



General Assembly

Fifty-first Session

27th plenary meeting
 Tuesday, 8 October 1996, 3 p.m.
 New York

Official Records

President: Mr. Razali Ismail (Malaysia)

The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Agenda item 9 (continued)

General debate

The President: I call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Worship of Haiti, His Excellency Mr. Fritz Longchamp.

Mr. Longchamp (Haiti) (*interpretation from French*): Almost two years have passed since the establishment of constitutional order and the rule of law in Haiti. The spectre of an illegal government and the acts of violence it perpetrated has vanished. The Haitian people, with the support of the international community, have succeeded in demonstrating in a country that the rule of law is more important than effectiveness where political shake-ups are common. Today, democracy and tolerance are part of the Haitian scene, breathing new life into the struggle to preserve freedom.

However, for this success to be complete, it must lead the way to security, knowledge, expertise and hope and to the well-being of seven million Haitians, who are still waiting for the realization of the dreams inspired by the return to democracy. Thus, the thorny question of socio-economic recovery — the true prerequisite for the consolidation of democratic gains — is more pressing than ever.

The United Nations has since 1991 been a focal point for the Haitian people, because the Organization did everything in its power to give full force to the rule of law in my country. That is why I attach great importance to the outcome of the fifty-first session, which should confirm the commitments we made last year, at the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Organization, to peace, international security and development. I am certain, Mr. President, that your leadership, your experience and your personal qualities will ensure the success of our work.

I should like to take this opportunity to pay a well-deserved tribute to His Excellency Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral for the work that he accomplished as President of the fiftieth session.

I also wish to pay sincere tribute to the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, whose tireless efforts are breathing fresh life into the Organization. The Government of Haiti acknowledges his active role in resolving the Haitian crisis. His latest report on the situation in our country reveals the perceptiveness of his analysis and his profound understanding of Haitian affairs.

Since the international community, through the United Nations, has invested in Haitian renewal, we have a duty to report to the Assembly on the progress made by the Haitian Government and the difficulties it is facing, and on its commitment to national development and to international peace and security.

The general elections held on 17 December 1995 led to the installation on 7 February 1996 of a new Government and to the renewal of Parliament. The new Government team is striving to ensure respect for public freedoms and human rights, in spite of the various constraints it is facing. It is encouraging free expression of opinion and the establishment of organized bodies to improve the functioning of civil society.

However, in its efforts to establish a democratic society and the rule of law, the Haitian Government must labour under two constraints: the economic problems that worsened after the *coup d'état* and the shortcomings of the judicial system, which have given rise to frustration among the population. Those factors have combined to create a state of affairs favourable to those forces that are against change, which have not yet abandoned their plans to destabilize the Government.

With respect to the reform of the justice system, the Government is mindful of the urgent need to end the incompetence and corruption of most magistrates. To that end, on 3 October of this year it submitted to Parliament a bill outlining the substance of the reforms to be undertaken to correct the discredited justice system and make it more credible and accessible.

An independent judiciary will be a crucial element in the reform. The Government is taking every step to ensure the elimination of any hindrance to judicial impartiality and integrity. Similarly, it is doing its utmost to provide the system with the means it needs to function properly.

For some time now Haiti has been experiencing an acute economic crisis. National productivity is declining. Infrastructures are seriously dilapidated. Real gross domestic product fell an average of 5.11 per cent from 1991 to 1995. The country's balance of trade is in chronic deficit, amounting to \$440 million, or 22 per cent of gross domestic product for fiscal year 1994-1995. Exports have dropped to less than \$100 million.

At the macroeconomic level, the Government is currently pursuing an economic policy that takes into account the need to curb inflation, balance the budget, reform financing, combat corruption, impose austerity on public administration and ensure equilibrium among the macroeconomic variables.

That programme, which is supported by the international financial institutions with which we have worked out clear-cut modalities for negotiation and

cooperation, will enable us better to meet an economic and social future that will be more promising and that will better favour the integration of the Haitian economy into the world scene.

A production-oriented policy should emphasize increased agricultural and industrial output. However, we must take into account that Haiti's agriculture is in crisis because it is unable to meet its two main goals: food security and increased export earnings for the country. Thus, the Government is striving to establish technological and social conditions that can relaunch national agricultural production.

In the same spirit the Government is giving special attention to relaunching industrial production. A strategy has been developed to restore a climate favourable to business, which is a necessary condition for promoting investment, which is the driving force of industrial development. There can be no question that such an objective can be achieved only through close cooperation between the country's various sectors. We believe, *inter alia*, that a dynamic private sector open to foreign investment is a necessity for economic growth.

The present Government recognizes that future development can be achieved only if we protect our natural resources. Thus, it intends to take steps to curb deforestation and soil degradation. Safeguarding our environment is one of our priorities.

Equally aware of the role played by the tourist industry in the world economy, the Government has devised a set of directives covering the principal elements of national tourist policy. It is encouraging to note that activities in that sector are beginning to pick up.

On the social level, the Haitian Government believes that there is a vital need to combat poverty, illiteracy and deficiencies in health care. The struggle against poverty entails a demonstration of strong political resolve to distribute the country's scanty resources on a fairer basis and to take steps to combat unemployment and encourage private investment.

The persistence of a high rate of illiteracy is a major handicap when it comes to improving economic results and raising social standards. Over the next four years the Government intends to achieve a significant increase in the number of children attending school. Here, we should note that particular attention is being put on improving health conditions in the country, and in that regard a

programme of action has been developed that will be implemented by mobilizing all available resources and with the support of certain bilateral and multilateral partners.

The task before us is enormous, but we are confident that we can meet the challenge, thanks to the determination of the Haitian people and the continuing support of the international community, which has been unstinting in its efforts to help resolve problems that threaten international peace and security.

On the subject of international peace and security, the international community has once again this year been torn between fear and hope as it has confronted developments in situations in various parts of the world. Long-standing conflicts have shown encouraging positive signs, while new outbreaks of violence have exacerbated world tensions.

Thus, the Haitian Government welcomes the positive developments in the situation in the former Yugoslavia, marked by the holding of general elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is truly heartening to see that the peace process has once and for all, we hope, replaced the spiral of warfare and hatred, with its concomitant systematic violations of human rights.

The initiatives taken by the Organization, in particular the creation of the United Nations Protection Force and the International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law, have greatly contributed to creating a climate favourable to peace and ethnic reconciliation in that country.

With regard to the Middle East, my Government wishes to express its satisfaction at the resumption of dialogue there. It encourages the two parties to continue their efforts to achieve lasting peace in the region, in keeping with the relevant United Nations resolutions.

On our own continent we welcome the prospects of peace that have appeared in Guatemala, after 35 years of armed conflict. The Haitian Government commends the United Nations on the leading role it has played in that peace process.

Our Organization should not only intervene in regional and inter-State situations that pose a threat to international peace and security but also contribute to help eradicate such dangerous evils as international terrorism and illicit drug trafficking or to assist in finding solutions to certain problems that threaten mankind's survival, such as the

nuclear-arms race. In that regard, my Government followed with interest the negotiations held within the framework of the Geneva Conference on Disarmament and decided to become a sponsor of the draft resolution submitted to the General Assembly, in the conviction that the Treaty was already a step towards nuclear disarmament. That is why, two weeks ago, on behalf of my country's Government, I signed the text of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, whose adoption by 156 States Members of the Organization eloquently attests to the profound desire of all nations to build a safer world for future generations.

