative designed to facilitate early and comprehensive fact-finding by the United Nations, particularly by the Secretary-General. The efforts of the United Nations and the Secretary-General to resolve conflicts must not fail for want of money.

(Mr. Genscher, Federal
Republic of Germany)

Underdevelopment in large parts of the world is one of the global challenges of our time. People in all countries are entitled to a life that is worth living. Industrial and developing countries must collaborate to achieve economic development and social justice. The debt crisis can only be resolved through joint action by everyone concerned: the debtor and creditor countries, the Governments and the international financial institutions, as well as the private banks. All creditor countries are now, as before, called upon to frame their national regulations in such a way as to encourage participation by banks in debt relief. That is already the case in our country. Without considerable funds from private banks the developing countries will not return to the path of growth.

The initiative of United States Secretary of the Treasury Brady is an important step in solving the debt crisis. At the forefront of the intensified debt strategy is the reduction of debts and interest. Fresh money must be made available. The rescheduling agreements with Mexico and the Philippines are major landmarks in the efforts to solve the debt crisis. The debts of the least-developed countries must be cancelled; the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany has already done so. For years now it has been providing development aid to those countries exclusively in the form of grants.

Many developing countries are carrying out radical and painful reforms in order to reshape their economic structures. They are thereby making a substantial contribution towards the stability of the world economy. These reforms should restore the confidence of domestic and foreign investors.

The prosperity of all countries can be increased most effectively through the free exchange of goods and services. That is why it is so important to make the

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Republic of Germany)

Uruguay Round a full success. That still calls for considerable exertions and concessions, not least in areas that are sensitive for the industrial nations. All countries must resist the temptations of protectionism. The weakest are always hardest hit by the consequences of protectionism. The basic principles of the new thinking - openness instead of isolation, co-operation instead of confrontation - must also apply to international trade. The Belgrade conference of the Non-Aligned Movement reaffirms this new thinking and reflects the growing awareness of global interdependence.

Today it is a question of reconciling economic and ecological factors. People are increasingly resisting the destruction of the natural sources of life. There is no nation that is not affected, no nation that does not bear responsibility. Global warming, destruction of the ozone layer, desertification, contamination of soil, air and water through pollutants and waste and forest depletion all threaten life on our earth. We have but this one Earth, and it has been entrusted to us. It must remain habitable for all future generations as well.

Mankind's duty to preserve peace includes making peace with nature. The first steps have been taken with the Vienna Convention and the Montreal Protocol, the Convention on hazardous waste and the Convention to combat marine pollution. Those Conventions must now be applied worldwide. They must constantly be supplemented and improved until all known pollutants are covered. The World Climate Convention and measures to save the forests must be vigorously promoted. Protection of tropical rain forests is also a matter for the United Nations. The Organization must pool and co-ordinate the efforts of the international community in the field of environmental protection. Binding limits and levels must be fixed, and agreed deadlines must be met.

(Mr. Genscher, Federal
Republic of Germany)

The Government of the Federal Republic of Germany will do its utmost to support all environmental activities of the United Nations, especially the United Nations conference on the environment which this General Assembly is to decide on at this session. This applies also to the international decade for the prevention of natural disasters. The Federal Government has made substantial efforts to protect natural resources. It will contribute to the work of the United Nations the experience of a country that has a strong environmental awareness, high environmental protection standards and advanced scientific and technological know-how.

The industrial nations must make a special contribution through the transfer of ecologically sound technology and through financial support for environmental projects in the developing countries. We must increase the responsibility of the United Nations for environmental matters and develop further its relevant organs, especially the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), widen their powers and, in particular, provide them with more funds.

The nations will achieve a new spirit of coexistence only if they acknowledge and respect each other's cultural achievements and characteristics. The awareness of mutual dependence in questions concerning our survival must be accompanied by unconditional respect for the dignity and achievements of every nation. The worldwide cultural dialogue should preserve the cultural identity of all nations. This calls for exchange on equal terms through mutual give-and-take.

The prestige of the United Nations increases with the new spirit of coexistence and the awareness of the need for a global domestic policy. This is not least a consequence of the growing understanding between West and East. The turn of the tide in international relations will also enable the United Nations to

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Republic of Germany)

play the role its founders intended it to have, after the terrible experiences of the Second World War.

We can no longer afford confrontation and national egoism, as our extinction would be the penalty. The United Nations must evolve into a universal community of States and peoples in which everyone can express his views freely and openly, in which the rights of the stronger do not prevail. To all individuals and nations, the United Nations is already a symbol of a new international order founded on human rights and self-determination, on dialogue and co-operation. We are called upon to create peace between individuals, between nations. We are called upon to create peace between man and nature. Inalienable human rights and the right of nations to self-determination must form the bedrock of our actions.

Mr. MAJOR (United Kingdom): Let me first, if I may, Sir, add my congratulations to those you have already received on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly. The first country that I ever lived and worked in outside my own was Nigeria - in Jos, your home town - and I have a very great affection for the country and for its citizens. I wish you the greatest possible success in your presidency.

I wish also to thank the outgoing President, Mr. Dante Caputo, and to pay a tribute to the tireless work of the Secretary-General throughout the past year.

Fifty years ago this month, war began in Europe and spread throughout the world. Fifty-five million people died. The landscape of international relations was profoundly changed. That war inspired the creation of this Organization. The United Nations, conceived out of war, was the best framework our predecessors could devise for law, for order, and for peace. Hopes for it then were high, but they did not last. Even as the General Assembly was meeting for the first time, in

(Mr. Major, United Kingdom)

London, divisions were opening between the two halves of Europe. The peoples of the East, for whom my country went to war, found that victory had been secured at an appalling price. They had won the peace, but they had lost their freedom. That division of Europe and that loss of freedom imposed a polarity on world affairs which has bedevilled international politics for over 40 years. Today, I am struck by the enormous and cheering contrast with those times. I believe that the feeling of hope and opportunity in world affairs is greater today than at any time since the Assembly first met, in London, my home town.

The hopes of the early days have been revived. Ideologies have become less potent: it is less and less relevant to talk of East-West, or North-South, or the first, second, third or even fourth worlds. Instead, we should talk of a world whose nation States have reciprocal rights, responsibilities and obligations. There is only one world. We all share in it and must make of it what we can. Today, the opportunities for the United Nations to make good use of that fine framework for law, order and peace I spoke of have suddenly become real. There are new problems that we must face together. We have moved from cold war to global warming.

Fresh ideas and attitudes are changing the face of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. I agree with Mr. Shevardnadze that it is in the interests of all of us for perestroika to succeed.

Liberty is reasserting itself in Poland and in Hungary and is drawing thousands of Germans from East to West. The cold war is ending where it started. Even the Berlin Wall cannot stem the exodus of people seeking a new life in freedom. No one doubts, I think, that we are only at the beginning of a long and difficult process. Patience and goodwill are necessary on all sides.

(Mr. Major, United Kingdom)

Yesterday, Mr. Shevardnadze offered an authoritative Soviet view of recent events in Poland. I warmly welcome his remarks. I hope and believe that in making them he was burying, once and for all, the so-called Brezhnev doctrine, which was used to justify the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. With freedom no longer seen as a threat, there is a real opportunity to build a new Europe.

The first priority for East-West relations must be to support and encourage the process of reform which is now under way. That will reinforce trust and confidence. A co-ordinated approach, including very substantial economic support, is essential. The European Community has made clear its readiness to play its full part, with both short- and long-term measures. Both will be needed. The challenge is to work in partnership with others to bring about a Community of Europe, to stand alongside the Community in Europe.

(Mr. Major, United Kingdom)

The goal is a Europe of peace, prosperity and freedom, where the terms East and West have more to do with geography than with politics - a Europe without enforced divisions, whose people are at liberty to determine their own future.

Increasing trust will assist the process of arms control. Success in this field is a priority. For the past 40 years the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) has resolutely maintained the peace in Europe. Now it is taking new opportunities to consolidate that peace. NATO countries have tabled far-reaching conventional arms proposals. Their aim is clear: it is enhanced security at equal and lower levels of forces in Europe. More peace at less cost is an attractive bargain for everyone.

We are encouraged by the steps agreed upon between the United States and the Soviet Union to achieve faster progress towards an early START agreement. The proposed 50 per cent cuts in their nuclear arsenals will make a major contribution to international security and stability.

We are working also for the achievement of a global chemical weapons ban. I warmly welcome the proposals made by President Bush on Monday and the positive Soviet response to them. The reduction of United States and Soviet stockpiles ahead of a convention will do much to reassure countries that do not possess chemical weapons and will also remove the rationale for other countries to cling to their stocks. It is through practical steps like these that Governments can best show their determination to get rid of these gruesome weapons. My country gave up its chemical weapons 30 years ago. We look forward to other countries destroying theirs.

