



General Assembly

Fifty-seventh session

Official Records

6th plenary meeting

Saturday, 14 September 2002, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Kavan (Czech Republic)

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

Address by Major-General Joseph Kabila, President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Major-General Joseph Kabila, President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, 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 His Excellency Major-General Joseph Kabila, President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Kabila (*spoke in French*): I am honoured and gratified once again to take the floor before the Assembly, to which I extend the most cordial greetings on behalf of the Congolese people, its Government and on my own behalf.

First and foremost, allow me, Sir, to congratulate you very sincerely, along with the whole of your Bureau, on your election to the presidency of the fifty-seventh regular session of the General Assembly.

I wish also to convey to your predecessor, Mr. Han Seung-soo, our great appreciation for the extremely important work that he accomplished during his term in office.

Allow me also to welcome the accession to the United Nations of the Swiss Confederation and of Timor-Leste as Member States.

Lastly, allow me to thank the Secretary-General for his dedication to universal values and for his active involvement in the quest for solutions to the conflicts besetting humankind.

At a time when the whole world is remembering the fateful date of 11 September 2001, the Congolese people, its Government and I myself wish to take this opportunity to convey once again our solidarity and our compassion to the American people and to the grieving families around the world who were victimized in this heinous act of terrorism.

This is indeed an appropriate setting in which to urge all peace-loving and justice-loving States in the world to commit to working together to combat this evil in all its forms.

For its part, as I had announced in my address to the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly, my Government, on 21 December 2001, established a national coordinating committee to combat international terrorism, pursuant to Security Council resolution 1373 (2001).

The first part of my statement will focus on the status of the peace process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Externally speaking, it should be noted that, faced with obstruction to the implementation of the Lusaka

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Agreement as regards the withdrawal of foreign forces, my Government, basing itself on the relevant provisions of the Security Council that encourage bilateral discussions, has entered into the Pretoria Agreement with Rwanda on the one hand, with the facilitation of South Africa and the assistance of the United Nations, and, on the other hand, it has signed the Luanda Agreement with Uganda, under the sponsorship of Angola.

The Pretoria Agreement, signed on 30 July 2002, essentially addresses the question of the withdrawal of Rwandan troops from the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the disarmament of the former Rwandan Army (ex-FAR) forces and the Interahamwe. The Luanda Agreement, signed on 6 September 2002, deals with the issue of the complete withdrawal of Ugandan troops from the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as well as with cooperation and the normalization of relations between our two States.

Almost 45 days have passed since the signing of the Pretoria Agreement — half of the time period set by the timetable for its implementation — without any significant progress having been made on the ground. The commitment undertaken yesterday by the President of Rwanda to begin the withdrawal of troops as from next week may mark a decisive phase in the implementation of the Pretoria Agreement.

For its part, the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, consistent with the commitments that it has undertaken, had already assembled at Kamina more than 2,000 Rwandan ex-combatants, who are awaiting repatriation to Rwanda. Furthermore, it has notified the third party, as of 5 September 2002, about additional information concerning Rwandan ex-combatants.

With regard to the Luanda Agreement, it should be noted that the withdrawal of Ugandan troops has begun and that a joint peacemaking programme has been set up in the Ituri region.

The successful implementation of the Pretoria and Luanda Agreements, in particular with respect to the withdrawal of Rwandan and Ugandan troops, will have a clear impact on the conclusion of a comprehensive and inclusive agreement in the context of the domestic political process aimed at national reconciliation and the reunification of the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, with a view to

the prompt holding of free, democratic and transparent elections at all levels.

Following consultations with various political and social groups, as well as with the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Democratic Republic of the Congo, my Government suggested that arrangements for the signing of an inclusive agreement could begin at an early date.

I would like now to turn to the particular and worrying situation that prevails in the eastern part of my country. I am referring to the bloody and distressing events that took place in Kisangani and Bunia; the resumed fighting in the Kivu region; the rapes; the plundering of the wealth of the Democratic Republic of the Congo; and all the other human rights violations that have taken place. I also have in mind the appalling destruction of fauna, flora and the ecosystem in general in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

I urgently appeal to the international community to put an end to this tragic situation, which is afflicting the people of the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and to ensure that the perpetrators of these vile and barbaric acts are punished and brought to justice.

Likewise, we look forward eagerly to the conclusions of the Panel of Experts, which we hope will be accompanied by proposals for sanctions to be imposed on those who are plundering the resources of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. This is the bleak situation that has been prevailing in my country for more than four years; the socio-economic situation of the people has deteriorated as a result of the war, which has deprived my Government of more than half of its resources. In order to deal with this economic disaster and to alleviate the suffering of our people as much as possible, a number of measures been in place for more than a year. The tangible effects of these positive measures include the stabilization of our currency and of the price of major consumer goods, as well as the resumption of cooperation with international financial institutions.

In the same spirit, a large-scale national reconstruction programme is under way, aimed at the rehabilitation of the basic social infrastructure so as to promote the recovery of the economy and the process of development.

I have condemned the terrorism and the tragic events of 11 September 2001, which plunged the American people and all of humankind into mourning. I have provided an updated review of the peace process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in particular with regard to the Pretoria and Luanda Agreements. I have expressed my grave concern about the disturbing humanitarian situation prevailing in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which is characterized by massacres and massive violations of human rights and international humanitarian law. I have also pointed to the particularly difficult socio-economic situation affecting the population of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, noting that it has been aggravated by war and its adverse effects. If the war persists, the Government's efforts to achieve economic recovery may well be completely nullified.