Terrorism and illicit drug trafficking also represent grave threats to international peace and security. Coordinated action involving all members of the international community will be increasingly necessary in order to eradicate these scourges. As far as terrorism is concerned, the Haitian Government has always vigorously condemned indiscriminate acts of violence against innocent individuals and believes that the international conventions adopted on this question provide a legal framework for the prosecution of the perpetrators of such crimes. However, along with laws and criminal punishment, we must also try to find a solution to the problems at their source.

Mindful of the gravity of the situation, the member countries of the Organization of American States convened a specialized conference on terrorism that met in Lima, Peru, from 23 to 26 April 1996. The Republic of Haiti signed the Declaration adopted on that occasion with a view to preventing, combating and eliminating terrorism within the overall framework of the applicability of international law, respect for the sovereignty of States, the principle of non-intervention and strict compliance by States with their rights and duties. The Haitian Government also subscribes to the new actions recommended by the Ministerial Conference held in Paris on 30 July 1996.

In the area of international drug control, I would like to note that the Republic of Haiti is aware of the effort being made by the international community to tackle the phenomenon of drug abuse and drug trafficking. It is increasingly necessary for us to define, by means of appropriate conventions, an integrated framework for the relentless struggle that we need to wage against drugs in all phases: production, consumption, abuse, money-laundering and money-recycling, extradition and international prosecution of traffickers and confiscation of goods.

Last year the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Organization allowed us not only to take stock of its record and of the activities it has undertaken but also to reopen the question of the reform of the United Nations necessary to tackle the challenges of the approaching twenty-first century.

As far as the expansion of the Security Council is concerned, the Haitian Government would like a consensus to be reached on a new configuration of that important body that would favour active participation for all States in the activities of maintaining international peace and security.

At the same time, we need to find ways and means to revitalize the Economic and Social Council. While recognizing the positive actions of the Economic and Social Council in various aspects of development over half a century, the Haitian Government believes that it is possible to improve its operation in order to make it a more effective instrument to promote sustainable development.

We stand at a turning point in history where we are faced with grave dangers as well as many signs of hope. In Haiti we are striving to restore hope to our people in order to make a complete break with a past of suffering and deprivation. It is also the responsibility of all States to make the reform of our Organization a reality so that it can usher in a better world for future generations.

The President: The next speaker is the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Chad, His Excellency Mr. Saleh Kebzabo, on whom I now call.

Mr. Kebzabo (Chad) (*interpretation from French*): First of all, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on behalf of my delegation, upon your election to the presidency of the General Assembly at this session. Your selection is not only a recognition of the contributions of your country, Malaysia, in the defence of the ideals of the United Nations but is also a confirmation of your talents as an experienced diplomat.

Allow me also to express my thanks to your predecessor, Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral, for his masterful guidance of the historic commemorative session of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations.

I would like to pay once again a well-deserved tribute to our Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, and to reiterate our support for his constant efforts on behalf of peace and development.

May I also transmit to our Assembly the message of hope and the wishes for success of the President of the Republic of Chad, General Idriss Deby.

The life of a nation is often stamped by events written in golden letters in the great book of their history. 1996 is going to be one of those pivotal years along the road to democracy in Chad. Indeed, at preceding sessions, Chadian delegations regularly informed our Assembly of the substantial progress achieved in this area. I can affirm to you today that the process is ongoing, is getting stronger and becoming day by day an irreversible reality. I offer as proof the two major elections that took place peacefully and quietly.

First, last March, the people of Chad gained a Constitution that then gave them the opportunity to elect freely and democratically for the first time in their history, with direct universal suffrage, a President of the Republic from among 15 candidates. Yes, after two hard-fought rounds of voting the people of Chad chose President Idriss Deby, who was officially inaugurated as President of the Republic of Chad on 8 August 1996 for a term of five years.

Nonetheless, the process is still under way. Before the end of the year the people of Chad will be called upon to elect their representatives to the future national assembly. The parliamentary election will bring to a close the first phase in the establishment of the institutions called for by the Constitution.

Numerous international observers were present in our country during the elections. They observed that the elections took place properly and that the Chadians showed discipline and political maturity. The organization of the elections would not have been possible without the contributions of Chad's traditional friends, most notably, France, the United Nations system and international and non-governmental organizations. This contribution supplemented the efforts of the Government of Chad itself, which, despite its serious economic and financial constraints, assumed a part of the financing of the operations. Here we wish to thank all those whose multifaceted support and assistance made it possible to achieve these happy results. I take this opportunity to again appeal urgently to the international community to support Chad in the organization of future elections, in particular the legislative elections scheduled for next December.

It is often said that there can be no lasting economic development without democracy. The latter, as we all know, is a long, evolving process. Thus, slowly, patiently, at its own pace and in the light of its own realities, Chad is providing itself with the democratic institutions that must support its socio-economic development efforts, which is the highest priority of the programme of action of the Government of Chad.

Thus, like a host of other countries, Chad has developed, in collaboration with the Bretton Woods institutions, a structural adjustment programme. It has also just negotiated and concluded with the Paris Club of Industrial Country Creditors a partial deferment and rescheduling of its public debt. These actions are designed to control Government expenditure and ultimately to reduce the current budget deficit. The main goal is to arrive at a surplus which would allow Chad to build the basic infrastructures which are essential to the promotion and development of economic activities. The Government of Chad is also re-energizing its private sector, which generates employment, privatizing State enterprises and vigorously reforming tax-collection services and economic development programmes.

Another concern of my Government is the constant quest for peace and security. As the Assembly knows, war has stalked my country for more than two decades, which has completely undermined its structures. This is why we must work to restore peace and security, which inevitably involves regaining control of the army. I can affirm to the Assembly that efforts have been made and are continuing to this end. Thanks to friendly countries and the World Bank, more than 21,000 soldiers have been demobilized, an operation which will continue. However, our demobilization efforts will be in vain if this means putting out onto the street men who know how to handle weapons and are capable of causing unrest and insecurity. This is why a programme to reintegrate them into society must be implemented immediately. Only then will the reform programme succeed and ensure that we have a disciplined army, a true melting pot of the nation, at the service of development: this is our ambition.

The aftermath of war must be overcome, and at the top of our list of priorities is to de-mine an area equivalent to one quarter of our national territory. The mines planted during the occupation of part of our country continue indiscriminately to kill and mutilate civilians, women and children in particular. This is an alarming situation because it hinders any development programme in a region which, nonetheless, has enormous potential for mining and tourism.

It goes without saying that national rehabilitation cannot succeed, once again, without the assistance of the international community.

As far as my country is concerned, and despite the problems I have just mentioned, Chad is resolutely determined to work for sustainable socio-economic development. The people of Chad, in an atmosphere of peace and freedom, decided to unite for the sake of their own development. To this end, we would like to see increasing external assistance, so designed to help us to reach the point where we no longer need such assistance. Help us to develop, so that we do not become too great a burden on the countries represented here. That is our message to the developed countries.