We should look also for a way to give more impetus and focus to the Geneva negotiations on chemical weapons. Today I propose one way to do this: let us move from the present intermittent pattern of negotiations to round-the-year meetings, as already happens in other areas of arms control.

(Mr. Major, United Kingdom)

We can also be encouraged by the progress that has been made towards the resolution of regional conflicts in different parts of the world. In Namibia the international community, and the United Nations in particular, has shown what co-operation can achieve. Security Council resolution 435 (1978) is more than a decade old, but its principles have remained valid. That in turn has opened the way to Namibian independence.

The Namibian independence process is the direct responsibility of the United Nations and the Secretary-General personally. Since we met last year, there has been major progress towards implementation of the United Nations plan. Now, as Namibia's elections draw near, it is vital for all of us to give our full support to the Secretary-General and the United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG). All the parties involved must show restraint, particularly in the face of provocation, such as the recent murder of Anton Lubowski. Violence and intimidation will serve only those who wish to deny Namibia its freedom.

But Namibia will need help after independence as well. Britain will play a full part in that effort. At the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting next month we shall also be considering what help the Commonwealth can provide. Next year, I hope, a free, independent Namibia will have taken its place in the Assembly and also, I trust, as a welcome new member of the Commonwealth.

Fighting still continues in Angola and in Mozambique, but there is now some movement towards peace in both of those countries. I urge both sides in Angola to restore the cease-fire and to resume negotiations on the basis of the common ground identified in June.

For our part, we shall continue to give full support to President Chissano's efforts to achieve a peaceful settlement with Renamo. We call upon the new South African Government to support those efforts in the letter and spirit of the Nkomati

(Mr. Major, United Kingdom)

accord. That means making sure that no support - no support -- goes from South Africa to Renamo.

South Africa remains the key to lasting stability in that region. In the recent elections, 70 per cent of the white-minority electorate voted for change. One hundred per cent of the black population, denied a vote, are calling urgently for change. Mr. de Klerk campaigned from a platform of reform. He committed himself to work for a new South Africa, in which all the people would be fully represented. He made a clear declaration of intent. There is now a clear mandate. Now the declaration and the mandate must be turned into action.

Of one thing I am sure. Apartheid cannot survive and it does not deserve to survive. It is not something to be tolerated or to be patient with. It is something to oppose constantly and comprehensively.

Violence is not the answer. Nor are economic sanctions. They weigh the possibility of change against the certainty of immediate, lasting hardship to the black community whose growing economic muscle is already contributing to the erosion of apartheid.

No. The answer to apartheid is unremitting political pressure on South Africa to reform itself. Wise policy lies in assistance and support for the innocent victims of apartheid within South Africa - political prisoners and township dwellers alike. It lies also in support for the economies of South Africa's neighbours and help for them to defend themselves against attempts at destabilization. Positive action, constructive action - action in which Britain's record is second to none and will remain so.

Many brave men and women in South Africa have struggled peacefully and persistently against apartheid. If I single out Helen Suzman, it is because, for 40 years, often alone in the South African Parliament, often in the face of threats and intimidation, she fought for freedom. She is in London today. I am pleased to

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tell the Assembly that she will be honoured by Her Majesty the Queen with one of our highest awards for all she has done in the campaign for justice. In her name, Britain will be funding a new scholarship scheme, soon bringing to 1,000 the number of our annual scholarships for black South Africans.

The new Government in South Africa must now move quickly and unambiguously to meet its commitment to fundamental reform. A new and just society cannot be constructed overnight. But we are clear what should happen. We want to see the release of detainees, the lifting of the state of emergency, the suspension of violence and a dialogue with black leaders to consider and to implement the changes that must be made.

I hope that the United Nations will be ready to respond appropriately to clear and practical signs of change. But signs there must be. That should be our common message to South Africa's leaders.

Since we last met, my country and Argentina have taken significant steps towards achieving a more normal relationship. In doing so, the two countries have agreed to set the question of sovereignty over the Falkland Islands on one side. Following preliminary talks here in August, both sides will be meeting again in Madrid next month.

(Mr. Major, United Kingdom)

For our part, we shall work hard to ensure the success of the process which has now begun. It will not be easy. And our ambitions should not be set too high too soon. But we enter these negotiations hoping for agreement.

In the Middle East, the resolutions which are the core of the search for peace are now nearly a generation old. Another generation of refugees and dispossessed people has now been added to what is first and foremost a human tragedy.

Last year's renunciation of terrorism by the PLO and its willingness to recognize Israel were a major breakthrough. I hope that Israel will come to recognize that. The Israeli Government's proposal for elections in the occupied territories is a positive step too. I hope the PLO will come to recognize that. I pay tribute to the efforts of President Mubarak in taking these ideas forward. Elections must be part of a process leading to final status negotiations on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). We believe that the best framework for these negotiations is an international conference under United Nations auspices.

In Lebanon, we have witnessed for years a process of national self-destruction. Now it seems there is a glimmer of hope. We have welcomed and supported the efforts of the Arab League Committee of Three. They offer a bridge to peace. We hope all concerned in Lebanon's conflict will cross it.

A particular threat hangs over the hostages in Lebanon. They are the victims of a detestable form of blackmail which threatens the entire international community.

It is hard to appreciate the anguish of those held hostage, although I have seen the suffering of some of their families, and seen, too, their courage and determination, which is remarkable. John McCarthy, Terry Waite, and now Jackie Mann, three British hostages, have been held for a total of more than

(Mr. Major, United Kingdom)

2,000 days. We must keep them and the other hostages constantly in the public eye. They must not be forgotten or overlooked. We must make every effort to press for their unconditional release. There are countries with influence on the hostage-takers. They should use that influence without delay to secure the hostages' safe release. State terrorism is no more acceptable through agents than if carried out directly. It is time to return the hostages to their families, and that should be the message from this Assembly.

Upon one further point we must all be clear. We must and we dare not give in to the blackmail of terrorists. The Security Council's resolution on terrorism last July added the authority of this Organization to that message.

We need to work for the wide adoption of specific countermeasures. After the horrific bombing of Pan Am Flight 103, the United Kingdom, with Czechoslovakia, is seeking an international agreement on the marking of explosives.

All of us are naturally concerned at conflict or tension between countries, or within countries. A number of instances were raised on behalf of European Community countries by my colleague, Roland Dumas, yesterday. I would single out only one, Burma, where there is an urgent need for the restoration of human rights and democracy through free elections.

Earlier this year millions of us around the world were shocked to see Chinese troops kill and wound their fellow citizens on the orders of their own Government.

The measures that we have taken in response to those events are not, however, intended to isolate China. We hope to see China return to genuine reform and to repair the damage done to its international relations. No Government can survive indefinitely by the suppression of peaceful dissent.

(Mr. Major, United Kingdom)

By treaty, Hong Kong will revert to China in 1997. By treaty, Hong Kong will also preserve its traditional freedoms and way of life. That treaty, the Sino-British Joint Declaration of 1984, is binding. It has been registered as such at the United Nations by both Britain and China.

I welcome unreservedly China's reaffirmation of its commitment to the Joint Declaration. Britain is likewise committed, bindingly and whole-heartedly. But our common commitment must now be reflected in action. And practical reassurances are required from China to the people of Hong Kong, so that they may feel secure in their future, both up to 1997 and beyond.

Hong Kong is resilient. Its economy continues to thrive. But it will take time, steady nerves and, above all, an explicitly supportive attitude on the part of China to restore Hong Kong's confidence in its future.

For our part, Britain will continue vigorously to represent the interests of Hong Kong's people in our discussions with China. We intend also to introduce concrete measures to reassure people in the territory about their future. They include: the early introduction of a Bill of Rights; the development of more representative government; and a package to encourage people essential to Hong Kong's future stability and prosperity to stay there, by giving them guarantees of resettlement in Britain if they wish. That package will be designed not to strip Hong Kong of its people, but to give them hope and confidence to remain in Hong Kong.

Hong Kong's continued confidence and success is in the interest of the entire international community. In return, Hong Kong needs international understanding and support. That was recognized by the Paris economic summit, and I hope it will also be recognized by this Assembly.

(Mr. Major, United Kingdom)

International understanding and support is also required in response to the intractable problem of the Vietnamese boat people.

The continuing human exodus from Viet Nam has imposed an insuperable burden on places of first asylum in the region. Hong Kong alone has more than 56,000 boat people in its camps; over 32,000 of them have arrived this year.

Yet the bleak reality is that for most of these people there are no homes to go to outside their own country. They are not political refugees. Under the criteria laid down by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, they have left Viet Nam for economic reasons, and not under political pressure.