In order to put an end to this protracted tragedy, I earnestly appeal, through this Assembly, to the entire international community, to mobilize and become more deeply involved in the quest for solutions to bring about the reunification of our national territory and to return peace and stability to my country and to the whole of the Great Lakes region.

I would like to make several specific points. First, I believe that a conference should be held, under the auspices of the United Nations, on peace, security and development in the Great Lakes region. My country's desire, in keeping with its African tradition, has always been to live in peace and harmony with all the States of Africa and of the world, beginning with its neighbours.

Secondly, the international community should be more actively involved in resolving the conflict that is tearing the Democratic Republic of the Congo apart. It is clear today that the international community seems to be forgetting the role played by Africa in the development of today's wealthy States, and is showing a degree of indifference to African issues.

Thirdly, the large number of Security Council resolutions which have, to date, remained unimplemented.

Fourthly, I am thinking of technical contributions and the mobilization of the international community to rehabilitate our ecosystem, so as to preserve this heritage of humankind.

The founding fathers of our universal Organization, who were convinced that nations could

be brought together only through peaceful settlements of conflict, signed the Charter in order to ensure that no armed conflict would be a matter of indifference to the remainder of humanity. For this reason, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which believes deeply in the universal values championed by the United Nations, expresses the hope that all the organs of the United Nations will play their role to the fullest to ensure that we may silence weapons wherever they are being used, in order to make peace a genuine right within the grasp of all of us.

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

Major-General Joseph Kabila, President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Levy Patrick Mwanawasa, President of the Republic of Zambia

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

Mr. Levy Patrick Mwanawasa, President of the Republic of Zambia, 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 His Excellency Mr. Levy Patrick Mwanawasa, President of the Republic of Zambia, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Mwanawasa: Let me begin by congratulating you, Sir, on your assumption of the Presidency of the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly. My delegation is confident that, given your vast political skills, you will execute your responsibility as President of the fifty-seventh session of the United Nations General Assembly most honourably.

My delegation pledges its total support and cooperation to you in the discharge of your important responsibilities. You can depend on Zambia's support and cooperation.

May I also take this opportunity to pay tribute to your predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Han Seung-soo of the Republic of Korea, for the excellent manner in

which he presided over the fifty-sixth session of the United Nations General Assembly.

My delegation also congratulates the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan, for the able manner in which he has steered the work of the United Nations.

We are happy to welcome Switzerland and East Timor as new Members of the United Nations family. My delegation looks forward to working closely with the two new Member States.

Three days ago, the world commemorated the 1st anniversary of the tragic events of 11 September 2001. The past year has witnessed a global resolve to fight international terrorism. My Government wishes to join the host country in remembering the tragic events of 11 September 2001.

My delegation salutes the efforts of the United Nations in ensuring that there is peace in the world. I am pleased to note that there are signs of positive developments in most of the trouble spots where there have been conflicts.

The African Union and the international community have to work together as partners in conflict prevention and peace-building. In the past forty years, Africa has lost too much blood through conflicts. Zambia is ready and willing to play her part to create in Africa a culture of respect for the rule of law and human rights, social and economic development, and to promote peace and security. In this regard we welcome the positive signs towards peace in Angola, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo and other conflict areas in Africa.

The search for peace is a continuous process. I therefore appeal to the international community to continue extending assistance to bring about peace in the conflict areas around the world.

It is against this background that my Government welcomes the implementation of the Lusaka Peace Protocol in Angola and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Since the death of Dr. Jonas Savimbi, the former UNITA rebel leader, in February 2002, the prospects for peace in that country and the entire subregion are encouraging.

The ceasefire agreement, signed between the Angolan Government and the UNITA military, further

paved way for the implementation of the Lusaka Peace Protocol of November 1994.

The full implementation of the Lusaka Protocol is vital for the reintegration of Angola in the Southern African economy and the promotion of regional peace and stability. The people of Angola require the moral and material support of the international community to complete that process.

I would like also to express my country's appreciation to the United Nations Security Council for the measures being undertaken to strengthen the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC). I am further gratified that the efforts by His Excellency Sir Ketumile Masire, former President of Botswana, to promote internal political dialogue are bearing fruit. I also wish to note, with appreciation, that the number of foreign troops still on Democratic Republic of Congo soil has been significantly reduced.

Conflicts have a negative impact on the economic life of the region. To Zambia, as a host to refugees from Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and other parts of the continent, the recent signs of peace are significantly important. My Government hopes that these positive signs will result in the voluntary repatriation of refugees to their countries. Currently, there are 270,000 refugees in designated camps and about 120,000 others who are simultaneously settled in the border areas among the local people in Zambia. My Government will continue to require the material and financial support of the international community to help in the refugee management effort.

Since the thirty-seventh session of the Assembly of the former Organization of African Unity, held in Lusaka in July 2001, Africa has continued to refine its partnerships with the rest of the world to foster development. The vehicle for this effort is the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). I wish to convey my Government's appreciation to the leaders of the Group of 8 for endorsing the NEPAD programme during their annual meeting, held in Kananaskis, Canada, on 27 June 2002. I note with appreciation that the G8 countries considered positively the request by the four-nation African representatives of Algeria, Nigeria, Senegal and South Africa, that they earmark for Africa 50 per cent of their projected foreign aid increases in the coming years. I wish to thank the

European Union, which has supported the NEPAD programme and remains committed to its pledge of support for the initiative.