The international situation is also of concern to us. Chad is not alone in the world, and what happens in that world, even if it is beyond us and if matters are settled outside Chad, concerns us all the same. The rampant crises in various parts of the world raise the question of what became of the hopes that were raised by the end of the cold war. We in Africa applaud the progress towards restoring peace and security in countries such as Mozambique, Angola and Liberia. But these achievements have to be consolidated. We can do this if we mobilize ourselves and shoulder our responsibilities.

We deplore the situation of latent war in Somalia and the Great Lakes region. Genuine efforts should be made by the international community; the parties involved also need to show political will to end their fratricidal confrontations.

The challenge is the same in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement must be vigorously supported so that a permanent peace can be established in that part of the world.

In the Middle East, the peace process which began with Israeli and Palestinian reconciliation seems to have been thrown into question in the light of events in recent weeks. We pay tribute to the very recent diplomatic initiatives to try and restore dialogue between the different parties, despite the lukewarm results. Chad exhorts them to respect their commitments to avoid a new flare-up in the region.

My country fully endorses the numerous efforts made with regard to disarmament. Thus we welcomed with satisfaction the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone

Treaty signed in Cairo, the non-aggression pact in Central Africa signed in Yaoundé and the adoption here in New York of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, which Chad signed this very morning.

Similarly, faced with the horror caused by mines, those deadly devices, Chad welcomes the initiatives taken to eliminate them. Consequently, we are prepared to support any measure to that end.

The 1990s will have been devoted to attempts to find global solutions to the serious economic, social and environmental problems facing part of humankind. Chad, as a Sahelian country, welcomes the entry into force of the Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa and hopes to see rapid implementation of its provisions.

We also hope that the forthcoming World Food Summit will meet expectations in terms of food security and water management, issues which give rise to often deadly conflict. Moreover, we should meet the new challenges facing the world: drugs, organized crime, pandemics, terrorism and religious intolerance. Increased international cooperation seems essential if we are to eliminate these scourges which Governments cannot deal with individually.

Here, I would like to congratulate the United Nations Children's Fund for its actions on behalf of children, in particular its vaccination programmes, including the programme to eradicate poliomyelitis before the year 2000. We also encourage the World Health Organization to step up its efforts to contain and eliminate the modern pandemic, AIDS.

The fiftieth anniversary of our Organization provided an opportunity for the international community to think about the future, reform and how to re-energize the United Nations.

But, like all human activities, only by making all this a reality will our Organization be able to achieve the ideals of peace, security and well-being laid down in the Charter and to which our peoples aspire.

I cannot conclude without joining with many preceding speakers in paying tribute to the immense work done over the last four years by our Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali. His action on all fronts, and the availability, willingness and courage of the Secretary-

General have enabled our Organization to foresee and resolve many conflicts. In that connection, I want to make it very clear that our country, Chad, will support the Secretary-General without reservation.

The President: I now call on the next speaker, His Excellency Mr. Fathulla Jameel, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Maldives.

Mr. Jameel (Maldives): At the outset, allow me, Sir, to say how gratified we are to see you presiding over this Assembly. Your election to that high office is a well-deserved recognition of your personal qualities and experience, and also of Malaysia's important role in this Organization and in the international arena. I have no doubt that you will lead the work of this Assembly to a fruitful conclusion.

It is also my privilege to pay tribute to your predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral of Portugal, for the exemplary manner in which he discharged his onerous responsibilities.

I would also like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for his untiring efforts in the cause of peace and development. While we realize the difficulties and the complexity of the challenges that lie ahead in the years to come, we remain confident in his wisdom and competence in steering this universal Organization towards the fulfilment of its responsibilities in accordance with the principles of the Charter. My delegation sincerely wishes him every success in his endeavours.

Last year, we proudly celebrated 50 years of achievements. As we slowly begin the countdown to the centenary celebration of the United Nations, on behalf of the generations to come, we see ourselves coincidentally on the threshold of a new century as well. My delegation feels that this is a unique opportunity for all of us to rededicate ourselves to the purposes and principles of the Charter with greater determination and commitment to strengthening the United Nations so that the menacing trends in human relations which caused so much misery and destruction in the past can be halted and reversed, and that existing inequalities among nations and peoples can be eliminated, creating a new atmosphere of tolerance and mutual respect, and a new sense of shared responsibility for development and progress.

Over the past 50 years, the Organization has grown fourfold and has become the most representative — certainly the only universal — institution serving the purpose of maintaining international peace and security. This truly global Organization has an immense capability to mobilize international efforts to deal with global problems relating to economic, social and environmental issues. It also possesses the potency to promote universal standards of human rights despite differences in the historical, cultural and religious backgrounds of nations and communities. Admittedly, the Organization has experienced rough times and has suffered several setbacks during the course of its existence. However, with the demise of the cold war that haunted the Organization for nearly four decades, a more favourable environment has emerged, enabling us to respond collectively to the challenges of the future.

Mr. Seydon (Niger), Vice-President, took the Chair.

My country is among the smallest and the least developed countries of this Organization. For us, the United Nations is extremely important in safeguarding our sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity. For us, it is the protector of freedom and justice, particularly for the weak and the vulnerable. It is also the beacon of hope for hundreds of millions of people in the developing world for a better future free from hunger and disease. Therefore, we feel the need to steadily strengthen, revitalize and reform the Organization in order to make it more effective, more democratic, and ready to react and respond without bias to situations that threaten international peace and security.

It was with this in mind that we joined in the initiative, way back in 1979, to include on the agenda an item on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council. My delegation welcomes the reform and adjustment process that is now under way and sincerely hopes that the process will not compromise the principles of the Charter, which emphasize multilateralism, mutual respect and shared interests, including the interests of small States. In this context, my delegation feels that the proposal made by Italy in the Working Group on the reform and restructuring of the Security Council deserves our attention and careful consideration. There is no doubt that the more representative the United Nations is, the more democratic it will be; and that the more accountable the United Nations is, the more effective it will be, thus benefitting us all, small or large, weak or powerful, rich or poor.

Reforming the Organization alone will not serve the desired purposes unless the commitment of Member States to uphold and abide by the principles of the Charter and their obligations is fulfilled. We are concerned that the Organization is undergoing the worst financial crisis in its history. We are reminded that the main cause of the financial predicament is the failure of Member States to meet their financial obligations on time and in full. While my delegation has every sympathy towards those countries which have genuine difficulties, we note that by far the greater number of cases in arrears are those which have the capability to pay. We note with disappointment that the richest Member of this Organization is among those who fail or refuse to pay their dues. It is ironic that the effects of this severe financial crisis have to be borne most adversely by the smaller and the poorer States of the Organization, which in many cases are obligated under the current scale of assessments to pay more than their fair share. In spite of its limited resources and the frequent economic difficulties it faces, I am pleased to say that my country continues to pay its share of contribution in full, as we are convinced that only resources and efforts can produce results.

