



General Assembly

Fifty-first Session

29th plenary meeting
Thursday, 10 October 1996, 10 a.m.
New York

Official Records

President: Mr. Razali Ismail (Malaysia)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 9 (continued)

General debate

The President: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Evariste Marson, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Madagascar.

Mr. Marson (Madagascar) (*interpretation from French*): In common with the speakers preceding me, I should like to congratulate you upon your election to the presidency of the fifty-first session of the General Assembly. We see it not only as a recognition of your personal qualities, but also, and above all, the consecration of the distinguished part played by your country in the international arena. Through your person, the honour that derives from your election is shared with the member countries of the Non-Aligned Movement, which gives us particular pride. I would like to assure you of the complete cooperation and full support of the delegation of Madagascar, which it is my privilege to lead.

My congratulations also go to the other members of the General Committee, to whom we wish every success in their work.

Lastly, I would like to take this opportunity to express to your predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral, our warm gratitude for all the efforts that he made during his term as President of the Assembly at its fiftieth

session. I would like to assure him that we followed closely and with interest the activities and contacts which he undertook on behalf of our Organization and in order to further its objectives.

The disappearance of the political and ideological divisions arising from the cold war gave birth to hopes for greater international security, stability, peace and prosperity, so that the international community could henceforth focus its efforts on the establishment of a just, equitable and truly multilateral and non-discriminatory international order, and on the strengthening of cooperation for international development. These hopes, however, not been fulfilled. A feeling of anxiety prevails in the face of the imbalances, insecurity, tensions and contradictions clouding the prospects for peace and economic development. The forces of conflict have grown to dangerous proportions as they have spilled over frontiers, and have assumed various forms such as terrorism, separatism, fundamentalism, intolerance and xenophobia.

Similarly, the interdependent world economy continues to be dominated by uncertainty, imbalances and recession. Negative economic growth rates, persistent imbalances in the commercial and financial fields, increased transitional or structural unemployment, and an absence of coordination in exchange rates and trade policies — these are some of the problems connected with the system of the developed world which have an adverse impact on the developing countries. For in fact the resources allocated to cooperation for development

have fallen, on the pretext that up to now this has achieved nothing for the beneficiary countries, including our countries in Africa, whose priorities, at both national and continental level, have been to relieve absolute, endemic poverty, to eradicate hunger and malnutrition, to overcome disease and illiteracy, and to meet the needs for housing and sanitation.

In this connection, just as we welcomed Habitat II last June in Istanbul, we commend the initiative of the Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to convene the World Food Summit next November in Rome, to sensitize international opinion to the problem of hunger in the world, thereby reviving interest in the subject that has apparently waned.

Thus it is clear that the world today is confronted with urgent social and economic problems which, at the national, regional and international levels, require efforts and the implementation of policies and measures that can provide urgent solutions. The future of world trade, financial and monetary regimes, economic growth and social development, as well as human rights, the environment and population in relation to development, are vital issues that inextricably link the fate and destiny of all countries.

It is therefore comforting to recall the solemn commitment made by the international community on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, on the night of 24 October 1995, to mobilize in the quest for peace, security, development and stability. In order to attain these objectives and successfully discharge the functions assigned to it in the Charter, the United Nations needs to be reformed in order to adjust to a world in constant change.

With respect to the increase in the membership of the Security Council, the principle is accepted in general, if for no other reason than to respond to the increase in the number of United Nations Member States. The proposals put forward in this context are as interesting as they are varied, each invoking praiseworthy objectives, depending on one's viewpoint. Thus the Italian proposal, drawing on the principle established in Article 23 of the Charter, highlights the need to favour the geographical regions that are currently under-represented. This comes close to the concern of countries such as Madagascar, which wholly subscribes to the decision taken by the African summit in July 1996, namely that the Security Council must become more representative in nature and reflect the composition of the Organization in a new international system, so as to correct the geographical imbalance that now characterizes

it and make it a genuine organ for the execution of the General Assembly's resolutions.

The African position gives priority for the time being to an increase in the number of members, both permanent and non-permanent. This restructuring of the Security Council should allocate two new permanent seats to Africa, three to Asia, two to Latin America and the Caribbean, and one to the European and other States.

With respect to the post of Secretary-General of the United Nations, Madagascar associates itself with the chorus of all African countries, through the Declaration of Yaoundé, which reaffirmed Africa's right to a second term in the Secretary-General's post, as has been the practice since the creation of the Organization. Accordingly, Madagascar supports the re-election of Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, one of whose main objectives has been to identify and elaborate concrete proposals for the recovery and development of Africa so as to make the United Nations system's support to the continent as effective as possible. In that context, the support of the international community as a whole is a must.

We take note of the progress achieved in resolving the debt problem and in the implementation of the Naples terms, as well as the recommendations made by the Group of Seven summit convened in Lyon in June 1996. The developing countries, particularly in Africa, certainly need substantial international support, but it is above all the responsibility of our leaders and peoples to make the necessary changes to create a suitable sociopolitical climate for development on a large scale. Thus we have no choice but to continue to work, by ourselves to begin with, to achieve collective self-reliance at the national, regional and continental levels. For its part, Madagascar, which has just completed its economic policy framework document, hopes in the near future to benefit from additional measures from its creditors going beyond the Naples terms to give a fresh impetus to its development.

Indeed, in today's world of multidimensional interdependence, any failure in development can only harm us all, rich and poor alike, since poverty is defined in terms of collective responsibility and the rights of every individual.

In the field of human rights, efforts must be stepped up to translate into real action the 1992 Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, adopted by the General Assembly.

With respect to the challenges arising in the Middle East, Bosnia and Northern Ireland, we note that we are advancing in the right direction. Madagascar is attentively following the recent phases, particularly as regards the peace process between Israel and the Palestinians. Moreover, like all peoples of the world, we reaffirm our wish to see the peaceful reunification of Korea.

In the face of the situation obtaining in the Western Sahara after the Security Council's decision of May 1996, Madagascar remains concerned.

The frequent setbacks experienced by the conventional approach to peacekeeping should persuade us to persevere in our efforts to prevent conflict and give subregional structures responsibility for the maintenance of peace, as advocated in the United Nations Secretary-General's Agenda for Peace, and as applied by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution.

Against this background, the General Assembly should be given appropriate powers to have access to mechanisms for the peaceful settlement of conflicts. The mechanisms for the peaceful settlement of conflicts should be strengthened in the light of the provisions advocated in the Agenda for Peace. When peace is restored, the role of United Nations forces as a buffer in international, civil or ethnic conflicts should also be strengthened. Madagascar intends to participate concretely in peacekeeping operations. Regional structures for conflict resolution, such as those that exist within the United Nations, the Organization of African Unity and the Non-Aligned Movement, should again be strengthened.

For us, the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution has proved its usefulness in Africa in a number of cases, *inter alia*, through the intervention of regional units of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Inter-Governmental Authority on Drought and Development (IGADD), which have operated respectively in sub-Saharan Africa and in the Sahel. Madagascar fully subscribes to this approach, as is borne out by its direct involvement in the mediation process for the settlement of the Comorian conflict in 1995.

The signing of the Pelindaba Text of the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty this year attests to the willingness of the African countries to banish all nuclear weapons from their soil. Madagascar, faithful to its principles, is now initiating the procedure for accession to

this Treaty. It is in this connection that Madagascar has just signed the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Similarly, my country also considers that the extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is an initial response to the major challenges of our time in the area of nuclear proliferation and arms limitation.

In the environmental sphere, after the legitimate concerns expressed by Heads of State and Government at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro, energetic measures must be taken through a common commitment by all countries. There is no need to demonstrate that environmental problems know neither political nor natural boundaries. Nevertheless, at the domestic level, it must be emphasized that people are not always sensitive to the almost irreconcilable concepts of conservation and protection and meeting basic needs (heating, fuel, fisheries resources, etc.).

It is in the light of these considerations that Madagascar has opted for a gradual approach regarding its accession to international environmental conventions. Thus the country has set up a basic framework for environmental policy, termed the Environmental Charter. It has drawn up an environmental programme in three stages phased over a 15-year period; negotiations for multi-donor financing of this programme have just been completed in September in Paris.

With respect to international conventions, Madagascar has ratified the main Conventions, including the Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations International Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer, and the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer. As it implements these various Conventions, Madagascar wishes to enlist the participatory involvement of its people, and thus apply the principle of "Think globally — act locally".

Lastly, one year after the Beijing Conference and one year after the Copenhagen summit, I would not wish to conclude without recalling Madagascar's efforts in the social sphere, as demonstrated by the permanent structures within successive Governments for the benefit of women, children and social problems in general.

At the dawn of the twenty-first century, Madagascar, like all nations on earth, aspires to a world of peace and progress in which the scourges of war, poverty and destruction will be banished forever. The United Nations is the ideal place to build such a world, provided that all peoples and all leaders have the necessary political will and transform into reality all the promises made. That is the Malagasy delegation's ardent hope.

Address by Mr. Alhaji Ahmad Tejan Kabbah, President of the Republic of Sierra Leone

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Sierra Leone.