The past year has seen practical and positive developments in the response of the cooperating partners to African trade liberalization initiatives. In this regard, I wish to take this opportunity to welcome the initiative of the United States Government to refine the scope of the African Growth and Opportunity Act to increase the number of products eligible to be exported to the United States.

In the health sector, Africa is experiencing the catastrophic impact of a combination of the HIV/AIDS pandemic and a series of outbreaks of such diseases as malaria, tuberculosis and diarrhoea. Unfortunately, my country is one of those hard hit in this regard. Although my Government has implemented health reforms that focus on ameliorating the situation, far more resources are required to address the problem.

My Government has taken a decision to acquire affordable antiretroviral drugs for distribution to people affected with AIDS. My delegation wishes to express its gratitude to our cooperating partners, who have been forthcoming in providing resources for this effort. Early deaths from HIV/AIDS-related illnesses are robbing the country of skilled professionals and creating large numbers of orphaned children.

As members are aware, a combination of natural and other factors has caused a food shortage and crisis in the southern African subregion. In response to this impending catastrophe, on 18 July 2002 the United Nations World Food Programme launched an appeal for food aid in support of the affected areas. In response to the food shortage, a number of countries and international organizations have pledged their support. My delegation pays tribute to the United Nations and other cooperating partners in providing assistance to Zambia to mitigate the food shortfall.

However, it has come to the Government's attention that some of the food aid products offered to Zambia constituted genetically modified organisms (GMOs). The offer of genetically modified foods has created a difficult situation for the Government. While, on the one hand, we are determined to procure food and seed for the mostly rural population that is hardest hit by the food shortage, we have expressed concern over the true impact of GMOs on our people and soil. Due to our low scientific and technological base,

Government has opted for the procurement of non-GMO food products. It is not my Government's intention to sacrifice the lives of the Zambian people by taking this position. However, given the lack of and often conflicting international information on the possible effects of genetically modified products on humans, I therefore wish to request Members' understanding of Zambia's position on GMOs. In this regard, my Government has accepted an offer from the United States Government for Zambian scientists to visit America to study first-hand the GMO factor. Their findings will help us to map out a way forward and to make informed decisions and choices.

In conclusion, I wish the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session successful deliberations of the issues before it. I wish to appeal to all Member States to ensure the rapid implementation of decisions emanating therefrom.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Zambia for his statement.

Mr. Levy Patrick Mwanawasa, President of the Republic of Zambia, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Agenda item 9 (continued)

General debate

Address by His Royal Highness Prince 'Ulukalala Lavaka Ata, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Tonga

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Tonga.

His Royal Highness Prince 'Ulukalala Lavaka Ata, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Tonga, was escorted to the rostrum.

The President: I have great pleasure in welcoming His Royal Highness Prince 'Ulukalala Lavaka Ata, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Tonga, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Prince 'Ulukalala Lavaka Ata (Tonga): As I offer you my congratulations upon your assumption of your high office, Mr. President, I must also praise your

predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Han Seung-soo, for a truly exemplary term as President, which was marked at the outset by the Nobel Peace Prize for the Organization and which closed with the promise of the recently concluded World Summit on Sustainable Development. Together with the continuing leadership of Secretary-General Kofi Annan and the support of the Organization's Member States, I look forward to that tradition of excellence and achievement continuing under your presidency, Sir.

I add my voice to the chorus within this Assembly warmly welcoming the Swiss Confederation to our fold and congratulating East Timor on its forthcoming accession to membership. Tonga very much looks forward to working with both of them as fully-fledged States Members of the Organization.

While 11 September 2001 will for all of us be ever present, it is fitting that we pause to remember those who fell in the line of duty and those other loved ones who perished on that terrible day. Those horrific events should serve to inspire us to rededicate ourselves and galvanize our collective efforts to fight the scourge of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations.

My Government continues to formulate measures in compliance with Security Council resolution 1373 (2001). These measures have both national and regional dimensions, and a number of workshops have been held in the Pacific region during the year to ensure that Pacific island countries formulate viable counter-terrorism measures and to assist them to do so. A number of key Government agencies, including civil aviation, immigration, police, finance and customs agencies, have already adopted measures, including financial and rapid reaction security measures, to tighten the security aspect of the resolution. Obviously, the sustained assistance of developed countries in our region has been very useful in our endeavours. It is our earnest hope that our required country report will be before the Counter-Terrorism Committee by the year's end. In this respect, I am grateful to the Committee and to the Security Council for their patience.

Since I last addressed this Assembly, at the Millennium Summit, there have been further signposts to add to the developmental path. These are signposts so readily identifiable as Doha, Monterrey and, now, Johannesburg. These names epitomize the vision and the as yet unfulfilled promise of our collective

development aspirations in this era of globalization. In that regard, I commend President Fox and the people of Mexico for their sterling efforts earlier this year. It was pleasing that consensus prevailed on critical thematic issues of particular import to developing countries, and we look forward to the opportunities that Monterrey will afford. I further commend President Mbeki and the people of South Africa for their wonderful achievement earlier this month. I am particularly pleased that the Johannesburg Summit gave prominence and profile in the Plan of Implementation to the sustainable development of small island developing States. In that regard, Tonga looks forward to the 10-year review of the Barbados Programme of Action in 2004 as a further signpost in the developmental path that will give impetus to what was achieved in Johannesburg. In preparing for that review, Tonga will continue its national efforts to refine and identify areas for specific priority capacity-building needs, as well as opportunities to take increased advantage of financial and technological support.