Meanwhile my delegation believes that the efforts of the international community to reform the administrative and budgetary functioning of the United Nations should aim at utilizing the scarce resources of the Organization more efficiently. In this regard, the efforts of the Secretary-General to achieve a more lean and effective Secretariat geared to take on the challenging tasks entrusted to it warrant recognition. We also welcome the recent measures towards eliminating redundancy, duplication and waste, for only a sound organization can ensure the success of its mission.

The world has never offered a greater opportunity than today to address critical developmental problems and challenges. The international community has emphasized the importance of a revitalized and enhanced system of international cooperation for development. The sheer number of major international conferences held during the past few years and the collective resolve documented offer adequate testimony to this strong desire. The outcome of these conferences fostered a common concept of sustainable economic development for the betterment of mankind as a whole. However, despite all these positive developments on the international economic and social scene, my delegation is convinced that unless these ambitious programmes are backed by the necessary resources and political will, no change can be achieved.

We also feel that all activities of international economic and development cooperation, including those undertaken by the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization, must be coordinated and closely linked with the development strategies and programmes of the United Nations system. After all, this Organization remains the most representative institution.

While the globalization and liberalization of the world economy gave some developing countries the opportunity to assume a more prominent status in the world economy, the least-developed countries — a category to which my country unfortunately belongs — continued to be marginalized. The standard of living in least-developed countries has in effect declined over the years, and the poverty level has intensified in many of these countries due to indolent economic growth, which in turn was subject to outside factors. The overall decline in official development assistance over the years has further aggravated the conditions of the least-developed countries at a time when aid is most needed.

This unfavourable situation, if allowed to drag on, could be calamitous for countries, such as the Maldives, with severe resource constraints and fragile infrastructures. For this reason, my delegation can only appeal for priority action on various international development commitments, such as the Paris Declaration and Programme of Action for Least Developed Countries for the 1990s. These have been endorsed at various recent global conferences. Admittedly, liberalization of trade has resulted in greater trade. However, liberalization has also meant the loss of the only advantage that the least-developed countries had — their privileged status — and the consequent loss of their markets. Liberalization has therefore, in effect, contributed to the marginalization of many developing countries.

The inherent obstacles facing small States, particularly small island States, and their vulnerability, deserve special attention. Small island States like my own require favoured treatment to prevent them from slipping back from their well-earned achievements.

In this context, I also wish to express the need for an incisive examination of the criteria for least-developed-country status and related issues, including the graduation process, in order to do justice to the poorest among the poor countries when the criteria come up for review next year. The per capita index used to classify countries for assistance purposes is no longer adequate, particularly in the case of small States. It fails to capture the special problems faced by these countries and their vulnerability to

external shocks. In this context, the development and use of a vulnerability index, along with other criteria, may be feasible in order to minimize these inadequacies.

On the other hand, many of the poorest countries are still entangled in a web of external debt from which they are unlikely ever to be able to free themselves. My delegation believes that more steps should be taken to lift the debt burden from the poorest and most indebted countries by increasing the debt relief measures of bilateral creditors and by greater involvement of multilateral agencies in this responsibility. The developed countries can also help in eliminating the situation by demolishing the barriers they still maintain against imports from the less developed countries, in particular those which are suffering from the burdens of external debt.

Poverty cannot be eliminated through charity, but only through cooperation. In this context, we welcome the proposal of the countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development to cut the number of people living in absolute poverty by half in the next two decades.

We are fully committed to the efforts of the international community to safeguard the global environment, especially by building the capacity of the United Nations to promote sustainable development for all. We welcome the work carried out by the Commission on Sustainable Development in this regard, and are looking forward to the forthcoming United Nations Conference on Environment and Development review conference in 1997. My delegation is confident that this review process will give the international community the opportunity to rededicate itself once again to the preservation of the global environment. Only concerted efforts on all fronts can produce encouraging results in this daunting challenge. For the Maldives, the environment is an important issue. We are conscious of the fragility of our islands and we hope to be able to protect them from the potential dangers arising from global warming and sea-level rise. We are also determined to keep our country environment-friendly, clean and unpolluted. Though the land area we have is so limited, I am happy to mention that in the Maldives we initiated a programme in January this year for planting one million trees in three years; I presume that if all countries represented here would initiate similar programmes at a rate of four trees per capita, the world would be greener and cleaner in 10 years.

The importance of disarmament for the preservation and maintenance of world peace and security cannot be overemphasized. We believe that, with the treaties and bilateral agreements concluded, and the ongoing negotiations among the nuclear-weapon States, and also with the indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons last year, the international community is now reaffirming its commitment to global disarmament and renewing the hopes for the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. My delegation is pleased about the positive approaches taken by the nuclear-weapon States towards the adoption of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, despite the lack of consensus. We are particularly happy that the Treaty has now been opened for signature.

We also would like to praise the role played by the United Nations in demining and mine clearance, and to congratulate those involved in this dangerous activity for their bravery and dedication. Anti-personnel landmines have caused enormous human suffering and continue to maim and incapacitate countless innocent men, women and children. We look forward to a worldwide ban on this horrible and inhuman instrument of killing.

My delegation is firmly committed to the concept of the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones and zones of peace and would like to take this opportunity to call upon all regions, especially the countries in the region of South Asia, to which we belong, to make every effort to bring about the proposed nuclear-weapon-free zone in South Asia without any further delay.

Internal strife generated and fanned by ethnic, religious and other factors is a recent trend, which is causing large conflagrations in some parts of the world. While our Organization gropes for effective mechanisms to respond to such exigencies, we should not ignore the serious threats posed by drug traffickers, terrorists and mercenaries, particularly to small States. Terrorist incidents have increased alarmingly over the last few years. My delegation is fully convinced that the international community should intensify its efforts to combat terrorism. The early entry into force of the Convention against the Recruitment, Use, Financing and Training of Mercenaries will be a step forward in addressing these threats. We urge all States which have not yet done so to ratify the Convention as early as possible. Similarly, my delegation would like to call for the strongest possible international action against drug traffickers, who are not only poisoning the fabric of human life but also draining the potential for

productivity and prosperity of nations by exploiting the vulnerable elements in our societies.

Though deeply concerned over the recent violence in Palestine and in the occupied lands, which resulted in the death or injury of hundreds of men, women and children, my delegation is happy to observe that despite the numerous difficulties that exist, the Middle East peace process is continuing to move forward. We fervently hope that the agreements reached so far will be implemented fully and without further delay.

The important and critical role played by the proponents of the peace process, especially the United States, deserves the appreciation and praise of the international community and should not be forgotten. My delegation is convinced that their positive role will continue to be instrumental to the success of the peace process. At the same time, we also feel that the United Nations should continue to play its important role in providing means to the Palestinian people in their just struggle for the restoration of their inalienable rights, including the right to self-determination and to the establishment of a sovereign State which could coexist with its neighbours in peace and harmony.

The situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina is encouraging, but we need to remain alert. The Dayton Agreement has finally paved the way to creating a lasting peace in Bosnia. The fulfilment of the commitments of the international community is, however, critical to the achievement and consolidation of full peace. We also believe that it is important and necessary to bring those responsible for the atrocities and the crimes of genocide to justice and to punish them.