Mr. Alhaji Ahmad Tejan Kabbah, President of the Republic of Sierra Leone, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations the President of the Republic of Sierra Leone, His Excellency Mr. Alhaji Ahmad Tejan Kabbah, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Kabbah: On behalf of my country and on my own behalf, I extend to you, Sir, our warmest congratulations on your unanimous election as President of the fifty-first session of the Assembly. Your election is indeed a deserving tribute to you personally and to your great country, Malaysia, which, over the years, has been unflagging in its commitment to the principles and ideals of this Organization — the attainment of international peace and justice. I am confident that your rich diplomatic experience, coupled with your fine human qualities, will enable you to guide the deliberations of this session of the Assembly to a successful conclusion. Permit me, Sir, to also take this opportunity to extend my delegation's gratitude to your predecessor for having so ably steered the Assembly's fiftieth session up to this momentous occasion.

I should like at this point to convey our appreciation and gratitude to the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for the dedicated and able manner in which he has guided the work of the Organization. In this regard, we reaffirm our support for the Organization of African Unity's (OAU) declaration on the Secretary-General's re-election. Permit me, Mr. Secretary-General, to convey, through you, to the entire staff of the United Nations our admiration for their loyalty and commitment to the Organization.

I bring also the greetings and good will of the people of Sierra Leone. They have requested me to convey our sincere gratitude to the international community for its support in restoring democracy to our country in March this year. I stand here today as a testimony to the right of that people, who in March of this year elected their Government and chose their destiny. As their leader, I am determined to live up to their high aspirations and expectations. Allow me on this occasion also to pay tribute to our gallant citizens, many of whom lost their lives in the process of restoring democracy and constitutional rule to our country.

Despite this great achievement, my country is still haunted and tormented by the spectre of ongoing civil conflict in our country. The rebel war inflicted severe pain and suffering on my people, who had never before imagined that such a terrible thing could happen to us. Thousands of innocent civilians — men, women and children — lost their lives; others were traumatized, as well as physically or psychologically crippled for life; still others continue to languish as refugees or displaced persons in inhospitable camps.

The Revolutionary United Front (RUF) has no political agenda and no respect for the democratic process. It consistently ignored an invitation to participate in the recent internationally supervised elections in spite of numerous appeals and offers of assistance by the United Nations and other intergovernmental organizations. Instead, it set out to disrupt those elections by unleashing violence against the electorates, killing many and maiming many more. Thanks to our determination to restore democracy in our country, this RUF attempt failed, as did its effort to collude with the military junta and share power in defiance of the democratic process.

The RUF draws its support from abducted villagers and rural schoolchildren, including girls aged seven and older, and maintains their "loyalty" with the use of drugs and terror.

This notwithstanding, my Government entered into peace negotiations in the spirit of reconciliation, and I am pleased to report that the talks have advanced considerably. In March 1996, just after my assumption of office, a ceasefire was agreed upon. In spite of some incidents, it is still generally holding.

On behalf of the people and Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone, I should like to take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks to the Secretary-

General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for the continuing support he has afforded us to in promoting the cause of democratization and the restoration of peace in my country and, in particular, for his assignment of a Special Envoy, whose constructive and enduring role has helped to advance the peace process. I should also like to express gratitude to President Henri Konan-Bédié and the Government and people of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire for the selfless and painstaking efforts they have deployed in hosting and mediating the talks between the Government of Sierra Leone and the RUF.

After protracted and painstaking negotiations that involved extensive Government concessions, including a general amnesty for all RUF members; an undertaking to help set up a trust fund for the RUF to assist it in transforming itself into a political party; the offer of jobs to the RUF leader and his followers, including their absorption into the army, the police and other government institutions, the RUF leader finally indicated his readiness to sign a peace agreement drafted by the host Government, Côte d'Ivoire.

However, the RUF leader now seems to be unwilling to honour his commitment to sign the agreement, manufacturing various excuses to justify his prevarication.

We are concerned that continued intransigence and prevarication by the RUF could precipitate a full-scale resumption of hostilities, given the increasing level of distrust between the two sides. It is therefore time for the international community to act to forestall this potential catastrophe by demanding that the RUF sign the peace agreement without further delay. Failing this, the imposition of sanctions against it should be considered, including the denial of access to the facilities and territories of third countries, and the prospect of its arraignment before a war crimes tribunal for the serious crimes being perpetrated against innocent civilians.

While we persevere in our efforts to bring this conflict to a peaceful end, I owe it to our people to emphasize the need for the continued support of the international community to help us in the task of rehabilitation and reconstruction. We are encouraged by the outcome of the recent round-table conference on Sierra Leone held in Geneva under the auspices of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). We take this opportunity to express our sincere thanks to those countries that have pledged generously to assist in our post-conflict rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts. We, for our part, are determined to rebuild our country with all the energy

and resources we can muster from within our borders. We have already embarked on this process, and we are determined to see it through, no matter what sacrifice is necessary.

Two decades ago, the prevailing perception in this body was that the end of the cold war would dramatically reduce the incidence of regional conflicts and thus enhance international peace and security. Today, however, those conflicts appear to have been replaced by civil wars and ethnic strife, which now pose the greatest challenge to the peacekeeping and peacemaking capacities of the United Nations.

We have witnessed mass horrors in Rwanda and Burundi, and intense internal strife in Somalia, Liberia and, to a lesser extent, in my own country. Bosnia and Herzegovina, Chechnya and the occupied Palestinian territories all have continued to engage the attention of the international community. We call upon the leaders and actors in those conflicts to renounce violence and to embark on sincere and serious negotiations with a view to finding peaceful solutions. Agreements reached should be honoured and respected. The innocent, who are all too often the victims of such conflicts, cry out for peaceful resolution.

As regards the question of the peaceful resolution of conflicts, of particular concern to my country is the situation in Liberia. Consensus has once again emerged from the political dialogue between the various factions, giving rise to renewed hopes of a durable peace for that devastated country and its people. Full implementation of the conditions embodied in the new implementation plan of the Abuja Agreement, concluded at the recent Economic Community of West African States Committee of Nine summit held in Abuja, Federal Republic of Nigeria, would provide real hope for Liberia. We remain confident that this time around, those responsible for the Liberians' pain and suffering will find the courage and patriotism to spare their fellow citizens further violence and bloodshed. Enough is enough. The defenceless people of Liberia, especially innocent children, men and women, have a right to freedom from violence; they have a right to life.

The situation in the Great Lakes region of Africa is also cause for serious concern. As we watch the cautious return of Rwandan refugees, we hope and pray that the wounds inflicted by ethnic strife will heal on the platform of national reconciliation. The ongoing crisis in Burundi also poses a challenge to the international community. In

the light of my own country's recent history, we cannot condone the seizure of power by the military from a constitutionally elected Government. We call on all concerned not to relent in their search for a long-term solution to the horrendous crisis. Looking at the broader picture of tackling such difficulties, we hope that others will support the efforts of the Organization of African Unity to strengthen its Mechanism for the prevention and resolution of conflicts.

Closely linked to the issue of peace is that of the protection of human rights. We reaffirm our faith in justice and in the dignity and worth of the human person. That is why Sierra Leone fully supports the work of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. We commend the work of the Preparatory Committee for its current efforts aimed at preparing the text of a statute for an international criminal court, which will have an important role in the area of massive human rights violations, which, notwithstanding the sad lessons of history, continue today in several parts of the world.

While political, regional and ethnic conflicts, civil wars and the menace of armaments — both nuclear and conventional — are a major concern, Sierra Leone believes that the greatest threat to international peace and security today lies in poverty and in economic and social deprivation. The nature and complexity of the economic and social problems that beset Africa are all too familiar to us. The majority of African countries, including Sierra Leone, continue to face a myriad of economic and structural challenges. Africa has the largest number of least developed countries and the lowest average per capita income in the developing world. In fact, Africa's overall living standards and socio-economic conditions have deteriorated considerably since the beginning of this decade. Most African countries have encountered numerous difficulties over the years in their effort to mobilize and deploy financial and human resources for economic development. The levels of investment have not been encouraging; nor have the levels of agricultural and mineral outputs, due in large part to drought, economic disincentives, political manipulation and an unfavourable international environment. In many cases, aided and abetted by ruthless arms merchants, many of us continue to engage in senseless fratricidal conflicts and the wanton destruction of the development infrastructure.

We are also obliged to note that budgetary constraints faced by various developed countries, clarification of foreign aid objectives, revised conditions governing the granting of assistance, and the heightened competition

among various regions for aid packages constitute a serious challenge for developing countries such as mine. The ubiquitous debt burden and the debt-servicing levels in no way help the situation, as they continue to be a major stumbling block on the path of African economic recovery and sustainable growth. Overseas development assistance and resource flows have dwindled to a level that gives us cause for concern. The downward trend in export commodity prices and the agricultural policies of some of the industrialized nations have had a negative impact on Africa's trade in these commodities, the main source of income for socio-economic development. In this connection, the debt burden that continues to hang over us has conspired to frustrate our efforts at economic recovery and development.

Sierra Leone strongly believes that the urgent implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, adopted by the Assembly on 18 December 1991, is the best hope yet for setting Africa on the road to positive sustainable economic development. We appreciate the fact that the basic tenets of the New Agenda are grounded on the principles of shared responsibility and global partnership between Africa and the rest of the international community.