As a developing ocean State, we are encouraged by the particular commitments in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation on fish stocks and fishing practices. The implementation of those time-bound commitments requires responsibility and good faith from all parties so as to ensure that States like mine obtain their fair share of their vastest and most bountiful resource. We are pleased that the United Nations fish stocks Agreement has entered into force and welcome the informal meeting of States parties that took place here in New York recently. In this respect, we urge other Member States to become party to that important Agreement. Within this context, we also continue to welcome the preparations under way for giving effect to the Convention on the Conservation and Management of Highly Migratory Fish Stocks in the Western and Central Pacific Ocean. The Convention is a testament to our commitment to conserving and sustainably managing a critically important resource. As such, we continue to urge the distant water fishing nations with a real fisheries interest in our region to make every effort to become a party to the Convention. Tonga continues to value the work and decisions taken this year of the Meeting of States Parties to the United Convention on the Law of the Sea, the International Seabed Authority and the third meeting of the United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea. We look forward to an important milestone

later this year: the twentieth anniversary of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. I hope that Member States will consider the upcoming anniversary as an opportune time to become a party to the Convention.

Our region has further endorsed a first-ever regional oceans policy that elaborates some guiding principles that should serve as a template for countries like Tonga to consider using to developing national ocean policies that strengthen coordination and complementarity in our ocean-related activities. One activity that continues to give rise to deep concern is the transshipment of radioactive material through the waters of our region. In this regard, while we might understand the needs and requirements of those States that engage in this activity, it is just as important that the necessary framework for prior notice, consent, safety and compensation for countries like Tonga not be ignored.

Tonga continues to support the development of an appropriate environmental vulnerability index for small island developing States and commends the continuing work of the South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission in that regard. It is our belief that, with the participation of States, such an index has the potential to provide accurate indicators of vulnerability to which small islands in particular are exposed, such as natural disasters, climate change and sea level rise. As such, Tonga welcomes the commitment by certain Annex I countries under the Kyoto Protocol made during the Johannesburg Summit to ratify the Protocol and the further opportunities for progress that such positive action presents.

On 30 and 31 December 2001, tropical cyclone Waka traversed the northern group of Tonga with a wind velocity in excess of 100 miles an hour and resulted in substantial and horrific damage to those islands. To be sure, the damage was estimated at over 140 million Tongan dollars, but thankfully there was no loss of life. The inevitable and difficult task of relief, recovery and reconstruction was compounded by the geographic distance from the capital of the northern group and the sheer scale of the damage sustained. Luckily, action by traditional donor Governments and our neighbours within the region, territorial governments, regional and international organizations, such as the Pacific Islands Forum and specific United Nations agencies, was swift and generous and provided much-needed assistance to my Government. I am

deeply grateful to those Governments, organizations and agencies, as well as to non-governmental organizations and churches, for their valued assistance in our time of crisis. Two weeks after the cyclone, nature, having wrought such devastating winds, caused more favourable weather to prevail, which greatly helped the replanting phases of recovery. We expect a resurgence of the critical agricultural, tourism and fisheries sectors by the end of the year.

While information and communications technology (ICT) remains the way to go, we continue with our own efforts to bridge the digital divide and take maximum advantage of the digital revolution. To do so will require joint efforts in tandem with the international community and the United Nations, particularly through the efforts of the United Nations ICT Task Force as one avenue. Such efforts must be characterized by partnership and inclusion in the ICT process, so that all developing States in every region can benefit. The United Nations role of bridging, coordinating and integrating activities is therefore crucial. In that respect, we urge continued support for the Small Island Developing States Information Network (SIDSNet) and for efforts to strengthen its capacity to support and assist small island developing States.

We welcome the fruitful outcome earlier this year of the General Assembly special session on children. While we recognize the promise it holds for the welfare and well-being of all children, like the outcome of the recent special session on HIV/AIDS, commitments must progress beyond rhetoric into concrete action.

Tonga fully supports the work of the Security Council and, like other speakers before me, calls for the full implementation of all of its resolutions to ensure an enduring peace in arenas of conflict and to lift the veil of doubt where such doubt could lead to conflict.

In one such arena, we join the call for an end to violence, a return to the negotiating table and the building of confidence so as to realize the coexistence of two States, side by side in secure and recognized borders.

Tonga also supports efforts to streamline the work of the General Assembly so that it can play the pivotal and focused role we desire. In like terms, we support the call for reform of the Security Council, in which the number of both permanent and non-permanent seats

would be increased to accord with and respond to today's realities.

Finally, with respect to pertinent regional issues, Tonga endorses the views expressed in both the Nadi Declaration, contained in document A/56/1015, and the Suva Communiqué, that will be contained in document A/57/331. They are the respective outcomes of the third Summit of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Heads of State and Government, held in Nadi, Fiji, in July 2002, and of the annual meeting of the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders held in Suva, Fiji, in August 2002.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Tonga for the statement he has just made.

His Royal Highness Prince 'Ulukalala Lavaka Ata, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Tonga, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

The President: I call on His Excellency Mr. Kassymzhomart K. Tokaev, Secretary of State and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

Mr. Tokaev (Kazakhstan): Allow me first to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the high office of the presidency of the current session and to express confidence that, under your able leadership, the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly will be successful and fruitful.

The terrorist acts in the United States, the anniversary of which we have just marked with great sorrow, prompted all mankind to pay close attention to the fundamental issues of sustainable development. The barbaric acts of international terrorists demonstrated very convincingly the fragility of the world we live in and the importance for all States to join their efforts to ensure economic development and civil rights, security and stability.