In June, at Geneva, the International Conference on Indo-Chinese Refugees agreed that:

"Persons determined not to be refugees should return to their country of origin in accordance with international practices reflecting the responsibility of States towards their own citizens."

That is surely the only answer. Alas, there is no room for them in Hong Kong. There is no hope of a home in any new country. The existing situation is, therefore, unsustainable.

The international community knows that it cannot simply leave this problem with Hong Kong in the hope that somehow they will cope. They cannot cope. The Government and the people of Hong Kong have done all they can. They have put up 15 camps. They have provided food, clothing, schooling. But the limit of their capacity to help has been reached.

(Mr. Major, United Kingdom)

For those boat people who are genuine refugees, homes are being found in countries around the world. That is as it should be. But for those boat people who are not refugees, there can ultimately be only one home: the one they came from. So far, only a few of them have recognized this and volunteered to return. We look to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to step up counselling of the non-refugees to ensure that more of them know that there is no future for them outside their own country.

In mid-October, the international community will review developments since the Geneva Conference. The main purpose must be to agree a programme of repatriation under the good offices of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. That must involve the phased, orderly and monitored return and re-integration in safety and dignity of all those who are not genuine refugees. To achieve that, Viet Nam must assume full responsibility for its own people and co-operate in the programme. We shall work in good faith with the Vietnamese authorities to that end.

The world that many of us grew up in was haunted by memories of war and overshadowed by the threat of nuclear destruction. Yet, for many of us, it was a much more innocent world than today. Our parents did not live in fear that their children could be exposed to the lethal menace of drugs. We as parents today can have no such peace of mind.

That is why the town of Medellin is now a household name throughout the world. That is why Colombia's battle against drugs is a battle on behalf of us all. The power of the traffickers transcends national boundaries. It demands an international response.

I can announce today that, following discussions with the Colombian authorities, my Government has approved a substantial package of assistance for Colombia. It draws on our experience in fighting terrorism. It will comprise

(Mr. Major, United Kingdom)

communications and of equipment, technical assistance, and training for those in Colombia involved in the anti-drugs campaign.

However, it is vital to make intensified efforts to reduce demand in consumer countries - to put the traders in human misery out of business. Britain will be hosting, in close co-operation with the United Nations, a major international conference in London next April to tackle the problems of demand reduction and cocaine.

The United Nations already makes a significant contribution to international efforts to combat the drugs menace. But we must all do more. All States should ratify the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances. Britain will do so and has also signed nine agreements so far with other countries permitting the tracing and confiscation of the assets of drug traffickers.

The world in which many of us grew up was also a more ignorant world. Few then appreciated the fragility of the environment which sustains life. But today, if ever there was an issue that should unite the nations, it is this one. To meet this global challenge we need stronger international institutions and clearer priorities.

That is why Britain has more than doubled its voluntary financial contribution to the United Nations Environment Programme. That is why Britain called in May for the early negotiation of an international convention on climate change. And that is why Britain is active in helping to protect tropical forests, whose importance in terms of both climate and resources is now far better understood.

The priorities of preservation must live alongside the priorities of development and economic growth. A balance has to be struck. Our philosophy has to be sustainable development, development that benefits mankind and protects his environment.

(Mr. Major, United Kingdom)

Partnership is a new watchword for the relationship between developed and developing countries. The priorities for that partnership are clear. In the first instance it must be for developing countries themselves to pursue sound economic policies. But development aid has an important part to play. So does action by creditor countries to relieve the debt burden on countries pursuing reform, and most especially on the poorest. International trade must be kept open and inflation contained to assist growth. Britain will continue to work for progress in all those areas.

Experience has shown us that focusing tightly and in turn on the key issues is a better approach than looking for generalized global solutions.

The international community, with the United Nations as its chosen instrument, faces a formidable range of challenges. But they are matched by opportunities. The demands on the United Nations are growing. But so is its prestige. So is its authority. So too is the extent of its engagement in new areas.

As we recall the conflict which created the United Nations, it is reassuring to find the Organization developing its role so successfully today. With the membership's continued support the process can be taken further still. All of us will gain from that. For, as the then British Prime Minister told the very first session of the General Assembly:

"The United Nations is really a coming together of all peoples in all countries and continents. It is not 'them' - it is 'us'; every one of us seeking, as citizens of the world, peace and security for humanity."

Now, at last, we are doing just that.

The PRESIDENT: Before I call on the next speaker, I should like to remind all representatives of the decision taken by the General Assembly that the practice of expressing congratulations in the General Assembly Hall after a speech has been delivered is prohibited.

(The President)

Unfortunately, several times during the course of the general debate, our proceedings have been disrupted by delegations lining up to congratulate speakers. I appeal to all delegations to please receive and express congratulations in the west foyer to my left, behind the observers' seats, or make appropriate arrangements through the Office of Protocol.

May I add very strongly that it is my intention to see to it that the decision is applied strictly, out of fairness to all delegations. I should like to appeal to all representatives for their co-operation in implementing that explicit decision of the Assembly.

Mr. PINHEIRO (Portugal) (spoke in Portuguese; English text furnished by the delegation): Allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as President of the General Assembly. On behalf of my country and of myself personally, I am pleased to express our confidence in your ability to undertake the important duties with which you have been entrusted.

I also extend to the President of the General Assembly at its previous session, Mr. Dante Caputo, our deep appreciation for the exemplary manner in which he carried out his difficult tasks.

Furthermore, I would like to give special recognition to the Secretary-General for his untiring activities on behalf of the objectives of the United Nations.

(Mr. Pinheiro, Portugal)

Yesterday, my colleague the Foreign Minister of France spoke on behalf of the European Community and carefully enumerated the principal themes to be debated here and the Community's position on these issues. They are positions which my country naturally shares, without prejudice to any particular considerations which arise from our special ties to other countries and continents - ties that constitute an important part of our national identity and that have contributed positively to the positions taken by the Community before the world.

Conscious of its past, Portugal has always involved itself in the great issues that concern not only East-West relations, but those between North and South. All those who, like us, defend the principles of democracy, liberty and human rights must continue to work for an improved climate of solidarity between men and among nations.

In this context, I would mention the proposal presented by the Portuguese Prime Minister at the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in May 1988, concerning the creation in Lisbon of a centre for global interdependence and solidarity. Covering diverse areas and themes and with a flexible structure, the centre would play an important role in the exchange of ideas and projects; a place for study and meetings, it should promote a mutual awareness and understanding of problems and experiences between peoples of the North and South.

Portugal's activity in this sector is not limited to the support of such a centre. Through our participation in the Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), to which we were recently elected, we shall dedicate ourselves fully to the activities of that important organ of the United Nations.

History has ensured that an exceptional relationship should exist between Portugal and the other Portuguese-speaking countries, which today include 200 million human beings scattered over the four corners of the globe.

(Mr. Pinheiro, Portugal)

But our co-operation is not limited to language: it covers many different sectors of activity which form a vast network of interrelationships between peoples and cultures. Without wishing at all to assume a position of spokesman for any other State, we are respectful of their interests and concerns, referring to them when appropriate in the geographic or economic groups to which Portugal belongs.

I should now like to address myself to the situation in various regions, beginning first of all with Africa.

Despite obvious positive political changes in several regional conflicts, significant structural problems remain, to which the international community must address itself. Of particular importance is the problem of external indebtedness. Portugal associates itself with all efforts on a bilateral or multilateral basis aimed at alleviating the terrible burden faced by the debtor nations, that is, the amortization and debt servicing of their external loans. In this context, we are following the activities of the United Nations Special Programme for Africa with particular interest.

Another grave problem is that of the refugees and displaced persons. Now that new prospects for peace have opened up in various parts of the continent, it is the duty of the international community to contribute actively towards overcoming this tragedy which affects, in Africa alone, many millions of human beings.*

Today, Africa is experiencing a period of great hopes and expectations. Allow me, in the first place, to hail the efforts of the Angolan people to attain the peace they so deeply desire.

If the road to independence was long and difficult, it is now fair to hope that the Angolans will be able to find the means to reach a permanent peace. Only

*Mr. Adouki (Congo), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Pinheiro, Portugal)

then will Angola be able to progress on the path of national reconstruction, progress and development. We have followed with the greatest attention and care the quadripartite discussions that took place throughout 1988. The constructive spirit that prevailed then was to be crowned by success with the signing of the already historic agreements reached in Brazzaville and New York. Portugal is mindful of the historical and cultural relations that bind it to the great Angolan nation. For that reason we hope that the spirit of peace will be fruitful.

The process will be long and difficult, calling for great persistence, tolerance, courage and vision, but the Angolan people surely will know how to sacrifice the unnecessary and combine their efforts so as to make reconciliation a reality.