Virtually all Member States of the first and second worlds represented in the Assembly have experienced, at one time or another, the same or similar problems in their struggle for national unity and economic prosperity; we read about them in the cold pages of history. Unfortunately for us Africans, our economic and other problems — teething problems, if I may say so — are transmitted live, instantly, by satellite to television sets across the globe.

Looking at current economic, social and political conditions on our continent, including the atrocities meted out to our own kith and kin, one is inclined to lose hope in the ability of Africa to achieve sustainable development.

But the thrust of my message today is simple: I appeal to the international community not to abandon Africa. Even though we may be on our knees in anguish, I firmly believe that there is hope for Africa, that Africa and its people have the ability and capacity to overcome natural and self-inflicted constraints and to achieve political stability as well as reasonable economic prosperity. We have recently witnessed many changes on the continent that lend credence to Africa's genuine

commitment to the New Agenda for Africa and to other plans for economic and political stability. Hence, there is still hope for Africa. My presence here is symbolic of that hope. In spite of a rebel war that still hangs over my country, and in spite of attempts to frustrate the will of the people to choose their destiny freely and in a democratic manner, Sierra Leoneans opted for democracy. We are determined to achieve genuine peace as well as the objectives we have set for ourselves, which are commensurate with the enormous sacrifices our people have made.

I am confident, therefore, that the political dialogue to ensure the advent of good governance, which has begun in earnest in most countries throughout the continent, will continue. Given the proper chance to grow, our new and emerging democracies will gradually bear fruit, and our distressed nations will once again be guided by lofty democratic ideals in an environment of peace, security and stability. African democracy will eventually be the order of the day. For these gains to be fully realized, it is therefore imperative that the international community continue to play a catalytic role in Africa's development.

In virtually every policy statement, every address and every current discussion about the United Nations there is some reference to reform in our Organization. We are encouraged by the work of various intergovernmental bodies to develop constructive ideas for reform. However, reform should not be seen only in terms of the so-called bloated bureaucracy of the Secretariat, to be used as a scapegoat for not meeting our obligations towards the Organization.

In the view of the Government of Sierra Leone, we need a systemic reform; a reform of the political decision-making process in the Organization; a reform of some of the archaic methods and practices in the institutions that compose the United Nations system. Let us begin by transforming, indeed transferring, the principles and concepts of democratic governance, empowerment, power-sharing, decentralization and pluralism that we espouse for nation States to the international community at large. In this regard, Africa should be entitled to play its role in the Security Council, the primary decision-making organ of this Organization, particularly in relation to international peace and stability.

In pursuit of this objective, we would like to recall and support the position expressed by the Non-Aligned Movement, that is, if there is no agreement on other categories of membership, expansion should take place, for

the time being, only in the non-permanent category. I should like to note in this regard that the proposal of Italy, among others, deserves careful consideration, as it aims at increasing the participation of all Member States in the Council, in particular medium-sized and small countries, and it would improve its representative and democratic character.

For our part, we affirm our faith in the United Nations, which, in spite of its defects, remains the greatest hope for the maintenance of international peace and security, and for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples in our interdependent world.

Who needs the United Nations? First, it is an important institution. Furthermore, it is an effective international mechanism when used properly. Some of us represented in the Assembly may need it more than others, but we all do, in one way or another.

Let us therefore rededicate ourselves to its principles and objectives, and, in the words of the Charter, make it at least

“a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations in the attainment of these common ends”.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Sierra Leone for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Alhaji Ahmad Tejan Kabbah, President of the Republic of Sierra Leone, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by The Right Honourable Sibusiso Barnabas Dlamini, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Swaziland

The President: The Assembly will now hear a statement by the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Swaziland.

The Right Honourable Sibusiso Barnabas Dlamini, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Swaziland, was escorted to the rostrum.

The President: I have great pleasure in welcoming the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Swaziland, The Right Honourable Sibusiso Barnabas Dlamini, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Dlamini (Swaziland): I bring with me from the Kingdom of Swaziland the greetings and good wishes of His Majesty King Mswati III, Her Majesty the Indlovukazi and Queen Mother, the Government and the whole Swazi nation to our friends and fellow Members here at the United Nations.

On behalf of the Kingdom of Swaziland, may I congratulate you most sincerely, Sir, on your election to the presidency of this fifty-first session of the General Assembly. We are confident that the wisdom, experience and diplomatic skills you bring to this office will ensure success in the important business before us.

Swaziland would also like to congratulate your predecessor, Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral, who presided with such skill over the historic fiftieth session.

I should also like to record the deep gratitude of the Swazi nation to our Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, and to the staff of the Secretariat for their untiring efforts in meeting the many challenges that face our Organization as we prepare to enter a new millennium.

One year ago, His Majesty King Mswati III joined other leaders from around the world to celebrate the first 50 years of achievement of the United Nations, to set out a vision for the future and to reaffirm the commitment of the Kingdom of Swaziland to the principles set out in our Organization's founding Charter.

Swaziland recognizes the vital role the Organization has played throughout its history, and we remain convinced that the United Nations represents humankind's best hope of providing global leadership and guidance towards achieving the conditions of universal peace and security that will allow equitable and sustainable development for all our peoples.

Last year's occasion was seen by many as an opportunity to review the internal mechanisms of our Organization and to call for greater efficiency, accountability and representation in all areas of its work.

Swaziland is therefore encouraged by the progress being made by the various working groups established by the General Assembly, in particular progress towards the reform of the Secretariat and Security Council. We will continue to support all initiatives that bring about a more efficient and cost-effective Organization.

As the Organization's membership has increased over the years, so has the scope of its operations and responsibilities. It is an unfortunate fact that our will to face these new challenges has not been met by a corresponding desire to pay for the means to overcome them. We are faced with a stark choice between whether to accept new responsibilities and the bill they attract, or admit that we lack the financial commitment to meet them.

The Kingdom of Swaziland has always believed in the principle of meeting our financial responsibilities in full and on time. We fully endorse the Secretary-General's call to our fellow Members to do likewise, so that the United Nations can have the resources at its disposal to perform the tasks that we expect of it.

The Kingdom of Swaziland has been most encouraged by recent developments towards the eventual elimination of weapons of mass destruction. The negotiations leading up to and the signing of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty by an overwhelming majority brings great credit to our Organization and to those whose hard work made it possible.

While we recognize and are deeply grateful for the humanitarian assistance provided to Africa by the United Nations, we believe that the Organization needs to do more to strike at the causes of the hardship suffered by so many Africans who find themselves caught up in the horror of war.

One important issue concerns the flow of weapons into Africa from many other parts of the world. It is a simple fact in today's world that arms, ammunition and armaments are too easily accessible to those with the means to procure them. The duration of conflict situations can be limited by the non-availability of the weapons of war.

It has been suggested that the first action of a truly caring world in response to a conflict situation should be to cut off the supply of arms to all involved, and that the final responsibility of a caring world towards a country that has endured conflict is the clearance of the last landmine.

This is a lesson we learned very late in recent disasters such as the Bosnian crisis and in Rwanda. We have clearly not learned from it in other situations around the world. Let us hope that the global community

represented here can move faster in future to impose limitations on man's ability to harm his fellow man.

We in Africa recognize the need to be prepared for immediate reaction to our continent's problems and are taking the necessary steps to abide by the principle of "African solutions to Africa's problems".

The example of Burundi shows our continent's desire to heed the warning signs and to ward off potential disasters before they happen.

The Kingdom of Swaziland commends the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and those individual countries whose diplomacy and actions have prevented the situation from spiralling out of control. The Organization of African Unity has also been at the forefront in attempting to resolve crisis situations in Rwanda, Somalia, Sudan and Liberia.

We join the rest of the world in applauding these efforts, and we continue to offer our encouragement and support in bringing about an end to the suffering of those involved. The OAU represents the hope of all Africans for unity, peace and development, and deserves to be supported strongly by the rest of the world.

On a subregional basis, and in the field of economic and trade cooperation, the Kingdom of Swaziland is a member of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa.

SADC has recently expanded its mandate to include a new Organ on Politics, Defence and Security. This is an attempt to provide a mechanism by which member States can call for advice and support from other members in the event of national and international issues that might threaten the stability of the whole subregion.

The new organ is founded on the principle of the recognition of the sovereignty of independent States and is intended precisely to identify potential problems, in whatever context, and to look for solutions to persistent concerns in our area. The organ provides an example of our subregion's commitment to peace and stability within and among our member States as essential conditions for the development of our separate nations. It deserves the support and encouragement of the rest of the world.

The Kingdom of Swaziland has been heartened by the various initiatives of the United Nations towards an improvement in global socio-economic conditions.

The establishment of an international criminal court is welcomed by Swaziland as a necessary extension of justice in cases where national jurisdiction does not apply. This step relies for its success on the political will of all States and requires the widest possible representation of Members in its operation. Similarly, the Kingdom of Swaziland welcomes the move by the United Nations to address the increasing threat posed to civil society by organized crime and money-laundering.