The contemporary world, with all the diversity of its political and economic systems, requires, as never before, agreed and coordinated efforts by the community of nations to protect common human values, primarily the rights of all citizens to a decent life.

Has mankind been able to rid itself of its own entrenched flaws — poverty, environmental pollution, disease and crime? The answer is more than evident: the community of nations has not made progress in resolving those issues. Thus, breeding grounds have been created for the spread of such dangerous phenomena as terrorism and drug trafficking, religious extremism and the illegal arms trade. Having crossed the threshold of the new millennium, mankind has been forced to exert efforts to resolve centuries-old issues and to counter new threats.

The events that took place last year have changed the world and have prompted everybody to think hard about the foundations that support it. The community of nations faces a pressing task: to create a new architecture of global security based on a multi-polar world, and to set up effective mechanisms to overcome the obstacles to modern economic and political development.

In our view, under these circumstances, the role and the responsibility of international institutions, primarily the United Nations, become significantly greater. Strengthening the authority of the United Nations is our common responsibility. We believe that the existing system of adopting decisions affecting the fundamental interests of mankind should never be doubted, let alone reshaped in any way. The issues of the world and peace should be considered and decisions reflecting the will and the interests of the community of nations should be adopted only within the framework of the United Nations.

Grounds for the use of force against Member States should be irrefutable evidence, corroborated by international institutions, of their illegal action to disrupt the world order and to undermine global and regional security.

The changed world forces us to take a fresh look at disarmament issues, primarily the consolidation of the non-proliferation regime. It is becoming more and more evident that, under these new conditions, the community of nations should focus its main efforts on preventing terrorists from getting hold of weapons of mass destruction. Therefore, joint action by Member States to continue to consolidate the non-proliferation regime and to make it universal deserve special attention. We believe that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which binds its participants to take nuclear disarmament measures,

should continue to play an important role in the area of nuclear arms control.

As one of the few States in the world that have voluntarily relinquished their nuclear heritage, we believe that a prerequisite for an atmosphere of trust in contemporary international relations is the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT).

Because it attaches great significance to the preservation of peace and security in Central Asia, Kazakhstan is interested in signing, as soon as possible, a treaty creating a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region. Such a zone could be an important contribution by regional States to the disarmament and arms control efforts of international community.

Further, additional results-oriented efforts to prevent the excessive accumulation of and illegal trafficking in small arms are no less important. It is impossible to ignore the alarming fact that 55 per cent of known small arms stocks, equivalent to 305 million pieces, are now already in private hands. In view of the need for targeted actions in this area, we express our willingness to host in Kazakhstan, in 2003, an international conference on this subject under the auspices of the United Nations.

Our country, home to the Baikonur space launching pad, is well aware of the harmful effects of the militarization of outer space. Therefore, we believe that it is imperative to start, without delay, talks to prevent an arms race in outer space.

From the very start, Kazakhstan has resolutely and unconditionally supported counter-terrorist actions by the international coalition. Without any doubt, its effective measures have contributed to the settlement of the situation in Afghanistan.

Together with all interested States and parties, our country supports the key role of the United Nations in the post-conflict peace-building in Afghanistan. We intend to take a most active part in implementing an international aid programme for Afghanistan. Kazakhstan is cooperating successfully with the World Food Programme by using it to send its agricultural products to Afghanistan. Our country has provided the Afghan people with free humanitarian aid in the form of grain. We believe that early implementation of the decisions adopted at the Tokyo Conference will contribute to the successful solution of the Afghan

problem and to the eradication of international terrorism.

When we speak about Afghanistan, we cannot ignore the issue of drug trafficking. Unfortunately, that long-suffering country continues to be a main source of the proliferation of drugs that are being transported through the territories of the Central Asian States and sold on the world markets, first of all in Europe. This problem is getting more and more dangerous and requires urgent and effective measures by the community of nations. We hope that the coordinating role of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme will be strengthened. One has to realize that it is the drug trafficking that constitutes a financial basis of international terrorism. When we put up a just fight against that evil, we, unfortunately, fight its manifestations and do not pay due attention to the root cause of the phenomenon. If this state of affairs remains unchanged, curbing international terrorism will turn into an indefinite process that will exhaust all financial and political resources of the community of nations.

The world community is closely watching the development of the situation in the Middle East. Interested States quite justifiably express their concern over the deteriorating chances of a peaceful settlement. We support the need to convene as soon as possible an international conference on the Middle East settlement in order to take parallel steps: to strengthen Israel's security, to strengthen Palestinian economic and political institutions and to settle the details of the final peace agreement. The international community also has to intensify its efforts to curb terrorism and meet the humanitarian needs of the Palestinian people.

Since the first days of its independence, Kazakhstan has focussed its foreign affairs efforts on the creation of a security system in Asia. That goal was advanced by the first summit meeting of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA), convened in June of this year in Almaty. For the first time ever, the heads of the major Asian States came together to express their political will and interest in a joint search for ways to strengthen peace and stability in the Asian region.

The adoption at the summit meeting of the final documents, the Almaty Act on the institutionalization of the CICA and the Declaration on Eliminating Terrorism and Promoting Dialogue among

Civilizations, has had an extraordinary significance. For the first time ever, the Asian continent has adopted documents making a significant contribution to regional and global security. Expressing our appreciation to the CICA member States for their efficient work at the summit meeting, we call on all interested States to continue their work to implement confidence-building measures in Asia.

We in Kazakhstan believe that the Shanghai Cooperation Organization can become an effective tool in ensuring security and stability in the region. The main mission of that organization is to address jointly the problems of security, as well as to create effective mechanisms for trade, economic and humanitarian cooperation.