For our part, we shall continue to do our utmost to support all the efforts under way. It is pertinent here to salute the mediation efforts of President Mobutu Sese Seko, which will undoubtedly benefit the people of Angola, Africa and the world.

Also in Mozambique, efforts are being made to put an end to a situation which has been especially painful for its people and which has taken a heavy human and economic toll. We share the hopes of the Mozambican Government and people that the path to peace and reconstruction will soon be found. It is the people of Mozambique who must decide which path to take. Portugal is following with great interest the efforts undertaken to overcome the differences that separate the Mozambican people as well as the significant contribution made by the churches of that country in the interest of national reconciliation. However, for this solution to become permanent it is essential that all the States in the region, and others that have ties with it, diligently seek all means of useful consensus leading to peace.

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We understand, on the other hand, that the resolution of tensions in southern Africa depends, to a large extent, on the posture adopted by the Republic of South Africa. We hope that the paths to regional understanding and dialogue will continue to be explored so that the climate of co-operation necessary for progress and development in southern Africa will be created.

The fulfilment of that objective is none the less inseparable from the process of change in South African society, which should lead to the dismantling of apartheid and the establishment of full democracy on a non-racial basis.

The international community demands a change in the situation of polarization that exists between the black majority and the white minority, an end to the emergency measures in place since 1985 and the release of political prisoners, including Nelson Mandela.

Portugal advocates dialogue, both on the international level and on the internal level, as the means of resolving the problems of this area. We have expressed unequivocally our feeling that certain political, diplomatic or financial pressures, if combined with a careful and persuasive dialogue, could well produce positive results and lead to the desired transformations.

It is in that perspective that my country is following attentively the process which will shortly lead to the independence of Namibia and will participate as an observer in the electoral process. In the interests of reaching a desirable equilibrium and progress in all of southern Africa, we believe it to be fundamentally important that the future State of Namibia be based on stability, tolerance and economic and social progress.

We expect all participants in the process to honour their undertakings. On the other hand, the presence of the United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) in the Territory and the efficient and persevering actions of

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Secretary-General Perez de Cuellar and his two associates will ensure the success of this enterprise.

Portugal shares a close relationship with Latin America, deriving from age-long historical and cultural links, particularly those which bind it to the great Portuguese-speaking nation of Brazil.

We have expressed our solidarity with the Latin American nations regarding the consolidation of their democratic institutions. These have fortunately become widespread today, despite adverse circumstances which have affected economic development and political stability.

I should like to stress the importance of international solidarity in resolving the debt problem, a matter which is essential to the stability of Latin America and the progress of its peoples. We must stop draining resources by providing incentives for investment in Latin America, permitting in this way the recovery of economies debilitated by successive years of austerity and sacrifice imposed on the population. Only in this way will it be possible to avoid the social and political tensions that could well place democratic institutions at risk.

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Portugal has supported the deepening dialogue with the Rio Group, not only to discuss the problems of debt and international trade, but also to encourage the process of Latin American integration which, as in the case of Western Europe, would constitute a decisive step in the expansion of markets and strengthening of the continent's position in the international scene.

In this process of integration, I cannot fail to hail the efforts that have been made by the Andean Pact nations, particularly in their meeting in Cartagena in May 1989. On the subject of Latin America, may I point out the importance of the San José meetings, which have brought together in a common effort aimed at the furtherance of peace and development in Central America, the countries of that region, the Twelve, the Contadora Group and its Support Group.

I believe that the meeting of San Pedro Sula and those which preceded it show, through results already achieved, the primacy of dialogue over confrontation. They are the incontestable reflection of the force behind the ties that unite the Europe of the Twelve and Central America.

It is fitting here to refer to the positive results achieved at the recent Tela Summit, leading to the abandonment of armed struggle in Central America, and to reconciliation of forces and full respect for human rights. Besides, the cessation of external intervention and arms supplies to the region, financial and technical assistance of the type envisaged in the co-operation agreement between the European Community and the States parties to the Treaty on Central American Economic Integration are necessary.

Unfortunately, in Panama a situation persists which does not correspond to the hopes that today exist in Central America regarding the re-establishment of democratic rules and respect for the will of the people. This anomalous situation must end urgently and result in the triumph of law.

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We are witnessing in Latin America the courageous battle of the Republic of Colombia against the network of drug traffickers. Allow me to express Portugal's unequivocal solidarity with the authorities of Bogota, which are in the forefront of a battle that concerns us all. The problem of trafficking in and consumption of drugs, which has become a universal scourge, destroying insidiously both developed and developing societies, is a matter which touches the entire international community and must be resolutely and mercilessly fought.

An illegal situation, morally and politically untenable, continues to prevail in the Non-Self-Governing Territory of East Timor, in spite of the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly and the Security Council calling for observance of the fundamental principles - namely, those concerning the right to self-determination of its people - and the relevant resolutions of the United Nations on decolonization.

In accordance with our consistent policy of seeking, through dialogue and negotiation, to achieve a just, comprehensive and internationally acceptable settlement of this issue, Portugal is diligently co-operating, as it has since the very beginning, with the mediation efforts of the Secretary-General regarding the question of East Timor. It is, therefore, in an open and constructive manner that we have been engaged in the talks which, under his auspices, started last May between Indonesia and Portugal, aimed at reaching an agreement on the terms of reference, modalities and timing allowing a visit to the territory by a Portuguese parliamentary delegation eventually to take place.

Though acknowledging the limited scope of this exercise, we are of the opinion that the resumption of the talks is in itself a positive fact, and we sincerely hope it will be possible to conclude them successfully. We believe that this will certainly be helpful in creating a good atmosphere for their continuation now on

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the very political substance of the question. Let me assure members of our continuing readiness to co-operate, in good faith and flexibility, with the Secretary-General in the fulfilment of the mandate entrusted to him by the General Assembly.

On the other hand, unfortunately, many reports have been reaching us lately, coming from different quarters, institutions, such as Amnesty International, and individuals, and giving account of a new and serious aggravation of human rights abuses in East Timor, through an intensification of military repression and harassment of the civilian population. It is worth noting, in this regard, that the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities of the Commission on Human Rights has - after failing to do so last year - very recently adopted a resolution on East Timor which, inter alia, regrets that more arrests, torture and summary executions are alleged to have taken place there since the end of 1988. I appeal to the international community not to remain indifferent to this situation and for an end to be put immediately to every form of human rights violations in East Timor.

Without peace, however, there will be no sound and lasting conditions for a return to normalcy in the Territory. And peace, as demonstrated by the unexpected and stubborn persistence of the fighting there, will not be possible without a settlement that will fully respect the interests of the people of East Timor, the need for which was rightly referred to in the statement made yesterday by France on behalf of the 12 States members of the European Community.

May I also call members' attention in this respect to the resolutions recently adopted by the European Parliament and the final communiqué issued by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe in November 1988. A very special comment should be made, in this context, regarding the letter addressed by Monsignor Belo,

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head of the local Catholic Church, to the Secretary-General on 6 February 1989, appealing to him for the East Timorese to be allowed freely to express their will on the political future of the Territory, something they have so far been prevented from doing.

Portugal, needless to say, has no neo-colonialist objectives whatsoever concerning East Timor. We invoke our capacity as administering Power solely with the aim of co-operating with the United Nations in bringing about a still incomplete decolonization process, in the light of the basic criteria and rules of the United Nations and in accordance with our own moral, historical and constitutional imperatives.

In his address yesterday the Foreign Minister of France referred to other grave regional conflicts that unfortunately still persist. The continuation of the conflict in Afghanistan, the fratricide in Cambodia, the continued tension in the Korean peninsula and the serious events that took place in China last spring cannot leave the international community indifferent. I refer here also to the instability that prevails in the Middle East, and I applaud all efforts under way to bring peace to the region, notably those of President Mubarak. Allow me to stress the determination of my country to contribute in every way possible to the resolution of those problems.

Unfortunately, it is not only in situations of armed conflict where violations of the most basic principles of human rights are evident.

The calm discussion in this Assembly or in the Commission on Human Rights in Geneva of the most egregious violations must be understood as a constructive effort on the part of the international community to correct violations, supporting Governments that indicate their concern in this area, or pointing out the extreme cases where a flagrant disregard for international obligations exists.

International trends in this field are frankly positive, whether with respect to

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the increasing power of public opinion, or with regard to the co-operation of States with the diverse socio-economic institutions concerned. The progress registered in the course of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe is a relevant example.

It is in this context that my country views with alarm recent moves to undermine the efficiency of the Commission on Human Rights in Geneva, under the pretext of assuring a better geographical distribution of membership. Equally negative is the tendency that has recently become evident towards a bloc reaction against criticisms or discussions relating to a State in a specific geographical area or regional group. Such initiatives or reactions surely do not foster greater respect for human rights; all States must be aware of this in acting to support those initiatives.