Of particular danger to Swaziland in this regard is the increase in traffic across our borders and abuse among our people of illegal drugs and related substances. This is a relatively new and alarming phenomenon for our Kingdom and undermines our efforts to promote national development. We therefore welcome the report of the Secretary-General on promoting international cooperation in the fight against the illegal drug trade, and we are appreciative of the high priority this subject attracts in the relevant agencies of the Organization.

This effort has been matched by a similar initiative within our own SADC organization to encourage cross-border cooperation among our security personnel and to agree on measures among the Member States to contain this potentially devastating problem.

It has been acknowledged that the continent of Africa presents particular challenges in the quest for sustainable development and a decent standard of living for all its peoples.

With this in mind, the Kingdom of Swaziland gave an enthusiastic welcome to the Secretary-General's initiative on the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s. It was hoped that the Agenda would provide fresh impetus for change and for the good of the people of Africa, but for many reasons this remains an elusive dream. While social and economic conditions in many areas of the continent continue to decline, we are comforted by the fact that efforts are being made to identify the reasons why so many commitments continue to remain on paper and why some are implemented, but slowly.

Swaziland echoes the call from all African brothers and sisters for real commitment to the New Agenda for the Development of Africa so that future generations of

Africans will not be locked into the same spiral of despair that many people on our continent find themselves in.

It is to avoid being caught in this very situation that the Kingdom of Swaziland has always worked hard to ensure that our people are at the centre of all our national development efforts. To this end the Kingdom frequently consults with all its people on all the most important development issues. Each and every Swazi has a voice and is given the opportunity to express his or her views on the matters that affect them.

In recent times we have consulted in this way with the nation on our political direction and our economic priorities. Currently we are addressing ourselves to a review of our Constitution.

A constitutional review committee has been established, representing the widest range of views, which will now consult with the nation and gather the people's wishes on the way they would like to see their country managed. All will be free to contribute, and we will abide by the views of the majority. The end result will be the Kingdom's defining document, and it will, in a very real sense, be the people's Constitution. This current consultation exercise is the latest example of our nation's adherence to the principle of rule through consensus, and it is one that has served us well throughout our history.

In a world where the definition of such concepts as human rights and democracy can vary so greatly and is so dependent on timing and circumstances, the Kingdom of Swaziland has had a consistent vision of what is really required of its rulers by its people: to provide the freedom and opportunity for all Swazis to offer an opinion on the great matters of the day and for our leaders to be bound by the wishes of the majority. We owe our survival as a nation to this principle, and we will continue to abide by it for as long as it suits us.

For the past three years the Kingdom of Swaziland has given its support to efforts by the Republic of China on Taiwan to have its case presented to the General Assembly. As the world concentrates its attention on the great social challenges facing us all today, we must surely acknowledge the need to engage all peoples of the world in a truly global effort to overcome them. Indeed, the Charter speaks of the requirement for universality in our Organization so that all may feel represented here.

The 23 million people of the Republic of China on Taiwan believe they can contribute significantly to this

effort and have already shown that they are willing to do so in many areas of expertise, including poverty alleviation, private enterprise development and humanitarian assistance. Many countries have acknowledged this will on the part of the Government and the people of the Republic of China on Taiwan, and the recent political developments in Taiwan have encouraged many others to support our call.

We are positive that a lasting solution can be found to resolve this question. Hence, we support the idea of the General Assembly establishing an ad hoc committee to address the question of the readmittance of the Republic of China on Taiwan into the United Nations.

The Kingdom of Swaziland continues to place its confidence in the United Nations and in the principles on which it was founded. We remain deeply grateful for the assistance we have received over the years from its agencies, and we look forward to many more years of cooperation and support.

For 51 years, and despite the many obstacles in its path, the United Nations has presented to successive generations the only chance for a united, global approach to the world's problems. We are reassured by the initiatives for reform in the Organization and look forward to a new dynamism and efficiency in its operations.

I am charged by His Majesty King Mswati III, by Her Majesty the Indlovukazi, the Queen Mother, and by the Government and the people of the Kingdom of Swaziland, with proclaiming the renewal of our commitment to the founding Charter of the Organization. We ask for Almighty God's blessing on its leaders and those who work here, to give them the wisdom and direction they need to carry out their vital tasks on behalf of all humankind.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Swaziland for his statement.

*The Right Honourable Sibusiso Barnabas Dlamini,
Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Swaziland, was
escorted from the rostrum.*

**Address by The Honourable Navinchandra Ramgoolam,
Prime Minister of the Republic of Mauritius**

The President: The Assembly will now hear a statement by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Mauritius.

The Honourable Navinchandra Ramgoolam, Prime Minister of the Republic of Mauritius, was escorted to the rostrum.

The President: I have great pleasure in welcoming the Prime Minister of the Republic of Mauritius and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Ramgoolam (Mauritius): I join all those who have gone before me in congratulating you, Sir, on behalf of Mauritius, on your accession to the office of President of the General Assembly at its fifty-first session. I also thank Mr. Freitas do Amaral of Portugal for his skilful stewardship of the fiftieth session.

Hearing and reading the speeches of world leaders to this Assembly, I am struck by the extraordinary degree of unanimity between them — how much we seem to agree in principle but how little on the right course of action; on the necessity of diplomacy and discussion as the primary path to peace; on the necessity of according to every man, woman and child the fundamental rights and freedoms which this Organization has, over the years, done so much to establish; on the necessity of providing equal opportunities for men, women and children in all our societies; on the necessity of protecting the environment; and on the need to ensure that mankind moves forward together on the path of development.

Mr. Wilmot (Ghana), Vice-President, took the Chair.

In all these noble and commendable aims we are united. However, we often seem to suffer from a paralysis when it comes to actual implementation of these good intentions.

This Organization was the response of the human race to the catastrophic experiences of two world wars and to scientific discoveries and inventions which confronted us with unprecedented choices. It was an expression of faith in the power of human beings to be rational in the face of these choices and to choose the paths of peace and progress instead of war and destruction.

But sometimes its voice has seemed very faint and far off in the midst of the terrible troubles that have afflicted us since then. Some have begun to mutter of the ineffectiveness of the institution and to complain of the cost. I am convinced that those criticisms do not begin to express the whole truth about the work that is done by this Organization. We are embarked upon a great and necessary experiment, and that is why the work of the Secretary-General is so important. Here I should like to pay tribute to Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, whose contribution has been so valuable in recent years. It is particularly appropriate that this great office should be filled, as we move into the next millennium, by a representative of Africa, for Africa remains the great intransigent challenge which the world has scarcely yet begun to face. Only through the renewed and concerted determination of this Organization and the vision of cooperation and mutual responsibility which it represents is there any hope of successfully meeting the extraordinary difficulties which the next century will bring.

Decade after decade, many of the nations of Africa have seen their efforts at development frustrated by natural and man-made disasters, poor governance and a hostile international environment. Foreign aid has not had the desired impact on the progress of these countries, and the poorer nations have accumulated huge and unmanageable debt which they labour, with inadequate tools, to support.

As the Assembly knows, of the 36 poorest countries in the world, as classified by the United Nations Development Programme in the human development index, 29 are in Africa. The majority of them have per capita incomes lower than they were 20 years ago. The countries of sub-Saharan Africa last year attracted only 3 per cent of the foreign direct investment into the developing world, compared to 20 per cent for Latin America and the Caribbean and 59 per cent for East Asia and the Pacific region. Life expectancy is placed at 50.9 years, the lowest among developing countries.

At the same time, a new and more demanding international economic order is emerging, one in which Africa is beginning to feel overwhelmed and isolated from the mainstream of world economic development. If some of its nations have not yet caught up with the industrial revolution, what hope have they, unaided, of reaching the heights of the technological and information revolutions which are sweeping the developed countries of the world towards new horizons.

If we are to bring Africa into the general march of the economies of the world towards progress and prosperity, we must begin, at the highest level, to coordinate and to chart a course for Africa to join in. Piecemeal aid and occasional intervention on the occasion of awesome disasters will not be enough.

Therefore, we welcome the Group of Seven's commitment in Lyon to a partnership for development and to the elimination of trade barriers to exports from developing countries. These barriers must come down. But we question whether this and private investment alone will be sufficient. Swift and dramatic debt relief for countries in need of it is essential. We welcome the lead provided by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in this regard, but it must be followed by decisive and urgent action. Measures should also be designed to promote the growth of real democracy and good governance, for economic prosperity must go hand in hand with democracy and the rule of law. It may seem temporarily otherwise. It may seem that the creation of wealth can, for a while, be separated from the yearning of the people and of individuals to be free, but sooner or later the force of the aspirations which prosperity brings will burst forth, as the waters burst from the dam.

Surely we must look with dismay at many areas of our world in which human rights are discounted or denied. A case in point is Myanmar, where a democratic vote, held in 1990, has been defeated and denied by force, and where the house of the elected leader of the people is kept under constant surveillance and surrounded by soldiers.

My Government will continue to support the cause of democracy and human rights in Africa and wherever in the world such support is required. Mauritius will later this month host the twentieth session of the African Commission of Human and People's Rights, which commemorates the tenth anniversary of its African Charter. This session of the Commission will undertake, with the participation of non-governmental organizations and other interested elements of civil society, an assessment and reevaluation of the implementation of the Charter and prepare a five-year plan of action which we are confident will greatly help strengthen and improve the situation of human rights in our continent.