The Johannesburg Summit fully highlighted the important need to overcome the antagonisms of modern economic and political development. It has become evident that with increasing globalization, the community of nations will have to pay close attention to the search for ways to ensure a more harmonious division of profits and benefits between the rich and poor among mankind. Addressing the forum in South Africa, the President of Kazakhstan, Mr. Nursultan Nazarbaev, rightly observed that without the natural and human resources of the developing countries the rich States would have never become rich.

It is commonly recognized that sustainable development is the only way to ensure the survival of mankind. Therefore, Kazakhstan supports targeted and coordinated efforts by the international community to solve burning economic, social and environmental problems of the Central Asian region. We attach great significance to cooperation with the United Nations in water resources management, rehabilitation of the environmental disaster areas in the Semipalatinsk region and the Aral Sea, the preservation of biodiversity and the prevention of soil degradation and desertification. At the same time, Kazakhstan has every right to expect more effective actions in this field on the part of the United Nations. Unfortunately, our country, as well as other regional States, have yet to receive assistance that would speed up the solution of the environmental problems.

Kazakhstan is interested in strengthening fruitful cooperation with the United Nations to improve regional transportation infrastructure, including within

the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECAs).

Kazakhstan is actively cooperating with its Eurasian Economic Community partners and considers that integration organization to be a very promising structure in terms of creating a common economic space for an extensive stretch of the Eurasian continent.

Our country stands for a more effective Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) and for making its activities more goal-oriented. We express our hope that the upcoming Istanbul summit will become a milestone in ECO's activities.

The diplomatic efforts of Kazakhstan are also aimed at further strengthening political cooperation, trade and economic ties with the Central Asian States. We believe that a recently created new organization, the Central Asian Union, has an important role to play in this regard.

The legal status of the Caspian Sea is becoming an increasingly important problem within the context of current international relations. The lack of consensus among the five Caspian States on the legal status of this unique water basin seriously hampers the chances of turning the Caspian Sea into a zone of peace and genuine cooperation. The issues of unrestricted navigation, the protection of biodiversity and the environment, as well as demilitarization, remain very much on the agenda. Kazakhstan has consistently called for the continuation of the preparatory work for a multilateral convention based on the consensus among the five Caspian States in order to develop secure legal safeguards providing for long-term and stable cooperation and for creating favourable conditions for attracting investments to develop the mineral resources of the Caspian Sea.

In this regard, Kazakhstan attaches great significance to an agreement with Russia on the delimitation of the seabed in the northern part of the Caspian Sea in order to ensure the rights of the users of the seabed subsoil, as well as to the protocol on the modified median line in this part of the sea signed in June of this year.

We believe that the signing of these documents represents a breakthrough in the protracted process of the development of the legal status of the Caspian Sea. These important agreements give the green light to

foreign investments in the development of the enormous mineral resources of Kazakhstan's sector of the sea. This will allow our country to join the group of leading world producers of hydrocarbons. We intend to continue our cooperation with international financial institutions and companies, thereby ensuring a favourable investment climate in Kazakhstan.

Kazakhstan has assumed obligations with regard to the observation and protection of fundamental human rights and freedoms. Our country is a participant in major international human rights conventions and exerts every effort to implement them.

Democracy and human rights are part and parcel of political life in Kazakhstan, which has undertaken, in complex geopolitical conditions, reforms aimed at the liberalization of the economy and at the creation of a civil society. These reforms are unprecedented for a post-Soviet State.

The question of human rights, in the view of our country, should be on the agenda of inter-State cooperation. At the same time, we believe that unified standards and criteria should be used in assessing the human rights situation in a particular country. We believe that the prerogative and responsibility for the consideration of the state of affairs in this very sensitive area should rest with the United Nations. We are pinning great hopes on the activities of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

In an increasingly interdependent world, there is no alternative to multilateral cooperation. Only jointly can we work successfully for a world without wars and conflicts, a world based on justice and prosperity.

We have embraced with great enthusiasm the statement made by the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, and express our support for his concept of joining efforts in order to address the key issues of modern times.

The President: I give the floor to His Excellency The Right Honourable Jack Straw, Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Mr. Straw (United Kingdom): In an imperfect world, our citizens need the United Nations as they have never needed it before. The United Nations has not resolved all conflicts by peaceful means, nor could it. The authority of the United Nations has to be underpinned by the force of arms. But the remarkable

achievement of this body has been to make the fine language of its Charter a force for good beyond just words; by this the United Nations has raised the bar against the illegitimate use of violence, by States and now by terrorists. In doing so, the United Nations has saved lives by the million and saved millions more from fear, poverty and tyranny.

Without the United Nations, there could have been no salvation for the people of East Timor, no prospect of lasting peace in Sierra Leone, no one to help rebuild Afghanistan. Forty years ago, President John F. Kennedy predicted a world in which 25 States would have nuclear weapons. But the Non-Proliferation Treaty, supported by international safeguards, has ensured that this nightmare scenario has failed to materialize.

All this should serve to remind us of the critical role which the United Nations has to play in world affairs, under its excellent Secretary-General, Kofi Annan. It is the responsibility of all of us here in the Assembly to ensure that the legitimacy, the authority and the capacity of the United Nations to preserve peace and to help build prosperity is strengthened and not undermined.

Today, alongside the traditional threats to global peace and security, the United Nations and the world community face three rising challenges: failing States, terrorism and weapons of mass destruction.