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I renew my appeal that this issue, fundamental to the international community, be the subject of reasoned debate aimed at improving the organs that deal with it, thereby securing greater assistance for the individuals under their protection.

While recognizing the profound social and cultural differences and the varied circumstances of Member States, I believe that all Governments share a common aspiration to establish conditions conducive to the elimination of the death penalty.

Portugal, as the first State to abolish that punishment, in 1867, cannot but support the recent initiative taken by the Federal Republic of Germany vis-à-vis the adoption of the Optional Protocol attached to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aimed at the abolition of the death penalty. We appeal to all States that use this form of punishment but that certainly would prefer that it be discontinued, to enable this Protocol to come into force.

Turning now to the international economic situation, I should like to express my support of the statement made by the Presidency of the European Community. In 1992 the Community will complete an ambitious process of economic integration. I must reaffirm that the objective of such integration is the creation not of an isolated entity, but of a more prosperous Europe, and therefore more open to co-operation with other regions.

Of remarkable importance, at the end of this decade, has been the progress achieved in the multilateral commercial negotiations of the Uruguay Round, which should lead to the widening of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. The integration of new areas should, in our view, be harmonious and disciplined and based on rules that assure fair and equal competition, providing specific safeguards in some sector; - for example, textiles and clothing.

It is the task of the responsible officials to contribute usefully towards the consolidation of the world economy's basis in the next century. The political

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realism that today characterizes international relations, the capacity for dialogue and the opening which has been established between the developed and developing countries will be decisive factors in the setting of realistic goals and the accomplishment of concrete results.

With regard to the problems of the environment, I would begin by affirming that their resolution should not be seen as a priority of the industrialized countries alone. Recognizing that the latter today possess the means to resolve some of the questions for which they bear responsibility, we should see the protection of the environment and the resolution of ecological questions as one of the principal concerns of all humanity.

Only a global policy undertaken by the entire international community can effectively combat the growing deterioration of the ecology. The disappearance of vast areas of forest - namely the Amazon jungle - today endangers the entire terrestrial ecological equilibrium.

Portugal believes there is an urgent need to develop adequate solutions, through the mobilization of international resources in co-operation with the efforts of Brazil, Malaysia and other interested States, to put an end to the disturbing deterioration of the tropical forests.

The conference on the environment and development, to be held in 1992, must seek to define effective means to confront a situation which can only be considered dramatic.

In this battle, which is of concern to us all, efforts should not be spared to establish sustained models of development that will ensure economic growth without destroying the environment.

Taking as a point of departure these two premises - the universal nature of ecological problems and the need to secure economic growth without damaging the

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environment - this Organization, whether through its agencies, including the specialized agencies, or in plenary meetings, should urgently confront the need to establish coherent policies aimed at the protection of the environment and the resolution of current problems.

This session of the General Assembly is taking place in a climate marked by significant improvements in the international political situation, particularly in East-West relations, opening up new prospects in the important area of arms control and disarmament.

Since the signing of the intermediate-range nuclear forces Treaty - a treaty that, for the first time in history, was not merely limited to reducing deadly weapons, but aimed at eliminating a vast number of them - there have been increasing signs that further and more decisive steps in this area may be imminent.

It appears that this progress is being accompanied by a general consciousness of the fact that the true mainstays of peace and international security are equilibrium, stability and mutual confidence, as well as respect for the primacy of law and the rights and freedoms of the individual.

In saluting the efforts of the United States and the Soviet Union, efforts which have led to the emergence of a new spirit in East-West relations, I must reiterate our profound conviction that all progress in the area of arms control and disarmament must be accompanied by corresponding events in the fundamental area of political and economic democratization and respect for human rights. The resolution of those problems must be accompanied by an increased awareness that the enormous advances of technology must be directed towards the correction of asymmetries that characterize our world today.

In conclusion, it is opportune to mention the significant role that we feel has been played by the United Nations peace-keeping operations in this climate of

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détente. We can thus consider that these operations today constitute one of the greatest successes of our Organization, at least in global terms. Their efficacy must be enhanced, and for this it will be necessary to review their system of functioning.

My country reiterates - and with satisfaction - its confidence in the United Nations as a privileged multilateral forum for the pursuance of the objectives of development and consolidation of security and universal peace which, after all, are its reason for being.

Mr. MALMIERCA PEOLI (Cuba) (interpretation from Spanish): May I first, on behalf of the people and Government of the Republic of Cuba and on my own behalf, express our warmest congratulations to Major General Joseph N. Garba, outstanding son of the brotherly people of Nigeria, on his election to preside over the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly.

At the outset, too, we wish to express our appreciation of Mr. Dante Caputo, a remarkable Latin American political figure and statesman, who performed brilliantly as President of the General Assembly at its forty-third session.

During that session we welcomed with satisfaction and hope the disarmament agreements between the Soviet Union and the United States, which undoubtedly opened the way for a relaxation of tension, a reversal of the arms race and the removal of the threat of war. We cannot overlook the influence of the Soviet Union's policy of peace on that.

Hope of peace is still uncertain, for those are just initial steps, yet to be consolidated. The nuclear arsenal remains virtually intact. The United States and some of its allies plan to modernize theirs, and have declared that the strategy of North Atlantic Treaty Organization should be maintained. The United States military budget is not being reduced.

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Therefore, we should not deceive ourselves or harbour illusions that tensions have disappeared from the international arena. A difficult road lies ahead. Yet, there are some grounds for hope, unless the Government of the United States allows itself to be lured by the dangerous and cherished idea that socialism can be brought down from within, and adopts a policy of arrogance and domination.

Cuba strongly supports a policy of peace, and will do everything it can to contribute to making this process, which is all-important for mankind, irreversible.

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However, the fundamental idea prevailing in the United States position is that peace among the big Powers, détente between the blocs, should allow the United States to pursue its policy of pressure and threat against revolutionary, progressive and independent countries of the third world.

Therefore peace should not be seen exclusively in the context of the level of confrontation between the big Powers. The peace that we non-aligned developing countries - which do not possess nuclear weapons but which have the great strength of our moral weapons - seek, the global, honourable, just and lasting peace we are all looking forward to, requires that underdeveloped nations also benefit from the climate of détente.

As the First Vice-President of the Council of State and of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Cuba, General of the Army Raul Castro stated at the Ninth Summit Conference of Non-Aligned Countries:

"The security and peace of the rich are not the security and peace for which the poor nations struggle. We want peace with sovereignty, independence, dignity, justice and development. We want a truly universal peace without interference or aggression."

We cannot conceive, much less accept, that while talks and negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union are being held with a view to agreements that contribute to disarmament, international peace and security, the United States continues at the same time to apply its hostile policies and actions against independent nations in different parts of the world.

The situation prevailing in Panama today is the clearest example of the arrogance with which the empire views peace with small States - undoubtedly a peace with sharp claws.

As Cuba has been constantly reaffirming, the continued provocations and campaigns orchestrated day and night against Panama, more than against an

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individual or an event, are designed to create an atmosphere conducive to a United States breach of the Torrijos-Carter Treaty under which Panama will gain full sovereignty over the Canal and which requires the dismantling of United States military bases in the Canal Zone by the end of this century.

The Ninth Summit Conference of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries expressed its concern over the increase of United States troops in Panama and at continued military manoeuvres on Panamanian territory, which create a situation of tension that could lead to serious conflict.

The Heads of State or Government reaffirmed in Belgrade their solidarity with the people of Panama in their struggle to consolidate the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of their country.

They demanded full observance of the letter and spirit of the Panama Canal Treaties of 1977 and rejected any action that might constitute a violation or disregard the validity of the treaties and called upon the United States to refrain from adopting any measure or action that could prevent their full implementation. They deplored the coercive economic measures imposed against the Republic of Panama and demanded their immediate termination.

The international community's solidarity with the heroic people of Panama is necessary to prevent the threat that now looms over that country from becoming a reality.

There is another situation of tension in our region that has not yet been resolved. The Central American conflict, which has lasted for years, has seen an important development in the Tela Agreements, crowning efforts that reflect the political will of Latin American peoples and Governments. We hope that such serious negotiating efforts will counter the United States Government's policy of interference which - after years of sustained heavy financial backing of the Somoza bands operating against Nicaragua whose disbanding has now been legally decided -

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is now promoting and appropriating funds for the Nicaraguan opposition with a view to sabotaging the country's legitimate will and producing an electoral victory favourable to its own interests.

We welcome the calm and firm attitude of the Sandinista Government in the search for a just and honourable solution to a conflict that has taken the lives of many of Nicaragua's best youth, fallen in defence of their national sovereignty and independence.