My country, whose only resources are the stability of its democracy and the enterprising spirit of its people, comprises many races, cultures and religions. We look to Europe, Africa, the Far East and the Indian subcontinent for our cultural inheritance. Our people cross many divides.

Therefore, we are able to witness and sense the impact of the rapid development of the modern world upon these different cultures and peoples more quickly, because we are a part of them. And I can tell the Assembly that what we see gives us cause for concern.

As the old world order passes and a new one replaces it, we are going through a period of transition fraught with pitfalls and dangers. We cannot but be dismayed at the number of countries that are falling prey to the ancient and deadly sirens of ethnicity and narrow nationalism that appeal to man's baser instincts of intolerance and xenophobic fear. Our continent of Africa seems particularly affected. Somalia and Liberia seem to descend endlessly into chaos, while Burundi threatens to blow up again.

We are concerned by recent indications that parties to the Middle East peace process may be giving in to the temptation of pandering to extremist fringes. We owe peace to this Holy Land and to the generations to come. We owe it to the memory of two statesmen who laid down their lives to this cause. The resolute pursuit of peace is the only way to defeat the assassins, those who felled President Sadat and Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin.

In the Commonwealth family of nations to which we belong, the uniqueness of which is its very diversity, a number of Member States are blighted by this affliction.

Mauritius fervently hopes that the sister island of Fiji will soon be able to resume its rightful place in the comity of nations by correcting the inequities written into that nation's constitution in a moment of tension, when racist passions were unbridled. We would be pleased to share with the people of Fiji our own constitutional experience of a pluricultural society.

In my own country, only 10 months ago in a free and democratic election, the people voted overwhelmingly for change. The Government has pledged to render our democratic process even more transparent and unequivocal. The numerous strategies and policy objectives enunciated by the new Government at the beginning of the current legislature, earlier this year, aim precisely at confronting squarely the problems that we face on all the issues that I have broached. Our overriding objective will be to ultimately make the economy work for the people and not the people work for the economy.

While a Government's overall objective is to improve the well-being of the people, sound economic

policies alone will not make our countries prosper. In order to create the right environment for the economy to flourish there must be good governance. This is also a moral imperative. The history of mankind inevitably moves in the direction of greater freedom, more transparency, wider accountability in all sectors of public life and greater access to information held by public agencies relating to citizens.

My Government is committed to a continuing process of democratization which will reinforce our institutions by creating wider confidence in them. We are convinced that this will create a climate more conducive to investment and will enhance the creative and entrepreneurial spirit of our people.

While the pursuit of happiness has perforce to be individual and private, it cannot be to the detriment of the collective good. The protection of the environment is one endeavour that has to be undertaken collectively at the national as well as the global level. Only if mankind as a whole takes care to ensure the integrity of our planet can we envisage a future for generations yet to be born. It is up to us to ensure the viability and ecological health of the planet we shall bequeath to those who come after us. My Government will pursue on its own national territory a vigorous policy of conservation and rehabilitation of natural resources. Our actions at the national level will be matched by our contributions at the international and regional levels, in concert with all our partners, to advance on these same issues.

Through our membership in regional and subregional organizations, we are undertaking, in close partnership with neighbouring countries, to advance and promote the same objectives that I have defined. Only one year after joining the Southern African Development Community (SADC), Mauritius has become an active member, putting its skills and knowledge in sectors where it has acquired valuable experience at the service of fellow members.

Mauritius informed this Assembly last year that it had initiated a process for the creation of a regional cooperation platform in the Indian Ocean region. Indeed, the Indian Ocean region was the only one in the world which did not have such a platform to discuss the economic and social development policies of its countries in a coordinated manner. I am pleased to inform the Assembly this year that the Mauritius Indian Ocean Rim Initiative has gathered considerable momentum. The Initiative, which started with only seven countries, has doubled its membership to 14 countries. A charter has been drawn up to provide the relevant framework within which to develop and implement

regional cooperation programmes. In addition, in contrast with some existing regional blocs, it has adopted an outward-looking approach, so as to be compatible with the multilateral system. The association has the distinguishing feature of having adopted a tripartite approach comprising government, the private sector and the academic community, to ensure as wide a consensus as possible.

Mauritius is convening a ministerial meeting in the first week of March 1997 to give political blessing to the Indian Ocean rim association for regional cooperation. The Indian Ocean region can now serenely look forward to playing its role, as a serious regional partner in the international arena, in the effort to uplift the standard of living of the peoples of the region. I am sure that the international community will lend its full support to this nascent regional grouping, in line with the often repeated appeal for South-South cooperation.

We have witnessed in recent years the growing significance of regional accords and blocs in determining and fashioning the orientation of multilateral financial and trading systems and institutions. We believe that regionalization is a necessary step towards a more liberal global environment inasmuch as it allows the less endowed countries and regions with specificities of their own to experiment and to test the political, economic and social reforms of their programmes. A similar approach has been adopted by the more advanced countries and regions, as evidenced by the emergence of the North American Free Trade Agreement and the consolidation of existing groupings, such as the European Union and the Association of South-East Asian Nations, to mention just a couple of them.

In addition, we have witnessed a new interpretation of the concept of regional blocs as purely geographical units that make use of their own individual characteristics to experiment, and to test political, economic and social reforms programmes within a smaller geographical entity before challenges are confronted on a worldwide scale.

Regionalization is increasingly being viewed by aid donors and international financial institutions as a means to promote overall economic development and to create an enabling environment that will attract foreign direct investment in specific regions. This process has also changed the way in which international businesses and multinational corporations are restructuring their activities. Improvements in telecommunications facilities, the adoption of advanced technology for the transmission of

information in real time and the use of more rapid and reliable modes of transportation have all contributed to giving regionalization a new dimension in political and economic issues. Hence, the prospects for ensuring a more balanced global development process are more real and attainable.

The decades-old partnership between African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) States and the European Union through the Lomé Conventions, the fourth of which will come to an end in the year 2000, has served as an excellent instrument for trading agreements between the African, Asian, Pacific and Caribbean countries and the European Union. This instrument has to a very large extent helped in consolidating the links between the ACP States and the European Union. It has permitted the growth of trade, economic, political, social and cultural development, for both developed and underdeveloped countries. However, the successor agreement to Lomé IV will have to take into account the changing pattern in world trade and the acquired benefits under the Lomé Conventions, and in this context we shall wait for the publication of the green book on the subject commissioned by the European Union.

The Sugar Protocol, which provides for guaranteed prices and quotas for the ACP sugar-producing countries, has been instrumental to a large extent in the socio-economic development of Mauritius.

While I have addressed development issues mainly, we should not overlook the crucial question of disarmament. The principled stand of Mauritius in the field of disarmament has always been to advocate a world free of nuclear weapons as well as chemical and other weapons of mass destruction. On the question of nuclear weapons, we once again reaffirm our total commitment to nuclear disarmament, and hope that the world community will make all efforts to secure unanimity around the views expressed in this Assembly by Member States that have some difficulties with some treaty provisions. Furthermore, with regard particularly to the position of Mauritius on the recent decision on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, we stood by the principle that we have always applied to other issues in the past, namely that of fairness and non-discrimination against any party. It is therefore imperative that we give renewed momentum to the disarmament process in general, and address the flaws of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty urgently.

In order to meet the challenges of the next century, we believe that it is urgently necessary to pursue the reform of the United Nations. It is vital that the Security Council

should be enlarged and made more representative and balanced among its permanent members, and should include developing countries such as India. And it is equally imperative that the Working Groups of the General Assembly should complete their task of producing an effective and credible programme for reform. It seems to us self-evident that, after 50 years, some revision and redesign is necessary. We think, with Shakespeare,

“When we mean to build,
We first survey the plot, then draw the model;
And when we see the figure of the house,
Then we must rate the cost of the erection;
Which if we find outweighs ability,
What do we then but draw anew the model
In fewer offices...?” (*King Henry IV, Part 2, Act I, Scene 3*)

Some have come to this Assembly in order to complain that the world and the United Nations are not doing enough. But we should inquire of ourselves first: What are we doing to advance or to hinder these causes upon which, in principle, there is such remarkable agreement?

After this overview of the world situation, allow me to speak of a matter of national interest to us. One of the fundamental principles to which we all subscribe is that of respect for the sovereignty of Member States. Interference in the internal affairs of States and disregard for their national sovereignty has often been a source of tension and conflict. Now that the cold war is behind us and we move towards ever greater economic, commercial and cultural integration, we should be able to find amicable answers to questions of sovereignty. Mauritius has sovereignty disputes regarding the Chagos Archipelago and Tromelin Island with two countries with which we have historically close and friendly ties. These differences were referred to as friendly disputes by Sir Seewoosagar Ramgoolam, architect of our independence and father our nation. We hope to resolve these differences through quiet diplomacy and dialogue.

The cold war has died, but the need for peace and security lives on. The state of affairs in the world today challenges us but must not daunt us. Against this background, the principle of meliorism — that the world may be made better by human effort — should prevail in our actions. Those who have the means and capabilities to help should not waver or shy away at the call of the United Nations.