My delegation remains convinced that the United Nations is the most viable and dependable universal institution today. It is the responsibility of all of us to allow this universal Organization to play a more central and active role in shaping and harnessing international cooperation for economic growth and development. It is also our conviction that the dedication and collective endeavours of the international community, which have enabled the United Nations to survive the past 50 years, will inspire us all to greater heights of unity and cooperation so as to preserve and maintain the principles of the Charter, promote its objectives, and strengthen the Organization, thereby enabling it to better serve and enhance the well-being of the peoples of the world.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): I now call on the Minister for Legal Affairs and Local Government of Grenada, His Excellency Mr. Raphael Fletcher.

Mr. Fletcher (Grenada): Virtue constitutes the greatest form of human strength. Indeed, the very origin of the word "virtue" connotes manly strength — not merely physical strength, but moral strength. With respect to human interaction, it is a widely acknowledged truth that the greatest form of power arises when virtue is furnished with means. That is the concept that gave birth to the United Nations, inspired its noble deeds, and generally continues to inform its operations. Accordingly, our celebration last year of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations was quintessentially a collective expression of rejoicing in the wisdom embodied in that powerful truth, as well as an explicit, joint recommitment on the part of Member nations to act in accordance with the principle of empowerment of virtue, through the supply of appropriate means.

In this context it is, for me, a great honour to be afforded the opportunity to address this very distinguished gathering of the fifty-first session of the General Assembly. This event is easily the most important in the world calendar, as far as political deliberations are concerned.

My delegation conveys to this Assembly the greetings of the Government and the people of Grenada, and congratulates His Excellency Mr. Razali Ismail of Malaysia on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its fifty-first session. We were particularly impressed with the way in which Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral of Portugal conducted the affairs of the General Assembly at its fiftieth session, and take this opportunity to thank him for his handling of those proceedings.

My delegation further expresses appreciation and thanks to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for his vision and willingness to confront the many challenges that the Organization has recently been facing and, specifically for his dedication in seeking to solve world problems in the socio-economic and political spheres.

This new session of the General Assembly is being held against the background of a continually changing global environment. That notwithstanding, there exists, on the one hand, a spirit of international cooperation and, on the other, a high degree of convergence of several ideals, such as the institution and strengthening of democracy, promoting and fostering economic integration and political

harmony, and the pursuit and practice of a new multilateralism. Yet it must be expressly stated that the noble goal of achieving global democracy, peace and prosperity can be realized only with significant inputs from the developed countries acting in collaboration with the disadvantaged ones.

Currently, many of the small developing countries that are Members of this Organization are faced with severe economic problems. It cannot be overemphasized that measures aimed at stabilizing their economies and creating the conditions for sustained growth and development have very painful effects on the populace. Nonetheless, these effects can be made more bearable, and it behoves us to point specifically to the human dimension in this regard.

Since June 1995, the new Administration in Grenada has focused on strengthening our democratic institutions and on rebuilding our economy. My Government has been developing strategies, mechanisms and procedures to increase transparency and accountability in the conduct of Government. Moreover, my Government has pledged itself to respect the fundamental rights of all citizens as well as to other elements of civil society, such as a free press, freedom of expression, a fair and open democratic process, the supremacy under God of our Constitution and the effective functioning of the parliamentary system, for which our Constitution specifically and explicitly provides.

Economically, our domestic policies are aimed primarily at encouraging individuals and businesses to maximize the return on their enterprise and efforts. We have embraced the notion that promoting micro-enterprises is one of the ways to accomplish this goal. Only recently, we initiated a micro-enterprise programme, with the provision of a modest sum to help young entrepreneurs in particular to embark upon their several ventures. We hope that the programme will succeed, thereby contributing to our overall economic development, both materially and psycho-culturally. Such preferential treatment is being given to the young so as to better fashion a culture of confidence, thoughtful creativity and purposeful enterprise. We are actively seeking also to enhance opportunities to enable our working population to attain higher standards of living.

My Government has set itself specific goals including balanced and integrated sectoral growth, a relevant and adaptive education system, health for all, and strategic human resource planning and development. In

this latter respect, priority is being placed on the development of an adequately skilled and disciplined work force.

While we are aware that the matter of economic and individual personal development is first and foremost a national responsibility, we are deeply conscious that our limited domestic resources constitute a severe constraint upon us in our quest to fulfil this obligation.

Accordingly, we earnestly ask — indeed we urge — the many United Nations agencies involved in such activities, and also individual Governments, to continue to provide to us and to others in the same position the kind of help that is needed to meet satisfactorily growing demand for the spectrum of expertise vital to our national development.

The grim realities of the very limited resources of very small countries are well known. Nonetheless, these realities have become more glaring in this era of trade liberalization and the globalization of production.

Both of these phenomena, as conceived and elaborated by the developed countries, are startling reminders to us not only of our condition of institutionalized non-reciprocating dependence in a world that is becoming increasingly interdependent, but also of our vulnerability to economic marginalization. Thus, we are in no way, and to no degree, inhibited with regard to addressing inviting profound reflection on the issue of the special circumstances of small island developing States — particularly those in the Caribbean region, where prominent among the features characterizing our special circumstances is the ever-present vulnerability to natural disaster and the widespread devastation resulting therefrom.

The need for official development assistance and the transfer of real resources from the North to the South has never been as pronounced as it is now. Indeed, such are the dimensions of that need in terms of both spread and intensity that the transfer of resources referred to here can be effected only on the basis of a concept of a new global order as was initially envisaged and expressed in principle by the President of Guyana, His Excellency Dr. Cheddi Jagan, and adopted by all the member States of the Caribbean Community.

This, no doubt, has to be elaborated, and the countries of the North are especially requested to give disciplined and objective consideration to this matter. The conceptual requirements of the new global order include: a reconstructive change in interaction between North and

South; a new basis for interaction; a new ethic for relating one to the other; and a genuine partnership, a partnership which eschews exploitation of any one people by another and seeks instead to pursue mutual upliftment of the peoples involved.

More specifically, it is explicitly posited here that the developed countries should assist the less developed countries in respect of the following: first, the alleviation of the debt burden by one means or another; secondly, assistance for the development of centres for investment, the training of human resources, and training in how to make the economy more efficient, responsive and transparent; and thirdly, technical assistance to the smaller economies to help them make the transition towards incorporation and effective participation in a global economy that is so markedly characterized by so-called free trade. Smaller countries must not be excluded from processes which they cannot direct in their favour or, indeed, effectively influence so as to avoid experiencing the deleterious effects of those processes. Those are but a few of the tenets upon which the proffered concept of the new global order is based.

It is common knowledge that bananas provide a livelihood for a significant percentage of the people of the Caribbean, and particularly the subregion of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States. Thus, the current challenge to our special arrangements for that fruit in Europe is, to say the least, uncaring, if not hostile. Grenada and several of the other States now being so affected have, on many issues, collaborated with and supported those very countries that are now quite unrelenting in their deliberate assault upon our preferential arrangement, which constitutes an assault on the well-being and the very livelihood of a significant proportion of our people.