The search for a politically negotiated solution in El Salvador is also part of the negotiating process in Central America. Acceptance of the Tela Agreements by both parties to the conflict allows us to harbour hopes for the honourable solution sought by a people which have suffered the horrors of a terrible repression that has taken thousands of lives and inspired Salvadorean patriots to put up a formidable fight. We support the just stand of the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) and the Democratic Revolutionary Front (FDR), which have once again shown their readiness to hold negotiations and engage in constructive dialogue.

We express our solidarity with the just demand of the people and Government of Argentina to recover their sovereignty over the Malvinas Islands.

We also support Bolivia's call for a direct and useful outlet to the sea.

The Iran-Iraq conflict, which has for years kept these two non-aligned countries emersed in a bloody war that should never have begun, is now moving towards negotiation. Hostilities have ceased, but certain elements contained in Security Council resolution 598 (1987) have yet to be implemented before the achievement of a just and stable peace is possible. The imperialist presence in the Guif, where naval forces pose a threat to the security and independence of States in the region, does not contribute to attaining the much needed permanent peace.

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In South West Asia the signing of the Geneva Agreements has not prevented one of the parties, with the support and assistance of the United States Government, from continuing its attempts to impose a military solution contrary to the letter and spirit of the Geneva Agreements. Cuba supports the national reconciliation policy being pursued by the Government of the Republic of Afghanistan in a flexible and persistent fashion.

The completion of Vietnamese troop withdrawals from Cambodia constitutes an important contribution to the political solution of the Cambodian conflict. Regrettably, however, the recent meeting in Paris did not bring about immediate results.

The situation in the Middle East is worsening and it has not yet been possible to get all the parties involved to agree to convening and holding an international peace conference, which is in our view a viable way to resolve the conflict, with the participation of all parties concerned on an equal footing, including the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. Our Government expresses its unrestricted support for their right to independence and a national State. The intifadah, the heroic uprising of the Palestinian people against the ruthlessness of Zionism, deserves the respect and recognition of the entire international community. Cuba reiterates its condemnation of the actions of Israel and the United States, its strategic ally, and expresses the conviction that the solution to the conflict in the Middle East must necessarily entail a solution to the question of Palestine.

We support the just cause of the Lebanese people in their struggle for national unity and territory integrity.

We reiterate our support for the legitimate rights of the Cypriot people to preserve their national unity, independence, sovereignty and non-aligned

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character. We consider the convening of an international conference on Cyprus under the auspices of the United Nations to be a positive initiative.

We wish to express our support for the just policy of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea aimed at the peaceful reunification of their country and the total withdrawal of United States occupation troops from the south of the peninsula. We are confident that we will soon be able to welcome a delegation from a unified Korea to the United Nations.

We support the establishment of an independent and sovereign Sahraoui State and the withdrawal of the Moroccan administration and troops from the territory of Western Sahara.

We reiterate our support for Madagascar's recovery of its rights over the Malagasy Islands - Glorieuses, Juan de Nova, Europa and Bassas da India - as well as for the aspirations of the Comoros Islands to recover their sovereignty over Mayotte.

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Progress in the situation in southern Africa has been significant since December last, when the United Nations became the stage for the signing of the Tripartite Agreements that preceded the beginning of the implementation of Security Council resolution 435 (1978). There is no doubt that the long and complex negotiating process which resulted in the signing of the Tripartite Accords is proof that serious negotiations can be held while the legitimate interests of all parties are respected. As our President, Comrade Fidel Castro, has pointed out, Cuba negotiated seriously and is seriously fulfilling its commitments. By 22 September 1989, a total of 20,666 combatants had returned victorious to our homeland, in compliance with the agreed timetable, which was duly monitored by the United Nations verification team.

In conformity with the decision of the Ninth Summit Conference of Non-Aligned Countries held recently in Belgrade, the United Nations has the lofty and delicate responsibility of monitoring the implementation of the provisions of resolution 435 (1978) and of ensuring that the Namibian people and the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO), its legitimate representative, can express themselves, without obstacles of any type, in the free and sovereign elections scheduled for next November. Cuba joins the non-aligned countries and all honourable peoples the world over in demanding an immediate end to all interference in Namibia by forces of the colonial Power.

At their Ninth Summit Conference the non-aligned countries raised their voice to denounce the intransigence of the apartheid racist régime, as manifest in its continued internal repression. The Conference pointed out that apartheid cannot be reformed, that it must be eliminated through the complete eradication of its criminal system. The Conference also called on the United Nations to adopt

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effective measures in accordance with Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter. Cuba fully endorses these just demands of the Non-Aligned Movement.

All necessary measures must be taken to avoid fraud in the forthcoming elections. Threats and acts of aggression against the Namibian people must come to an end. The Koevoet racist military forces, which are part of the Namibian police, must be disbanded immediately. Voters should cast their votes in the places where they are registered. Secret ballots must be respected. Illiterate voters should be able to have the assistance of persons of their choice, and ballots should be counted in the districts, and not brought to the capital.

The Assembly should have full powers and not be subordinated to the administrator, as the representative of the South African racist régime wishes, when deciding on the steps to be taken towards independence.

We note with satisfaction that the climate of aggression and threats from outside against Ethiopia is beginning to be dispelled. As a result, the circumstances which, more than 10 years ago - when a request was made by the Ethiopian Government - made the presence of Cuban internationalist combatants necessary to assist Ethiopia's forces in repelling outside aggression, have come to an end. Thus the Cuban combatants who comprised the small contingent in Ethiopia returned home this September. In this manner Cuba has once again proven its ability to express its solidarity with other peoples and at the same time contribute to international peace.

With the independence of Namibia and its entry into the international arena and the community of nations, the struggle against colonialism will have achieved a great victory. However, we should not feel fully satisfied; more than 20 territories, with a population of several million, still live under colonial domination.

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The people of Puerto Rico remain under a foreign boot, after almost 100 years of United States military occupation. It is well known that the so-called plebiscite with which the United States Administration intends to determine the Territory's future is an attempt to incorporate Puerto Rico, as a new state, in the Union.

Because of this, the United Nations Special Committee on Decolonization this year not only reaffirmed the right of the Boricuan people to self-determination and independence, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV), but also expressed its hope, and that of the international community, that, in any consultation, the people of Puerto Rico would be able to exercise, without any hindrance, its right to self-determination and independence, with expressed recognition of their sovereignty and full political equality, in line with the provisions of resolution 1514 (XV). Cuba, together with the other non-aligned countries, considers that efforts must be made to put an end to all existing colonial situations by the turn of the century.

The problems deriving from the sustained growth of the drug consumer market - particularly in the United States - and the resulting incentive to production and trafficking have become increasingly serious. We must face this situation resolutely. The struggle against drug production and trafficking must go side by side with the struggle against consumption, against the market which, in the United States alone, produces annual profits exceeding \$150 billion. Cuba is, as always, prepared to play its corresponding role in that battle.

One issue that deserves our immediate attention is the threat to global security resulting from the international economic situation. We reiterate that, while the steps being taken in the field of disarmament and towards the creation of

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a climate of détente in the solution of some conflicts, as well as in the relations between the great Powers, are encouraging, such progress has not led to solutions to the problems of underdevelopment or the economic crisis afflicting the third world. We will not advance towards a real system of security so long as the already huge gap between the developed countries and the underdeveloped part of the world - which is suffering from an increasingly critical situation of backwardness, poverty and underdevelopment - continues to grow. These issues must be reconsidered, and a lasting solution found, if we wish to live in a world of true peace and social stability.

The encouraging picture painted by the economic performance of the industrialized nations during 1988 is very different indeed from the situation of crisis prevailing in the economies of the developing countries. United Nations studies themselves indicate that the average per capita income of industrialized countries is 50 times higher than that of the least developed countries, and that the mere annual growth of the wealthiest countries amounts almost to the total annual per capita income of the poorest nations, which is approximately \$300.

What kind of peace can we talk about in such a situation of seemingly unsolvable imbalances, where the poor increase the opulence of the wealthy? If peace is not linked to development, then poverty, inequality and violence will not disappear.

The phenomena which continue to characterize international economic relations, perpetuating this unjust situation, which are particularly evident in third-world nations with respect to unpayable external debt, are well known: protectionism; difficult access to markets for the main products of the developing countries; deterioration in the terms of trade; dumping; reduced financial flows; high interest rates; coercive economic measures; international monetary and financial instability; and external debt. All of this has resulted, in the recent past, in a

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net transfer of resources from the developing countries to the industrialized nations, causing not only continued plundering that prevents growth and development but also a new form of economic colonialism. Suffice it to mention, as an example, that the transfer of resources from Latin American countries to their creditors, in recent years alone, amounts to \$179 billion. This represents 4 per cent of their annual gross domestic product - a figure that exceeds, by far, Germany's forced external net transfer of resources after its defeat in the First World War.