These are some of the ideas that I wanted to share today. It is my hope that we will all join in a global partnership for the achievement of a better and stronger United Nations at the service of the peoples in whose name we stand here.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of the Republic of Mauritius for the statement he has just made.

The Honourable Navinchandra Ramgoolam, Prime Minister of the Republic of Mauritius, was escorted from the rostrum.

The Acting President: I call next on His Excellency Mr. Ugyen Tshering, Chairman of the Delegation of Bhutan.

Mr. Tshering (Bhutan): I have the honour to convey to the President and all the members the warm greetings and good wishes of His Majesty Jigme Singye Wangchuck, King of Bhutan, for the success of the fifty-first session of the United Nations General Assembly.

We congratulate Ambassador Razali on his unanimous election as President of the fifty-first session of the General Assembly. We are happy that a close friend of Bhutan is presiding over our deliberations. We are fully aware of his wide experience and deep interest in the United Nations. He is not only an outspoken critic of the shortcomings of the United Nations but is also one of its greatest supporters, and we look to this session with high expectations.

I would like to express our deepest appreciation to His Excellency Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral for the exemplary manner in which he conducted the Special Commemorative Meeting of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations and the fiftieth session of the General Assembly. I am also grateful for the privilege of having had the opportunity to serve in his Bureau.

We would also like to take this opportunity to pay a special tribute to the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for his leadership in steering the United Nations through a period of many challenges and changes.

Twenty-five years ago, on 21 September 1971, Bhutan became a Member of the United Nations. That day saw the fulfilment of a long-cherished dream and was a historic occasion on which the people of Bhutan joined hands with the international community. We have since taken great pride in our membership of the world body and have made

great strides. Bhutan has stepped forward to take an active role by seeking membership in all major United Nations and other international bodies including the Bretton Woods institutions. Our membership of the United Nations has provided us with the opportunity to participate in all international discussions of importance. Our participation, which we consider both a privilege and an obligation, has always been guided by a positive attitude, seeking to contribute constructively and fairly.

On the part of the international community, Bhutan has received an outpouring of goodwill and friendship. The United Nations and its agencies have come to our assistance with enthusiasm and dedication. Every sector in Bhutan has received the benefit of United Nations assistance, and the lives of the people of Bhutan have greatly improved. Today, the development of Bhutan rests in the hands of young Bhutanese, many of whom were trained through United Nations assistance. I take this opportunity to put on record the heartfelt gratitude of the people of Bhutan to the United Nations and international institutions, in particular the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Capital Development Fund, the International Fund for Agricultural Development, the World Food Programme, the United Nations Volunteers programme, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the World Health Organization, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the World Bank and the African Development Bank, many of which have been working constructively in Bhutan for the last 25 years.

Bhutan takes the opportunity of the twenty-fifth anniversary of our membership to rededicate ourselves to the principles of the United Nations and its Charter. As we rededicate ourselves to the United Nations and express our support and gratitude, we are conscious of the fact that the United Nations is at a crossroads, and that there is a struggle for the heart and soul of the Organization. The world has changed, and the United Nations too must change to meet the new realities.

Today we would like to confine our remarks to a few areas which we feel need to be addressed in the process of reform and in preparing the United Nations for the next century.

The increase in membership from the original 51 Members to the current 185 is the clearest indication that the United Nations is truly a global body. The representation and participation of all United Nations

Members in the General Assembly give true meaning and legitimacy to the United Nations, yet increasingly the General Assembly has little influence in the work of the United Nations. The role of the Assembly must be enhanced. It must become the centre of the United Nations and the source of both its moral and real authority. In order to do this, the General Assembly must change its own working methods, and its debates and agenda must be made more meaningful. It must become the point from which all United Nations policies emanate. The General Assembly's relations with other principal organs and bodies of the United Nations must be streamlined and strengthened.

The structure of other principal organs such as the Economic and Social Council must also be reviewed. In many of the principal organs, subsidiary bodies and commissions have taken a more prominent role than the organs themselves. While we agree that the more detailed work of implementing the technical aspects must be devolved to commissions and subsidiary bodies, policies must be made by the principal organs themselves. Many here will agree that the subsidiary bodies, committees, groups, and so forth, are too numerous to keep track of, let alone participate in. All United Nations bodies must finally be made accountable to the General Assembly. Unless this linkage is strengthened, many Members will be excluded from the activities of the United Nations. For many smaller Members, the possibility of being elected to and participating in many United Nations bodies is limited. Therefore, the General Assembly is of paramount importance for enhancing the participation and role of Member countries.

In the area of peace and security, there is increasing concern that the United Nations is unable to maintain peace and provide security, particularly for its smaller and more vulnerable Members. This view seems to persist despite a number of successful interventions by the United Nations. There is growing frustration that the Security Council, the only body of the United Nations with any real authority, is unable to respond to the challenges posed by the present conflicts, and that the Security Council is primarily driven by the views of its major members. The need for reform and expansion is more and more keenly felt. In our view, there must be an increase in the number of both permanent and non-permanent members. Developing countries and deserving countries from all regions must be included in the ranks of permanent members. Using the objective criteria of equitable distribution, the ability to contribute to the work of the United Nations and the maintenance of international peace and security, Bhutan believes that India

and Japan qualify for permanent membership of the Security Council.

Expansion alone is not sufficient. The decision-making process of the Security Council, its relations with the General Assembly, and other powers such as the veto and the Council's virtual hold over the appointment of judges of the International Court of Justice and other important positions in the United Nations, must be reviewed.

Progress towards a world free of tension can only be made with disarmament that includes all types of weapons. While various steps have been taken towards easing the nuclear threat, no significant progress towards the goal of the complete elimination of all nuclear weapons has been made. We must not lose sight of the primary objective of the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. The disarmament dialogue must include all parties and address the genuine concerns of every Member State.

A brisk international business in conventional arms continues to pose a threat to peace and security. As long as there is an unlimited supply of arms, their use in the settlement of disputes will continue. We must expand our initiatives at the United Nations to control the global arms trade. Bhutan supports the steps taken towards the elimination of chemical and biological weapons. The United Nations Register of Conventional Arms is a useful step. Efforts must also be redoubled to bring about a moratorium on the manufacture, sale and deployment of anti-personnel landmines, with the objective of eliminating this weapon which kills indiscriminately.

With the major agreements and common ground arrived at during the United Nations global conferences of the 1990s, it was hoped that the stage had been set for fresh impetus and a new direction in international development. In reality the new era of development has continued to elude us.

There is an emerging consensus that the new approach to development must be to concentrate on the well-being of the individual person and to release the productive capacity of the human spirit and of nations through social development, free markets, international trade and investment. While this strategy has brought progress to many countries, many poorer developing countries have not been able to compete and benefit, due to structural inadequacies in their economies or because of the small size of their markets.

To adapt to the new approaches to development, all United Nations agencies have to undergo major changes in their organization and operations. However, the resources available to United Nations agencies have declined both in actual and real terms. Many of them are unable to carry out programmes at the level of previous cycles. In these circumstances, many of the targets set in the major global conferences, whether in health, environment, population, education, or other social fields, may not be met.

It is often said that the overall contribution of United Nations agencies to a country's development is small. While this may be the case in larger countries, it should be pointed out that in many smaller countries the input of United Nations agencies plays a substantial role. It is unfortunate that the most far-reaching responsibility of the United Nations, which can make a lasting impact in improving the lives of millions of people, is being constrained and reduced at a time when more efforts are necessary.

The efforts of the United Nations development bodies are of particular importance to the 48 least developed countries. It has become increasingly difficult for the concerns and needs of these countries to find a place in the international development dialogue. The United Nations, through the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and all other agencies, must ensure that the situation and the needs of the least developed countries are kept in focus and as part of any agenda for development. Otherwise we risk the further marginalization of a significant number of countries.

The United Nations development agencies must ensure that the resources they spend in finding and developing new ideas and approaches are balanced and matched by programmes and resources in the field. The agencies and developing countries must work closely together in order to regain the confidence of the donor community. Bhutan strongly believes that the special role that many development agencies fulfil must not be allowed to diminish due to a lack of funds.

Bhutan recognizes that developing countries must work closely with other major participants in the international development effort, such as financial institutions, bilateral donors and the world business community. Bhutan has greatly benefitted from the contributions and efforts of our bilateral donors. Their assistance has been utilized effectively and has contributed meaningfully to our development. We take this opportunity to express our gratitude to our bilateral donors, in particular

India, Switzerland, Japan, Denmark, the Netherlands, Austria, Norway, Kuwait, Germany, Australia and Thailand, for their cooperation and generous assistance.

Allow me to express a few thoughts concerning the impact of reform on the United Nations. We are aware that the issue of reforming the United Nations system and its organizational structure is not new, and that it was raised just a few years after the establishment of the United Nations itself. However, the issue of organizational reform has taken on special significance in the last few years, given the financial situation of the United Nations and some of its major agencies. While the dialogue on reform of the United Nations continues, the Organization has had to implement major cuts in staff and activities. The morale of the international civil servants has been greatly affected. This situation should not be allowed to continue for long. All Member countries must take cognizance of these facts, work towards completing the reform process, and place the Organization on a firm financial footing at an early date.