The world saw in Afghanistan the graphic dangers of State failure, where order breaks down, law is undermined and anarchy takes over. We in the international community must accept our share of the blame for allowing that country to disintegrate. Al Qaeda and their evil creed were only too willing to take advantage. But we delude ourselves if we believe that the chaos in Afghanistan over much of the last decade is unique. In too many areas of the world, our fellow citizens are forced to live under the rule of gangs, without the security and freedoms which we all should be able to take for granted.

If we are serious about the concept of an international community, then, as Members of the United Nations, we must accept our responsibility to help prevent States from failing and to restore order where States have already collapsed.

The United Kingdom's own experience in Afghanistan, as the International Security Assistance

Force (ISAF) lead nation, working with the United Nations, shows what can be done; but we all know that much more needs to be done. We need a much more structured and methodical approach to this growing problem of failed and failing States.

But the tools are there. At Monterrey in March and at Johannesburg earlier this month, the world community has built on the Millennium Development Goals to reduce poverty among the world's most disadvantaged people. We are backing this commitment with action. Between 1996 and 2006 the United Kingdom will have doubled its development assistance.

Together with the Doha Round of the World Trade Organization (WTO), we have within our grasp a new era of sustainable economic growth and prosperity, a stable political future for the developing world and a much more secure global environment.

But people cannot be freed from poverty unless they are also free from fear. Security is not an option; it is a necessity. Three years ago over half of Sierra Leone was under the control of rebels; over half the population was displaced; countless civilians had been murdered, abducted or horribly mutilated; a spiral of sickness and hunger was taking over. Now, thanks to United Nations and British intervention to end that decade-long civil war, people are returning home and rebuilding their shattered lives. But long-term commitment is necessary in situations like that.

As we found in Afghanistan, when we deal with failing States, we have to tackle the second challenge to international law and justice — that of global terrorism — as well.

All the nations of the world, and all its people — black, white, Buddhist, Christian, Jew, Muslim, Hindu and Sikh — have a common interest in defeating terrorism. There must be no hiding places for terrorism or for terrorists; no hiding places for their money; and no semantic hiding places either. The distinction some claim between terrorists and freedom-fighters is false and dangerous. Their victims enjoy no such distinction. There must be no such distinctions either in international law.

Security Council resolution 1373 (2001) created new obligations on all of us. The United Kingdom has been honoured to chair the Counter-Terrorism Committee. There has been an overwhelmingly positive response. But, as we recall those who lost their

lives on 11 September last year, we cannot relax our collective determination.

Alongside the threats from failing States and from terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction poses the greatest current threat to global security, and nowhere is the case for universal support for the enforcement of United Nations law stronger than in the field of weapons of mass destruction.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention comprise one of the world's most significant bodies of international law. For the past three decades, this corpus of law has ensured — with one infamous exception — that no States have resorted to these, the world's worst weapons.

That exception is Iraq. For two decades, Saddam Hussein's regime has defied and frustrated every attempt to enforce the international rule of law. Iraq is the only country to be condemned by the United Nations for breaching the Convention on Chemical Weapons. Iraq has fought wars of aggression against two neighbours, and has launched missile attacks against five countries in the region. Iraq has used poison gas against its own people. Saddam Hussein has persistently mocked the authority of the United Nations. No country has deceived every other country in the world as systematically and cynically as Iraq. And no country presents as fundamental a challenge to the United Nations as Iraq.

Every society, from the smallest village to the global community represented here in the General Assembly, must have rules, and every member of that community must accept responsibility for respecting and maintaining those rules. Without this, the very concept of community breaks down. So those of us who believe in an active international community cannot stand by and do nothing while Iraq continues to defy the will of the United Nations. All of us who believe in the United Nations have to make up our minds now about how to deal with Iraq. The authority of the United Nations itself is at stake.

We cannot let Iraq do grave damage to this Organization and the international order which it represents. We cannot let Iraq go on defying a decade of Security Council resolutions. If we do, we will find that our resolutions are dismissed by aggressors everywhere as mere words. We have spent 57 years

building this Organization beyond a talking shop. We cannot now let that work be undone.

There are times when hard choices have to be made. On Iraq, we have now reached such a moment. If we fail to deal with this challenge, the United Nations itself will be seriously weakened. And that would make the world a much more dangerous place.

As President Bush spelled out in his powerful speech to the Assembly here on Thursday, we have to be resolute in the face of Iraq's defiance and secure the will of the United Nations. We must require Iraq to re-admit inspectors, with unfettered access. We have not just an interest but a responsibility to ensure that Iraq complies fully with international law. We have to be clear to Iraq and to ourselves about the consequences which will flow from a failure by Iraq to meet its obligations.

And yes, in dealing with the threat posed by Iraq we must also tackle those other international challenges outlined so eloquently by Kofi Annan in his address.

Over the past year we have seen a further deterioration in security in Israel and in the occupied territories. There has never been a greater need for international involvement in the Middle East peace process to secure the outcome we all want to see: two States, Israel and Palestine living side by side within secure and recognized borders, based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 1397 (2002).

In Kashmir, we should continue to urge both India and Pakistan to act with restraint, and to seek to resolve that long-running conflict.

At the end of the cold war we had all hoped that future generations would be able to enjoy a world where cooperation rather than conflict was the hallmark of international affairs. That goal is still within reach, if we are united in tackling State failure, in the war against terrorism and in confronting those threats of weapons of mass destruction.