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Many have focused their attention on the specific problem of external debt. But consistent steps towards true solutions have not yet been taken. Proposed solutions, coming mostly from creditors and based on case-by-case rescheduling, have only worsened the economic situation of debtor countries, although they have succeeded in their main objective of keeping creditor banks from enduring imminent heavy losses. Debtor countries, however, are growing nearer to insolvency, and their stagnation is prolonged with economic and social costs that have led to serious political disturbances and claimed hundreds and hundreds of human lives.

Proposals made within and outside the United Nations, based on a reduction of the amount of the debt, involve recognition that the debt is unpayable. The experience of all these years only confirms that the real solution to the debt problem involves the total elimination of the debt and the establishment of a new international economic order which would do away with the causes of today's grim picture. Existing proposals would be a palliative only if reductions reached substantial levels, which Latin American Economic System experts have fixed at no less than 50 per cent, if ceilings are set for interest rates, and if a general framework for implementation were established including all debtors without exception.

As long as we attempt to resolve the problem on a case-by-case basis we shall continue to fail. We would support United Nations efforts to bring about a real political dialogue between debtor and creditor countries.

The special session of the General Assembly to be held in the spring of 1990 and its preparatory process will give us an opportunity to reassess the challenges posed by this ongoing crisis of development in the face of the world's new economic and social realities. We hope the special session will promote frank and

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constructive dialogue with the understanding that unless swift and realistic solutions are promoted the problems now affecting vast regions of the world will in the future threaten the countries of the North with social and political instability.

Of course, the international development strategy for the 1990s will have to be realistic and provide for concrete policy measures with defined goals and objectives. But in particular it will require the readiness of industrialized countries to contribute to efforts by developing countries.

Protection of the environment is a concept that must be clearly defined because of its close relation to problems of development, the protection of natural resources, international economic relations, extreme poverty and the sovereignty of States. It is a matter of concern to all nations, a matter with respect to which imperialist actions bear a great responsibility, owing to the transfer to our countries of polluting industries by capitalist developed countries irrespective of the diversity of forms the problem takes in different areas. The problem must therefore be examined and measures chosen with the participation of all States, not a restricted or select group. In particular, its close links to problems of development must be very clear, since underdevelopment is the main threat to the third world. Underdevelopment stems from our colonial past, which also involved, among other acts of aggression, the devastation of our forests and caused irreparable damage to our environment.

Increasingly, the United Nations is becoming the optimal forum for contributing to the solution of the numerous problems we are facing. Maximum co-operation by all Member States is necessary to make its action more effective. The unique role played by the Secretary-General through his efforts to eradicate hotbeds of conflict has gained recognition by the international community, thus

(Mr. Malmierca Peoli, Cuba)

strengthening the Organization's potential to mediate and give political negotiating coverage to parties that had in the past been engaged on the battlefield. We should pursue those endeavours wherever conditions allow in the search for compromise and the honourable peace demanded by our peoples.

The growing role of the third world in the United Nations may be seen in the context of that positive performance. There is no doubt that the United Nations represents the development of our planet since the end of the Second World War - from the establishment of the Organization to the present day. Today's United Nations is not and cannot be the United Nations of 1945. We must therefore embark on a sustained process of democratizing its machinery in keeping with the interests of all Member States. Cuba has already stated its position on this subject, which is of interest to the entire international community.

The Bush Administration has clearly begun to take steps with respect to Cuba that would make it the eighth United States Administration not wishing to establish a climate of peace and good-neighbourliness and persisting in hostile and aggressive action against us.

Cuba knows it is not alone in the struggle to defend its rights, its independence and its sovereignty. We appreciate the numerous expressions of solidarity we have received. We wish in particular to refer to the decision adopted by Heads of State or Government of non-aligned countries at the recent ninth summit conference held in Belgrade. They condemned the continued threats of aggression against Cuba, the violation of its air-space and territorial waters and the blockade imposed against Cuba in the areas of finance, credit and trade, along with radio broadcasts from the United States and the decision to begin television broadcasts of a destabilizing nature, in violation of international law and, particularly, the 1982 Nairobi Convention.

(Mr. Malmierca Peoli, Cuba)

We have warned the United States of the consequences of beginning such broadcasts; it will bear full responsibility. Cuba will not tolerate such aggression in silence. We shall respond - and I wish expressly to reaffirm that from this rostrum.

Heads of State or Government of the Non-Aligned Movement also reiterated their support and solidarity with respect to Cuba's just demand for the return of the territory illegally occupied by the United States at its Guantanamo naval base.

Cuba will never forget those decisions, which should be taken into account by the United States Administration as it formulates its regional policies.

The anti-Cuban attitude of United States arch-reactionary circles on the Potomac increases the political blindness of the top leadership of that country in its vain attempt to make the Cuban revolution yield; this has reached the point where strategic aircraft in combat formation have been sent to our country simulating a massive air strike, as took place on 20 May last, while United States submarines approached our shores with unknown objectives, which could have caused serious and delicate incidents.

Like all other peace-loving nations that are firmly committed to achieving the social and economic development demanded by their peoples, Cuba shares the great wish to devote all its resources to the noble goal of development.

Cuba - the Cuban revolution - has been a reality for more than three decades, and it constantly renews its energies and strengths. Long ago, our people decided to sever the chains of bondage to metropolitan countries and neo-colonialism, and freely chose the economic, political and social system it wanted. Therefore, our readiness to maintain peaceful relations of co-operation and friendship with any country - and the United States ought to remember this - is based primarily on this principle: Cuba must be treated for what it is, an independent State and a sovereign socialist nation.

Sir Satcam BOOLELL (Mauritius): I should like to extend to Ambassador Garba, on behalf of my delegation, my sincere congratulations on his election to the high office of President of the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly. That this important session has been placed in the hands of a distinguished son of Africa is a matter of great pride to my delegation and to Africa as a whole. There can be no doubt that he will conduct our deliberations with authority and efficiency.

I should also like to express our deep appreciation to his predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Dante Caputo, Foreign Minister of Argentina, for the exemplary manner in which he presided over our deliberations during a very eventful year.

I wish to avail myself of this opportunity to express to our Secretary-General my delegation's congratulations for his outstanding contribution in the pursuit of world peace and stability. He has succeeded in solving a number of pending regional crises and in improving the work of the Secretariat under difficult financial constraints. He can rest assured of our continued support.

This year we have witnessed the consolidation of peace processes. Great progress has been made in relations between the United States and the Soviet Union. The Treaty on the elimination of intermediate-range and shorter-range missiles signed by the United States and the Soviet Union and ratified in June 1988 is a historic agreement because it is the first in recent history to abolish a whole category of nuclear weapons from the arsenals of the super-Powers. In the sphere of multilateral disarmament the Paris Conference on chemical weapons, held in January this year, gave support and impetus to the Geneva Conference on Disarmament. My delegation looks forward to the day when an effective and universal chemical-weapons convention banning the production, storage and use of such weapons can be implemented.

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My delegation notes with satisfaction the progress achieved in the negotiation on conventional arms in Europe. Proposals for military reductions and confidence-building measures have been submitted by both Western and Eastern Groups at the recent Vienna meeting. It is hoped that those talks will lead to an effective and concrete reduction in the armed forces and conventional weapons in that region.

Our concern for peace should be global. We must take advantage of the new rapport between Washington and Moscow to liquidate any area of tension and confrontation, wherever it happens to be.

It is high time that the littoral and hinterland States of the Indian Ocean started the process of the demilitarization of that ocean by calling for the convening of the long-overdue Conference not later than 1990, with the active participation of all permanent members of the Security Council as well as the major maritime Powers.

As the Assembly is aware, the Government and people of Mauritius have not accepted the fact that an important part and parcel of their territory has been excised by the former colonial Power in contravention of United Nations General Assembly resolutions 1514 (XV) and 2066 (XX). The dismemberment of Mauritian territory constitutes an unacceptable affront to our sovereignty. Mauritius cannot and will not remain silent until Diego Garcia and the Chagos Archipelago, as well as the Tromelin Islands, are returned to us. Our claim is just and legitimate. We have the total support of the Organization of African Unity and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. We appeal to the international community and to all peace-loving countries to assist us in the restoration of our territories. Our islands should not serve as a nuclear base and should not constitute a threat to our own security and to that of all the littoral and hinterland States of the region.

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The current political situation in South Africa calls for careful reflection and handling. We all agree that apartheid is the root cause of conflict in that region, and we have repeatedly called for its total elimination. It is a matter of comfort to note that many of our elder statesmen in Africa are initiating contacts with the South African Government in the true spirit of dialogue with a view to pressing that Government to make the necessary changes to the satisfaction of one and all.