We must not be afraid of reform and change. Major changes have already been carried out, and there are still many areas which need to be addressed. However, it is our view that the process of reform of the Organization should be time-bound. A long, drawn out process with no end in sight will hinder the Organization in effectively carrying out the vast responsibilities we have assigned to it.

The calls for change and reform of the United Nations, in their own way, are the best indicator of the strong support of its Members. The United Nations today has become an indispensable institution in international relations and development. It is up to us, the Member States, to ensure that it will be able to meet the aspirations and expectations of all its Members, large and small. It must become the source of inspiration for all and a guiding beacon that will take the world to the next millennium of peace and prosperity for all the peoples and nations of the world.

The Acting President: I call next on the Chairman of the delegation of Dominica, His Excellency Mr. Simon Paul Richards.

Mr. Richards (Dominica): It is indeed a pleasure for me to extend my delegation's congratulations to Ambassador Razali and his country, Malaysia, on his election to the high office of President of the fifty-first session of the General Assembly. I entertain no doubt that

he will be able to draw upon his proven diplomatic skills and considerable experience to guide the affairs of the General Assembly in a creditable and exemplary manner. Permit me also to express my appreciation and thanks to his immediate predecessor, Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral of Portugal, for the competence which he demonstrated in presiding over the historic fiftieth session of the General Assembly.

The United Nations was established 51 years ago with a focus on the maintenance of peace and security, and while that remains the objective, the linkage between peace and economic and social development, enshrined in the Charter, must be recognized and strengthened if the world is to escape the inexorable consequences of the continuously widening gap between rich and poor nations. We were led to believe that the peace dividend resulting from the end of the cold war would provide the engine for greater economic development. Obviously, that has not materialized. Indeed, the opposite has occurred. The developing world continues to experience a steady shrinkage of development assistance. And at this critical juncture, small island States, already hampered by size, geographic location, topography and climatic conditions, are having their very existence threatened by the policies and practices of multinationals, made all the more formidable by overwhelming support from their Governments.

The production and export of bananas are vital to the economic viability of the Commonwealth of Dominica, as they are to all the islands of the Windward group. The banana industry in the Windward Islands accounts for less than 5 per cent of world production. The producers are small landowners; the production costs are relatively high; and any attempt by the Windward Islands producers to sell their products on the open market would be suicidal. Recognizing the peculiar difficulties of Windward Islands producers and their traditional access to the European market, the European Union has established a regime reserving less than 10 per cent of its market for bananas from the Caribbean. That regime is now under attack from multinationals in Latin America and elsewhere, with huge resources augmented by the power, prestige and political might of their national Governments.

In the struggle to save an industry critical to our economic survival, our political stability and our democratic traditions and institutions, we call upon the international community to take note of the very real possibility of social upheaval and political disaster in the region if this challenge to the European Union regime were to succeed. It is rather incongruous that the same forces that are at the forefront of

the effort to establish democratic institutions and representative governments in certain parts of the world are also engaged in an enterprise which, if successful, is calculated to destroy the free and democratic way of life in the eastern Caribbean. The international community has an interest in seeing that these small societies remain free and stable, and it has an obligation to ensure that that freedom and stability subsist.

The scourge of illicit drug traffic and drug abuse must continue to be of great concern to the international community. The problem knows no boundary, it respects no ideology or power, it makes no distinction between rich and poor, North and South, East and West. Its engine is driven by the prospect of huge fortunes amassed clandestinely and quickly. Universal in its destructive force, the illicit drug problem presents a unique challenge to the world. The Commonwealth of Dominica has taken steps, commensurate with its limited resources, to deal with the problem at the national level, and it is a party to cooperative regional arrangements aimed at impeding the trans-shipment of illicit drugs through the Caribbean region. Recognizing, however, that the problem is demand-driven, we must make it clear that the prospects for success in this effort will remain dim unless there is a greater undertaking by the major consumer centres to reduce the demand for the product.

Connected with international drug trafficking is the illegal trade in arms and, tangentially, international terrorism. The twin evils of illicit arms and international terrorism have as their purpose the destruction of innocent lives, the violation of the fundamental tenets of the civilized world and the subversion of the democratic freedoms of all mankind. An unprecedented effort by Members of the United Nations will be required if we are to control the illicit trade in arms and extinguish the threat of terrorism. Compounding the problem is the legal trade in conventional weapons of increasing sophistication and destructiveness. With regard to nuclear weapons, the Commonwealth of Dominica believes that the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty are merely way-stations on the road to the desirable end of a world free of all such arsenals.

We are extremely concerned and aggrieved by the continuing practice of trans-shipping nuclear waste and other hazardous substances through the Caribbean Sea. Assurances of safe procedures and infinitesimal risks are unconvincing, particularly when such trans-shipments are made through the Caribbean Sea during the hurricane

season and at a period of heightened seismic activity in the Caribbean region.

The Commonwealth of Dominica, together with other members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) continues to view this dangerous practice as a potentially serious threat to the fragile ecosystem and to the livelihood and well-being of the people of the region, and we call upon the States engaging in the practice to demonstrate some regard for our justifiable concerns. We earnestly seek the support of the international community in our ongoing effort to halt the shipment of these dangerous materials through the Caribbean Sea.

For several decades, the Republic of China on Taiwan has exercised and continues to exercise sovereign authority over a defined geographical area inhabited today by 21 million souls. This year, the process of political reform achieved its ultimate goal when, for the first time in history, the President of the Republic of China on Taiwan was democratically elected in free and fair elections. Democracy is alive and well in the Republic of China on Taiwan. The peace and security of the region are not threatened today, nor have they ever been threatened, by the Republic of China on Taiwan. Indeed, the Republic of China's human rights record, its commitment to market economy and multilateralism and its economic assistance programmes have served to enhance the prospects for peace, security and stability in the area and beyond.

As the members of the European Parliament stated in their resolution of 17 July 1996, the Republic of China on Taiwan can play an important beneficial role in the international community, and it is clear that the exclusion of the Republic of China on Taiwan from the world's councils, from the United Nations and its specialized agencies, and from the major international financial institutions concerned with development and the eradication of poverty is a detriment to us all. The Commonwealth of Dominica believes that on the principle of universality, the Republic of China on Taiwan should be admitted as a Member of the United Nations.

Just over two years ago the world applauded the progress that had been made in the bilateral negotiations between Israel and its Arab neighbours in the Middle East, and we expressed cautious optimism with respect to the eventual resolution of the conflict and the progress towards a full and just peace in the region. Recent events have given reason for pause, however. We recognize that a solution to the problem in the Middle East can only be achieved through the energies of the States in the region

and their genuine commitment to peace. But the international community and the United Nations in particular have an interest — indeed, a duty — to facilitate and assist the process towards the realization of the legitimate hopes, aspirations and security needs of the peoples in the area.

The Commonwealth of Dominica abhors the concept of national laws having extraterritorial jurisdiction and serving as underpinnings for illegal secondary boycotts. We are particularly troubled by the potential use of these instruments by large and powerful States to compromise the territorial integrity and national sovereignty of small States like ours.

The restructuring and reform of the United Nations system continues in the face of a forced financial crisis that undermines the very result intended by the reform programme, namely, an Organization with the capacity to discharge its worldwide obligations effectively and efficiently. We continue to be supportive of the efforts to exercise budgetary restraints, to reduce waste and to eliminate unnecessary duplication, but we caution against a programme of retrenchment detrimental to the existence of programmes designed to assist small developing nations. Indeed, we believe that the end-product of the reform of the United Nations should be an Organization better equipped to be an effective force for development and economic growth.

In this age of globalization, the United Nations continues to be an important agent for economic growth and development and a vital instrument in maintaining world peace. The Commonwealth of Dominica recognizes and applauds the achievements of the United Nations in those areas. The capacity of the Organization to meet the challenges of the years ahead will depend on our collective will and commitment to effecting measurable improvement in the human condition.

The Acting President: The next speaker is the Chairman of the delegation of the Central African Republic, Mr. Henry Koba.

Mr. Koba (Central African Republic) (*interpretation from French*): On behalf of the delegation of the Central African Republic, I should like to express our warmest and most heartfelt congratulations to Mr. Razali Ismail on his election to the presidency of this session. His proven skill in international affairs assures us that our work will be crowned with success. I would assure him of my delegation's cooperation.

We also wish to extend to the outgoing President, Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral, the deepest appreciation of the delegation of the Central African Republic for the competence with which he served the Organization throughout his mandate.

Lastly, I should like to pay a heartfelt tribute to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for his courageous and tireless work, work which does honour to Africa and which is often performed in a hostile context, to have the principles of the United Nations Charter prevail in all circumstances. The work of our Secretary-General deserves to be encouraged and must continue.

The evaluation of the United Nations 50 years of existence revealed the Organization's continuing shortcomings in the accomplishment of its mission. However, the end of the cold war, which allowed us to glimpse a new era in international relations, opened prospects for renewed cooperation commensurate with the hopes that emerged at the end of the world's division into blocs. In that connection, the United Nations was at last to rediscover its capacity to handle relations among States on the sole basis of the application of the principles that have brought us together here in this Hall.