There should be no need whatsoever to remind the Assembly that there is a direct correlation between the premature destruction of our banana industry and the well-being and integrity of our democratic process and thus of our democracy itself. Substantial increases in crime and other social ills have been shown to induce commensurate increases in involvement in trading in, and the use of, illicit drugs. We certainly prefer to prevent the occurrence of such situations than to have to expend our energies and scarce resources on remedial action to contain and eradicate the now ever-present threat of an expanding narco-culture.

It cannot be denied that, there are other, and more important, objectives to be achieved besides protecting the market economy. And this applies to all countries, the developed as well as the less developed. The time is now right for serious thrusts to be made towards the alleviation of the poverty and deprivation which are so widespread across the world, although most prevalent in the developing countries. This process must be activated immediately to ensure that economic progress is buttressed by social equity. Freedom from want; good health; genuine education; a clean environment; elimination of the scourge of illicit drugs, as well as of unemployment and underemployment; and the better and wider enjoyment of basic human rights: these are the goals we should unswervingly and constantly be seeking to reach.

In this context, my Government is cognizant of its duties and responsibilities. We are convinced that through prudent management of our very limited resources, a willingness on the part of our people to work hard and, on our part, clear political leadership and virtuously inspired guidance — all enhanced by the support of friendly Governments and donor agencies — we shall, in due course, place our country on a sound path towards genuine growth.

My delegation is happy to state in this regard that some improvement has already been made and that our Government looks forward to achieving in the not too distant future most of the goals we have set ourselves in order more effectively to pursue those other goals, which would significantly enhance the quality of our people's lives.

In the context of collective international efforts towards the achievement of some kind of sustainable development in the less developed countries, it is instructive to refer to the recently held Group of Seven summit in Lyon, France, where most of the efforts focused on the new global order.

The leaders of the world's most powerful nations agreed that in the present global economic situation it is absolutely necessary to control negative consequences and fight against the risks of exclusion, both at the national and international levels. Their communiqué, entitled "Globalization for the Benefit of All", does seem to signal the stirrings of a new order for humankind.

Grenada welcomes the discussion held on aid for development — particularly with officials from the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank — and is

heartened by the fact that in those discussions modalities were defined for a new partnership for development based on the sharing of responsibilities between developed countries, developing countries and multilateral organizations.

The pledge by the G-7 countries to ensure substantial flows of public aid for development to the countries most in need is very timely and most welcome. Dare we of the South perceive this pronouncement by the G-7 to be not simply a pledge of honour but, further, an expression of subscription to the new global order, as enunciated by a visionary of the South, underscored now by a soulful shinning forth of virtue on the part of the North? My delegation sincerely hopes so.

It is several years since any substantial change was made to the structure of one of the most important organs of this Organization. I refer to the Security Council. Meanwhile, the international political and economic environments have undergone some drastic and far-reaching transformations. Grenada strongly believes that in order to reflect the new geopolitical and economic realities of our world today, there are changes that are now due, particularly in the Security Council. Accordingly, my delegation expresses its unwavering support for the reforms currently being undertaken, as well as those now being contemplated with respect to the United Nations system.

In July of this year, the European Union, through its Parliament, adopted a resolution to support the call for participation in international organizations by the Republic of China. The Government and people of Grenada consider this action on the part of the European Union to have been a most significant development. We welcome this development, and we applaud the European Union for it. Indeed, we are encouraged by that action, for the persistent plea of Grenada, constantly repeated over several years in every appropriate forum, has now been amplified into a clarion call for moral justice, in contrast to the expediency of power politics, economic advantage and legislative manipulation of yesteryear.

The Republic of China has for many years consistently displayed its commitment to the values and principles of this body. Indeed, in the face of threats and undisguised acts of aggression, the courageous people of the Republic of China boldly chose to embark upon a path of freedom, justice, and respect for human rights, and recently took part in their presidential election, which was open, free and fair.

The economic achievements of this brave country of 21.3 million people are well and widely known. Thus, there can be no doubt as to the capability of the people of the Republic of China to make substantial contributions to the work of the United Nations. As to their willingness to make significant contributions, that also cannot be a matter of doubt. They have given testimony in this regard in several ways. They have established their good faith. They deserve the right to participate in the conferences and activities of the United Nations system. To continue to deny them this right would be to persist in denying them justice within the confraternity of nations.

Superior power is found only where there is superior excellence of some kind, and the Republic of China has manifested a certain degree of superior power which derives from virtue rather than from physical strength. Thus, the Government and people of Grenada unequivocally exhort this Assembly to secure participation by the Republic of China in the agencies and activities of the United Nations system.

With every passing year, contemporary politics becomes more complex and, thus, commensurately complex are the related solutions. In this regard, my delegation especially applauds the efforts of the United Nations in attempting to maintain some degree of peace and security in various parts of the world. From Haiti to the war-torn Republics of the former Yugoslavia, to the famine-stricken cities of many an African State, the United Nations humanitarian activities and missions of peace are indeed worthy of special commendation. In this regard, I seize the opportunity now afforded me to express a father's appreciation of and blessings upon my son Mark, who for some years has been and continues to be so engaged, and I ask your indulgence in this regard.

Grenada is encouraged by the progress — albeit halting — made in the Middle East peace process and urges continued dialogue until the noble ideal of peaceful coexistence is achieved. But world peace and security will not be attained if those countries with nuclear capabilities continue to promulgate their use for military purposes. My delegation therefore welcomes efforts to institute a comprehensive ban on nuclear testing.

Similarly, the practice of transporting hazardous radioactive materials, particularly through the Caribbean Sea, must be stopped immediately. The very surreptitiousness with which this business is conducted and transportation effected is indeed a tacit admission of wrongdoing. Caribbean humanness is violated in such

transactions. In the name of humanity, therefore, the Government and the people of Grenada, without equivocation and without qualification, call for this practice to be stopped, and stopped now.

It has been suggested by Max Ascoli that

“civilization is a constant quest for non-violent means of solving conflicts — a common quest for peace.”

Nonetheless, my Government perceives civilization as being more than simply a quest for peace, more than merely the shunning of visible violence. My Government sees civilization as the purposeful pursuit of peace through commitment to justice; the inherent equality of all men and women; and the inalienable rights which derive from simply being human. My Government subscribes to the principle of the overriding rule of moral law.

In the context of violations of humanness, it behoves me to express, on behalf of my delegation, the deep concern of the Government and the people of Grenada in respect of the agonies which are currently being experienced by a significant number of persons in Cyprus. Grenada, like Cyprus, is an island nation, small, but sovereign. We therefore call for an end to the suffering to which so many of the families and individual persons of that beautiful country have been subjected. The smallness of a nation does not, to any degree whatever, negate the fundamental human rights of each of its citizens.

The great Lebanese poet Khalil Gibran, in his *Thoughts and Meditations*, offered humanity the following insightful observation:

“My soul preached to me and showed me that I am neither more than the pygmy, nor less than the giant. Ere my soul preached to me, I looked upon humanity as two men; one weak, whom I pitied, and the other strong, whom I followed or resisted in defiance. But now I have learned that I am as both are, and made from the same elements. My origin is their origin, my conscience is their conscience, my contention is their contention, and my pilgrimage is their pilgrimage.”