We fervently hope that the changes promised by the new South African Government are genuine and that it will soon embark on the total dismantling of apartheid and the establishment of a free, united and democratic society based on universal suffrage.

We cannot accept that a leader of the calibre of Nelson Mandela should be eternally confined to house arrest simply because he dared to raise his voice against apartheid. We demand his immediate release and that of all political prisoners. The lifting of all political restrictions, the withdrawal of troops from black townships, the lifting of the state of emergency and the cessation of all political court proceedings can only help to create a climate of confidence for the pursuit of a real and meaningful dialogue between the South African Government and its people. The opening of dialogue with the African National Congress will be a test of the sincerity of the new South African Government.

The liberation of Namibia has been a cause near and dear to us. Mauritius has always stood firmly by Security Council resolution 435 (1978) and its reaffirmation this year in resolution 632 (1989), as well as the United Nations plan for the independence of Namibia. The United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) needs all our political and diplomatic support to lead and organize a smooth transition through free elections without interference and intimidation. We wish

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Namibia and the valiant Namibian people a new dawn and a bright and prosperous future.

With the resolution of the Namibian problem there was hope for a quick end to the conflict in Angola. We note with much regret, however, that the recent Gbadolite accord has failed to be given concrete effect, leaving the people of Angola still in the grips of war.

It is our fervent wish that peace will prevail in Mozambique, which has endured untold sufferings for far too long. Similarly, we greatly commend the initiative of President Mubarak, the current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity, to mediate in the tragic conflict between two neighbourly African countries, Mauritania and Senegal.

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My delegation last year rejoiced at the cessation of hostilities between the brotherly States of Iran and Iraq and their acceptance of the implementation of Security Council resolution 598 (1987). We pledge to support the Secretary-General in his ceaseless efforts to quicken the pace of negotiations and entreat both parties to co-operate in good faith in order to reach a common understanding and a lasting peace between the two countries.

We are deeply concerned over the deterioration of the situation in the Middle East as a result of the continued Israeli occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, which poses a serious threat to international peace and security. We fully support the just struggle of the Palestinian people and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) for the recovery of their lost territory.

The intifadah, which has been going on for nearly two years, has made it clear that the Middle East stalemate cannot continue for ever. Israel must negotiate with the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, the PLO. Any attempt to create a local Palestinian leadership in the West Bank is doomed to failure.

The PLO's desire for peace has been expressed emphatically, at the Palestinian National Council meeting in Algiers and at the United Nations General Assembly session in Geneva last year. This has entailed a major shift in the attitude of many nations to the PLO.

To prevent the tragic scenario in the Middle East from deteriorating further into a global crisis, the convening of an international conference under the aegis of the United Nations, with all parties, including the PLO, in accordance with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 335 (1973), is of the utmost necessity.

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No one can be insensible to the tragedy which has engulfed Lebanon. Such tragedies will recur unless and until we see the withdrawal of all external forces. The Arab League, the tripartite Committee on Lebanon and the international community must continue their efforts towards bringing peace and security in this war-torn country.

My delegation also deplores the fact that despite the Korean people's aspirations for the peaceful reunification of their homeland, Korea remains divided. This situation remains a great threat to peace. We welcome the efforts of the Korean people to reunify their homeland peacefully without any foreign interference and by means of dialogue and consultations between the North and the South.

The signing of the Geneva Agreements and the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan had raised high hopes that peace would soon come to that country. My delegation notes with regret that the hopes have not been realized because of the non-observance of the spirit of the Geneva Agreements. Afghanistan presents a harrowing picture of devastation, of a million dead and 5 million refugees. The flow of more, lethal weapons will not break the stalemate that has settled over the conflict. The civil war, since the pullout by the Soviet troops, during the last six months, has amply demonstrated that there can be no military solution to the Afghan conflict. A political settlement is the only way out. We appeal to the United States and the Soviet Union to bring the diverse elements together with a view to bringing an end to the present bloodshed in Afghanistan and restoring peace under an Afghan Government of national reconciliation.

My delegation welcomes the recent initiatives of the Presidents of the five Central American countries in their quest for peace and stability in that region. We are glad to learn that a United Nations mission will be sent to observe the elections in Nicaragua early next year.

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Similarly, we commend the ceaseless efforts of the United Nations Secretary-General in bringing about the resumption of intercommunal talks in Cyprus. We hope that a permanent and durable solution will be found, to the satisfaction of both communities there.

We also wish to see peace and stability prevail in South-East Asia. The people of Cambodia have gone through great sufferings in recent years. The International Conference in Paris did not bring about the much-desired agreement between the parties engaged in the conflict. We still believe that all foreign troops should leave Cambodia - and we welcome the withdrawal of the Vietnamese troops - and that the Cambodians should be given the opportunity to determine their destiny freely and without any hindrance. There should, however, be a guarantee that there will not be a return to the "killing fields", to the genocide that still haunts the people of Cambodia.

It is an undeniable fact that the economies of the industrialized countries have been steadily growing during the last few years. Unfortunately, the developing countries have not benefited from this growth. On the contrary - their economies have been declining. Most countries in Africa and Latin America and several in Asia have fallen into a deep and protracted crisis. Their economic conditions are worsening, their social services are deteriorating, and the political stability is endangered. This negative trend in the world economy is likely to persist in the years to come unless decisive steps are taken globally. The combined effect of the debt problem and the scarcity of new financial flows has further exacerbated the economic crisis in the developing countries.

African debt has risen sharply from \$78 billion in 1980 to \$230 billion in 1988. African countries are having to borrow more and more to service their debts,

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thus enduring more severe economic hardship. While we appreciate the gestures made by some industrialized countries, such as France, the United States, Canada, the Federal Republic of Germany and others, in alleviating the debt burdens of several of the most indebted developing countries, we cannot but re-emphasize that as long as the third world is made to retain the role of mere supplier of raw materials at non-remunerative prices, its future will continue to be bleak and the scourges of poverty, hunger, disease and illiteracy will continue to exist as we step into the next century.

A redefinition of economic co-operation is therefore essential to the prevention of a further deterioration in the situation. Economic relationships must be based on equality, partnership and interdependence. It is imperative that products originating in the third world countries should receive fair and remunerative prices and should not be subjected to various constraints. International agreements aimed at stabilizing prices of primary commodities must be negotiated and implemented. The countries of the industrialized world, which has the skills, the technical know-how and the economic means, are better placed to restructure their industries so as not to affect the nascent industries of third world countries, which otherwise will have to face severe competition. Growth and prosperity can be realized only by these measures. Such a liberalizing philosophy will mirror international solidarity and true partnership. In order to address adequately the pressing issue of international debt, there is an urgent need to reactivate the North-South dialogue and convene, as proposed by the recent Summit Conference of the Non-Aligned Countries, an appropriate forum under the auspices of the United Nations to review all aspects of the problem of external debt within the context of an improved environment for development and international economic co-operation.

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We are deeply concerned by the state of the world environment. The warming of the atmosphere and the depletion of the ozone layer constitute a threat to the ecosystem which may in turn affect the very existence of mankind.

Island countries which are already prone to natural disasters such as cyclones and hurricanes are now facing grave threats from the rising seas - which is a direct effect of environmental imbalances. Furthermore, the oceans are being polluted by the irrational dumping of industrial wastes. Unless immediate measures are taken to prevent the aggravation of the situation we shall run the risk of compromising an important source of food supplies and raw materials.

While we welcome recent initiatives on global environmental issues, such as the Montreal Protocol on the ozone layer and the Hague Convention, and take note of the positive actions relating to dumping of toxic wastes, we urgently appeal for remedial measures to be taken in favour of the most affected regions and we call for international support and solidarity in checking the pollution of our environment. At the national level also, the protection and the preservation of the environment must become an important factor in the conception, implementation and execution of new projects and programmes.

Finally, I should like to refer to a problem which has assumed alarming international proportions. Drug trafficking and addiction, to which the problem of AIDS is intimately connected, is already the new scourge of mankind. My Government has taken drastic measures to combat drug trafficking, and we will support all steps taken at the international level in this respect.

We are almost on the threshold of a new millenium, and we have no doubt that the major intractable global problems facing mankind and our planet will be handled with wisdom, vision and foresight, bearing in mind the enlightened principles of

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the United Nations Charter. The challenges we face should prompt us to arm ourselves with a spirit of solidarity enabling us to confront the future with confidence and serenity.

Man has survived many wars and conflicts, and I am confident that in the nuclear age he will be able to muster courage and fortitude and use the natural intelligence with which he has been endowed to keep premature death and destruction away from his doorstep. I conclude by reaffirming my faith in mankind's willingness and ability to survive and to create conditions for a better tomorrow.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.