Opposing tendencies continue to vie for attention at a time when we must, with shared resolution, ensure respect for an international rule of law. The world today has changed. The aspiration to wider freedom and greater recognition of equality is stronger than ever before.

Thus, the delegation of the Central African Republic believes that the shortcomings and limitations of our Organization, like those inherent in any human endeavour, must be rectified, and they can be, if States give priority to concerted action, to dialogue and a shared search for solutions to the world's problems. Together, we will be better able to establish the universal values of the United Nations. Indeed, that is our principal task.

The wider advent of democracy, its affirmation and its implantation are of course primarily the choice of a people. However, democracy, which is a universal value, is also the struggle of all democratically minded people who share its ideals, and the struggle of the United Nations, whose very establishment was a response to an international order of dictatorship and terror with the tragic consequences we all know. We are therefore in duty bound to create true solidarity so as to ensure the defence and spread of democracy.

This is an appropriate time for me to dwell for a moment on the case of my own country, the Central African Republic.

In the space of one month, a country that was already very far advanced in negotiations to conclude an agreement with the Bretton Woods institutions was to undergo two mutinies that proved to be attempts at *coups d'états*. The world was presented with a shocking and unfamiliar picture of my country, erasing the efforts of the national community to turn its back on its past and wiping out the efforts of Central Africans to devote themselves, within the framework of their sovereign choice, to the search for the means of developing the Central African Republic, with its vast potential in mining, agriculture and livestock and with its abundant rainfall.

There were deaths, there was destruction, but above all there was an attempt, by force of arms, to impose the will of a tiny fraction of the nation on the majority. The long struggle of the Central African nation freely to choose its leaders at the ballot box was about to be obliterated without any legitimacy or legality whatsoever.

Central African democracy is three years old. It is developing in very difficult economic circumstances, and it must find within itself the necessary spirit of confidence, solidarity, hard work and organization. The affairs of state of this young democracy must be given the transparency needed for good governance and the confidence to build at last a country whose potential will enable it to provide its children with a healthy future.

That is the constant message that President Ange-Félix Patassé, our Head of State, has expressed to his compatriots ever since assuming office in the Central African Republic. But there is still a long road to follow, and one strewn with pitfalls, before we can arrive at the tranquillity of older democracies that makes military adventurism inadmissible.

While this destiny is mainly the responsibility of each country, the Central African Republic believes that defence of the universal values of freedom and equality is also the responsibility of all democrats, whether or not they are States. That is why I would like to take this opportunity to express the gratitude of the Government of the Central African Republic to those friendly countries, especially France, the United States of America, Germany, Gabon, Chad, Zaire, Congo, Senegal, Togo, Benin, Mali, Côte d'Ivoire and Sudan, which gave their

support, in the name of the principles of democracy, to the choices of the Central African Republic and its institutions during this difficult period. That same appreciation is extended to the Secretary-General of the OAU, and above all to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, for his unambiguous and courageous position in defence of democracy.

Collectively, the Central Africans overcame this difficult stage in the history of their country because in dark moments they always had the spirit to find a solution to preserve the essential, the unity of the country, reinforced by a common language, Sango.

Since then, the Central African Republic has been working to find ways and means to strengthen the peace and security it has restored. Hence, with the participation of friendly countries such as France, Gabon, Senegal, and Mali (with the contribution of its former President Amadou Toumani Toure), the Government has organized national structures for defence. It recently convened an important seminar, with the support of the United States of America on the role of the military in a democracy. This meeting served to draw attention to the place of the army within the nation; in other words, in a republic the armed forces must be under civil authority.

Another dimension of restoring peace and security is the relaunching of the economy. My country wishes to pay tribute to the promptness with which countries such as France, the Republic of China and Germany and bodies such as the United Nations, through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) intervened, either providing direct support for the re launch or helping to develop an emergency programme leading to a joint meeting of donors in Bangui. The pledges made during that meeting were encouraging and we hope for further such offers of support during the round table planned for 1997. But it is the intention of the President of the Republic, Ange-Félix Patassé, to reach an agreement with the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. This intention has been repeated and will be pursued.

The course taken in international relations since the end of the cold war should prompt States to turn to multilateral cooperation and United Nations principles should come fully into play in crisis settlement. This should apply to the question of the Middle East, where the current peace process must be pursued and concluded without delay. It should also apply to the situation in Rwanda and Burundi, where regional initiatives must also back up international efforts, in the Western Sahara, in Angola and

in Liberia, where it should be possible to implement the United Nations plan of action.

The firm political will of all continues to be necessary to achieve this, with a constant search for mechanisms that build and strengthen confidence among States. In this respect, the signing of the non-aggression pact among States members of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Questions of Security in Central Africa will certainly contribute, if observed, to preserving good-neighbourly relations among the signatories and will free the dynamic elements in one of the richest regions of the world for integrated development efforts.

In that same spirit, during this session the Central African Republic intends to sign the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, which it fully supported at the draft stage.

Political will presupposes the strengthening of the United Nations authority and its universal nature. That authority flows from its rightful place in the world, a world that has changed to such an extent since the establishment of the United Nations that the working methods of its organs need to be adapted. The United Nations is no longer accorded the status it had during the decolonization movement. There has been a loss of regard for the United Nations, especially since the division of the world into hostile blocs came to an end. States, particularly the powerful ones, prefer to resolve problems outside the United Nations, or consider that the Organization should merely endorse their decisions. The United Nations should not be used as a tool in this way; therein lies the root cause of the powerlessness of which it stands accused.

The restructuring efforts begun two years ago must be pursued and stressed in order to achieve rational and real structural reforms allowing the Organization to operate more efficiently in various areas, beginning with the Security Council. The Security Council should include countries from both the North and South that can provide the financial and political resources needed by the Organization to defend peace. From this standpoint, the Central African Republic delegation supports the initiatives taken by Germany and Japan. The economic weight of these countries and their activities to promote development and peace give them an outstanding place in international cooperation today.

What is more, the democratization of international relations also involves a strengthening of the universalist nature of our Organization, because the United Nations, with its mission to bring together all States and civilizations of the world, can no longer refuse to admit States, especially if those States are able to meet the obligations inherent in the status of Member.

I should like to raise here the question of the Republic of China in Taiwan. My delegation regrets that this question is once again not on our agenda this year. Yet the first consequence of the end of the cold war was the reassessment of questions associated with this period, for example the issues related to General Assembly resolution 2758 (XXVI), which artificially deprives the Republic of China of its place in the United Nations. This is a flagrant injustice that should be redressed by the international community, which can surely not allow a sovereign and independent State, in which free and democratic elections have recently been held, to be indefinitely excluded, with its 21 million inhabitants, from United Nations activities. The European Parliament has recognized this. Last July it adopted a proposed joint resolution requesting the United Nations to study the possibility of participation by the Republic of China in the activities of bodies that report to the General Assembly.

Furthermore, there are many challenges facing the world today requiring the general mobilization of all States, including the Republic of China, whose participation in efforts for peace and development throughout the world is already highly appreciated. The delegation of the Central African Republic therefore appeals to the General Assembly's wisdom and realism and invites it to examine the question during its next session so that the Republic of China in Taiwan can resume its seat in the United Nations.

It has been said time and again that the world has become a global village, characterized by an intermingling of cultures, ideas, economies, markets, norms of behaviour and the ever more rapid coming together of peoples, despite the barriers imposed by frontiers. My delegation believes that the acceleration of the process of globalization will lead to an increasingly integrated approach to development management so as to find a global solution.

Given the proliferation of internal conflicts and regional tensions, the harmful effects of economic disorder, the spread of the AIDS pandemic, the rise of crime and terrorism, violations of human rights, the ever-widening international character of drug-trafficking networks and the deterioration of the environment, there is no single area of

international relations that does not require a collective effort on the part of States if it is to be mastered.

The Central African Republic would like to emphasize the issue of the AIDS pandemic. This problem requires the keen attention of the entire international community, because no solution is near. The small size and youthfulness of the country's population explain why the Government is paying special attention to this pandemic, and to the question of health in general. That is why we believe that agencies such as the World Health Organization, the United Nations Children's Fund and the United Nations Population Fund must be encouraged.

For the delegation of the Central African Republic the hope that has been placed in the will of States to mobilize for this vast international cooperative action will truly make it possible to embark on the second 50 years of the United Nations in a way that will avoid the pitfalls experienced during the first 50 years of its existence.

In our lives as human beings there are always times when we need to look within ourselves, and at our existence, to see exactly what must be done and in what direction to go. It is the responsibility of States to make of the United Nations what they want it to be, taking account of its failings, weaknesses, limits and shortcomings.

States today must do all they can, with a constant effort of political will, to support our Organization so that multilateral cooperation has full scope. The defence of peace and the promotion of sustainable development during this time of globalization cannot succeed otherwise.

The delegation of the Central African Republic would like to share with the other members of the international community the hope that, during the next 50 years, the world will embark resolutely on the path laid down by the founding fathers of the Organization. An important part of the attainment of the principles and values of the Charter will be the implementation of the proposals made by our

dynamic Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros-Ghali, through the Agenda for Peace, the Agenda for Development and, above all, the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa.

The meeting rose at 12.35 p.m.