My delegation is deeply convinced of the unsurpassable wisdom which these words of Khalil Gibran represent. The sentiment conveyed constitutes the *sine qua non* for the realization of international brotherhood. This we do believe.

Accordingly, my delegation earnestly urges that henceforth the quintessential sameness of all mankind and a genuine commitment to virtue should be adopted as the guiding principles of this Assembly. May God bless everyone participating in this fifty-first regular session of the Assembly, so that, so much the more effectively, the Assembly will be a transforming blessing to our world.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): The next speaker is the Chairman of the delegation of Lesotho, His Excellency Mr. Perch Metsing Mangoaela, on whom I now call.

Mr. Mangoaela (Lesotho): I wish to extend my delegation's sincere congratulations to you, Sir, on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its fifty-first session. It is with great pleasure that I assure you of Lesotho's support and cooperation as you conduct the deliberations of this body. Let me also take this opportunity to pay special tribute to your predecessor, Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral, for the skilful manner in which he guided the work of the historic session of the General Assembly last year. My delegation truly appreciates his leadership and his tireless dedication to the heavy responsibilities entrusted to him during the past year.

I also take this opportunity to express our satisfaction with the sterling work that the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, has been doing under the very difficult conditions of reduced financial resources. Were it not for his tenacity, our Organization would not have been able to hold together as it has done.

The celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations last year provided an opportunity for reflection about the global mission of our Organization. We retraced our past and took stock of the failures and notable successes that the United Nations had engraved in the historic record of half a century of its existence. We also looked ahead with renewed determination, resolved to create for mankind a future that would be brighter than the past, amidst the euphoria of hope and expectation in the new international order that is still emerging from the ashes of the cold war.

Even as we did so, we were aware how great the potential was for a relapse to the pitfalls of past years and for the re-emergence of complacencies that could render our new hopes and expectations vain and futile. A deliberate effort is required on the part of the international community to build on the past experiences of our

Organization and to identify and reinforce the positive trends that the end of the cold war era has yielded.

The first half-century was characterized by cold-war conflicts, the struggle against colonialism, the constant threat of a nuclear holocaust and the fight against apartheid. All these are either behind us or considerably abated. Our attention must remain focused on how we can give the twenty-first century a United Nations equipped to serve as an effective instrument in the evolving global environment for the attainment of the noble goals enshrined in its Charter.

A universal consensus for the reform and revitalization of the United Nations was highlighted in the solemn Declaration that was adopted in this very Hall a year ago by, *inter alia*, 128 world Heads of State and Government. The momentum for the realization of that aspiration and for the implementation of the commitments that were made by the world community should not be lost. The actions and the path that we have to take are known to all of us.

We would like to see a more democratized United Nations, whose credibility and legitimacy are enhanced by the representativeness of its structures.

We have identified the need for measures to ensure greater consultation between the Security Council and the General Assembly, particularly on crisis situations, and the need to restore the role and authority of the General Assembly in the decision-making processes of our Organization, without compromising the speed with which the Security Council may take its decisions.

We have cautioned against regional selectivity in the attention paid by our Organization to international crisis situations and have advocated a demonstration of good faith and the upholding of the principle of the sanctity of human life in the enforcement of United Nations resolutions.

We have also stood in favour of exploring a new, balanced formula for equitable burden-sharing, as well as for a renewed commitment on the part of all Member States to fulfil their financial obligations to the United Nations in full and on time, just as we have joined in the call to effect economies and improve efficiency through the transformation of the management techniques within the United Nations system.

The events and experiences we have witnessed since the last session of the Assembly once again present us with mixed signals. On the one hand, we have seen a steady expansion of the frontiers of peace, tolerance and democracy, while, on the other, some problems that are rooted in the past not only have persisted but have been compounded by new challenges arising from the evolving international environment.

Thanks to the efforts of the international community, the carnage in the former Yugoslavia has been brought to an end. However, a conscious effort is still required to give permanence to the positive trends that are still evolving in Bosnia and to suppress the ever present risk that the peace dividends already gained can be reversed.

In the Middle East uncertainty and the new obstacles that have emerged in the path of a negotiated peace have thrown new doubts over the prospects for an early restoration to the Palestinian people of their inalienable right to self-determination and statehood. We appeal to both Israel and the Palestinian Authority to adhere in good faith to the provisions of the peace agreements they have concluded and to implement them within the agreed time-frame, pursuant to the Declaration of Principles they signed in Washington in 1993.

The prerequisite for peace remains the withdrawal of Israel and the cessation of the establishment of new Israeli settlements in the occupied Arab and Palestinian territories, in compliance with the resolutions of the United Nations.

In Western Sahara recent developments have demonstrated that peace in that area remains elusive. How long will the will of the Saharan people for self-determination and independence be frustrated? The withdrawal of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara in May of this year due to the lack of cooperation by the parties raises a real prospect for a resumption of violence. The international community must act now to reverse the tragic trends and to persuade the parties to cooperate in the implementation of the United Nations plan for the independence of Western Sahara.

In Burundi, Liberia and Somalia the situation regrettably continues to defy the efforts of the international community to restore peace and stability. We appeal to the international community to support the current initiatives spearheaded by the Organization of African Unity and the neighbouring countries of Burundi aimed at protecting democracy in that country.

Lesotho shares Africa's deep disappointment at the demonstrable lack of interest on the part of the international community in extending the necessary material support to the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) countries that are engaged in the regional peacekeeping effort in Liberia. This, regrettably, calls into question the world's commitment to the universality of the sanctity of human life.

Despite the remaining hotbeds of instability, fortunately all is not doom and gloom in Africa, even in the area of conflict resolution. The major strides that have been made in southern Africa to free the subregion of conflicts is a source of great satisfaction. If the momentum for peace is kept in Angola, there is no doubt that a subregion long associated with conflicts will have established durable peace and stability. The implementation of the Lusaka Protocol — particularly the establishment of a unified army and the formation of the Government of National Unity — are within reach, and with more concerted action by the international community should soon be attained.

Throughout southern Africa, political stability, peace, democracy and human rights continue to be deepened. Multiparty general elections are being held, and other political and constitutional reforms are being put in place to ensure transparency and predictability, especially in the electoral systems.

The establishment by the Southern African Development Community of the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security reaffirms the region's resolve to consolidate the gains that have been bequeathed by the demise of apartheid and to face head-on the challenges of peace and democracy.

These measures have contributed to the strong performance registered by the national economies of southern Africa in 1995, as well as to the improvement in the overall investment climate of the region. We hope that the international community will continue to assist southern Africa in its reconstruction efforts, particularly by encouraging the flow of private investment as a contribution to the regional efforts for the economic recovery of the subcontinent.

The past 12 months have presented the world with great opportunities for the attainment of durable peace. Yet, I regret to say, we have sometimes failed to take advantage of them. A scourge that has stalked humankind

for the past 50 years has been the growth in the arsenal of armaments, especially nuclear ones. Last year, in a historic achievement, the nations of the world agreed to extend indefinitely the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. In doing so they undertook to achieve a comprehensive test-ban treaty by September of this year.

It is with unbounded joy that we are able to stand here today and say that that goal has been attained. To be sure, it was not attained with ease, but the fact that it was achieved is a source of great encouragement that humankind is slowly but surely moving towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons. Although Lesotho shares the view that the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) that was adopted here in New York last month is not perfect, we regard it as a giant step forward that will serve to put the nuclear-weapon States on notice that the rest of the international community is serious about its aspiration to a nuclear-free world.

In spite of the fact that the cold war has ended and that the START Treaties have been concluded, tens of thousands of nuclear weapons are still deployed by nuclear States, and there is a very real possibility that many more States could develop such weapons.

Worldwide opposition to weapons of mass destruction has resulted in Conventions banning biological and chemical weapons, but as yet there are no concrete proposals to negotiate a similar convention to outlaw nuclear weapons. The fact that nuclear weapons are not prohibited by convention weakens the willingness of many non-nuclear States to abide by the Biological Weapons Convention and the Chemical Weapons Convention. These States perceive an imbalance in the retention of certain types of weapons of mass destruction by some States, mostly States of the North, while other weapons of mass destruction, often held by States of the South — are banned.

Lesotho believes that the proliferation of nuclear-weapons technology and the manufacture of nuclear weapons constitute a very serious problem which the international community cannot and must not ignore.

The fact that only a handful of people have been brought to justice for the millions of crimes against humanity and the serious violations of humanitarian law committed since the end of the Second World War has not altered the international community's view that perpetrators of international crimes should be tried and punished for their acts. More recently, the growing global outrage against

international crimes has been demonstrated by the creation of the two ad hoc International Tribunals for the prosecution of crimes in the former Yugoslavia and in Rwanda. These Tribunals were established by the Security Council to have jurisdiction over the most heinous crimes in the world: genocide, other crimes against humanity and serious violations of humanitarian law.

It is therefore a matter of concern that since their inception both Tribunals have been plagued by inadequate and short-term financing and have not received adequate budgets from this Assembly. It is also a matter of concern that very few Member States have enacted legislation permitting effective cooperation with the Tribunals.

The international community must send a clear message to those who commit genocide and other crimes against humanity that they cannot escape to fully account for their actions before international law. We can do this by providing the much-needed support and resources to enable the ad hoc International Tribunals to bring to justice those who are responsible for atrocities both in Bosnia and in Rwanda.

Although Lesotho has not yet promulgated implementation legislation for the Tribunals, it remains committed to fully cooperating with the two Tribunals in accordance with the provisions of Security Council resolutions. We hope that the international community can build on the experiences and the already noteworthy success achieved by these Tribunals to pursue the project of the establishment of a permanent international criminal court.

While we recognize the important work of the Preparatory Committee on the Establishment of an International Criminal Court, we are of the view that the General Assembly should enhance the Preparatory Committee's work by mandating it to begin serious negotiations of a consolidated draft treaty based on the International Law Commission's 1994 draft statute. The present momentum for the establishment of a permanent international criminal tribunal should not be lost, but should be matched by commensurate political will to ensure that the work is completed in time for a conference in 1998.

Development and the promotion of international cooperation as enshrined in the Charter, will continue to be the principal objectives of the United Nations. The recently concluded mid-term review of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s

has shown that many of the social and economic problems which led to the adoption of the Agenda in 1991 still exist and that poverty and unemployment in Africa are expected to increase substantially. Furthermore, the estimated resource mobilization levels in the Agenda are still far from being attained.

Consequently, the mid-term review recommended that African Governments should continue to promote, *inter alia*, economic reforms, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, good governance and administrative reform. For their part, international partners should seek to mobilize substantial new resources from all sources — public and private — and from traditional and new sources, to find a solution to Africa's external debt problem and to enhance Africa's recovery through trade facilitation and improved market access.

The United Nations System-wide Special Initiative for Africa, which was launched by the Secretary-General in March this year, promises to break new ground by assuring the cooperation of the whole system, including the Bretton Woods institutions, in tackling the intractable problem of accelerating the development of the African continent.

While this expression of interest in our continent is appreciated, we must also stress that the implementation of the several initiatives currently on the table must be carried out in very close consultation with the African countries themselves, to avoid the duplication of efforts. The Organization of African Unity's Cairo Plan of Action is relevant in this regard.

As we engage in this introspection one year after our historic Declaration on the Occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations, it is pertinent to inquire to what extent we are all fulfilling our commitment undertaken during the various global conferences, all of which — except the Vienna World Conference on Human Rights — have a development dimension. Perhaps the one that towers above all others in its significance for alleviating the plight of citizens of least developed countries, such as mine, is last year's Copenhagen World Summit for Social Development.

In Lesotho there is a serious effort to attain the target of devoting 20 per cent of our budget to the health and education sectors, but we have not witnessed a corresponding commitment on the part of our development partners, as was agreed at Copenhagen.

The Commission for Social Development has been given the primary responsibility for the follow-up and review of the implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action. Commitment 2 of the Declaration and chapter II of the Programme of Action both deal with the goal of poverty eradication. In this connection, 1997 is a crucial year, being the first year of the United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty.

By its resolution 50/161, the General Assembly decided to hold a special session in the year 2000 for an overall review and appraisal and of the implementation of the World Summit for Social Development and to consider further actions and initiatives. We support the view that, to enable this to happen, the Commission should meet annually, that the length of its sessions should be extended and that its membership should be increased.

Measures to ensure that women have the same degree of access as men to economic resources and opportunities are of equal importance for the attainment of economic progress. Poverty can be eradicated only through the empowerment of the poor. United Nations efforts should therefore be coordinated in such a manner that all its activities for poverty eradication fully take into account the gender perspective.

The ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women was supposed to be followed by the revision of all laws that act as an impediment to the social and economic advancement of women. In Lesotho this goal, although not yet reached, is still being actively pursued.

Lesotho has joined the other countries of southern Africa in signing two Protocols to the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Treaty recently, one of which deals with politics, defence and security and the other with cooperation in combating transboundary crime, especially trafficking in narcotics and money-laundering.

A central element of the Protocol establishing an Organ on Politics, Defence and Security is the commitment to work for the protection and promotion of human rights in the region. Our endeavours in this regard are intended to reinforce the United Nations own programmes.

The increase in crime, particularly transnational crime, has a considerable effect on the economies of

many countries. New worldwide strategies are therefore urgently needed for combating this malaise. However, developing countries cannot bear the economic burden of combating transnational crime by themselves. Technical cooperation and assistance activities to develop the criminal-justice capacities of developing countries should therefore be accorded a high priority.

The activities of the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Division — particularly its training courses, seminars and workshops for criminal-justice personnel — are to be commended.

Let me conclude by observing that together we have the capacity to make the United Nations of the next century a veritable instrument for meeting mankind's aspirations for a better world in all respects. In our interdependent world, the United Nations has to become an efficient working forum for searching for universal consensus, a conscious regulator of the integration processes and a vehicle for establishing a stable world order.

We have deep confidence in the potential of the joint efforts of the entire international community in its capability to enter the twenty-first century in an atmosphere of peace, development and joint creative work, and to provide comprehensive security for all, as is called for by the priority interests of humankind.

The meeting rose at 5 p.m.