The tasks facing the founders of this institution were no less intimidating. Yet their combination of high values and hard-headed realism created the greatest instrument in history for the avoidance of war. Our founders' achievement has been formidable. But the Organization now faces new and emerging threats. We have to confront those threats and be ever alive to

the challenges which are out there to peace and justice across the world. All of us who believe in those principles of international law and justice have a duty to ensure that they are both upheld and enforced.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Mircea Geoana, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Romania.

Mr. Geoana (Romania) (spoke in French): Allow me to begin, Sir, by congratulating you on your election to preside over the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly. My congratulations go likewise to the outgoing president, His Excellency Mr. Han Seung-soo, for his dedication and for a job well done. I wish also to echo earlier speakers in welcoming, very warmly, Switzerland as the newest Member of the Organization and Timor-Leste, which will be joining us shortly.

Global security models, which are in a process of change after the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, have posed serious and unexpected challenges to the international community. We have been faced with tragic proof that our security is more fragile than we had imagined and that democracy and freedom have been under attack. We have been violently reminded that combating terrorism is a matter for us all.

The prompt and constructive response of my country, Romania, to the United Nations appeal for solidarity has been very clear. Our participation in the International Assistance Force for Afghanistan, approved by the Romanian Parliament in December 2001, clearly attests to our resolve to fulfil, in practice as well as in spirit, our commitment to the principles and purposes of the United Nations.

Following the adoption by the Security Council of its resolution 1373 (2001), we enacted legislation to prevent, in Romania, the financing of terrorist organizations and acts, and we have ratified the 12 United Nations conventions and protocols concerning terrorism.

We have been actively involved in operations in Afghanistan with our strategic allies and we are, together, tackling the consequences of the struggle against terrorism.

(spoke in English)

But have we, the international community, done enough? The Secretary-General, in his opening

statement, drew an uncompromising picture of the threats to peace, and rightly reminded us of our responsibilities.

Romania believes it is necessary to proceed unambiguously in condemning and actively combating all forms of terrorism and violent fanaticism through cooperation at the international level that is substantive, consistent and coherent. The financing of terrorism is an obvious target for action. Romania believes that the experience of regional liaison and joint operations in South-East Europe can be of use to international efforts to suppress the flow of funds to terrorist groups.

The terrorist threat calls for us to be even more vigilant in controlling the use and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, as well as conventional weapons, such as landmines and small arms, which can fall — sometimes too often — into the wrong hands. In this context, Romania calls on Iraq to comply with existing Security Council resolutions and to allow United Nations inspectors to return, immediately and unconditionally, to enable further decisions to be taken relevant to the people of Iraq and the security and stability of the area. Romania was on the Security Council in 1990 when the first resolutions on Iraq were adopted and contributed to building consensus at that time. We believe that the Security Council must respond to the continued defiance of its resolutions firmly and resolutely. There can be no doubt as to my Government's stand should fears about possible threats to global security prove justified. As we have done in the past, we will stand alongside our allies and freedom-loving nations in the defence of world peace.

A strong response to Iraq's long-term defiance of the Security Council's authority is also called for because of the threat to global security from weapons of mass destruction. The temptation to apply these same principles to other, localized conflict situations should be resisted, especially when mechanisms exist for dialogue and peaceful resolution. While States have the right to exercise control over their own security, they also have a responsibility to ensure that security measures do not undermine the foundations of democracy. We can adapt to these new realities without sacrificing human rights and universal values. Indeed, through respect for civil liberties and the promotion of equal opportunity and social cohesion, we can help to remove some of the root causes of terrorism:

resentment and frustration fuelled by poverty and marginalization.

This is a fundamental element of conflict prevention, but early warning and early intervention by the international community are not enough. The experiences of the last decade show that it is time to move away from ad hoc solutions for short-term problems towards an integrated and long-term approach to nation-building. By "integrated", I mean that the international response should be based on an efficient division of labour between the appropriate organizations, with a common mandate and a clear chain of command. By "long-term", I mean that international support should remain in place until security is seen to be durable and rehabilitation and local empowerment have become a reality.

The stabilization and rehabilitation process in Afghanistan is a test for the changing pattern of international cooperation. Ultimately, reconstruction efforts must be directed towards sustainability and ownership by the Afghan people. The recent attempt on President Karzai's life demonstrates the frailty of the current situation in Afghanistan. This and the attacks in Kabul and other cities are dramatic reminders of the price paid by too many Afghan generations for recovering their sovereignty and for winning the right to govern their country.

The intense effort that the United Nations has embarked upon in the democratic and physical reconstruction of the country is commendable. Romania believes that this commitment must be maintained as long as the dangers of a serious renewal of violence exist. Romania has already made a solid financial contribution to the international aid effort and is ready to offer further assistance, according to the requirements of the Afghan Government.

But efforts to aid Afghanistan should not stop at that country's borders. Stability for that country and the region will be assured only through a broader vision for the development of the whole of Central Asia. We need to find a way to link Europe and Central Asia by working up an integrated strategy that will reinforce democracy and bring economic prosperity not only across Europe, but to Eurasia as well. A first step must be to put an end to the "frozen conflicts" in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus.

The positive developments in South-East Europe show what can be achieved when the international

community takes action in a coherent and coordinated way. The United Nations and its international partners, notably the European Union, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, have worked tirelessly to help to reconstitute societies based on the rule of law and ethnic tolerance, but the process is not yet complete. It is vital that this decisive electoral autumn show beyond doubt that modern democracy has taken root in the western Balkans. By ensuring free and fair elections, political leaders in the region should keep their countries on the right path to European integration. As Romania draws closer to achieving its Euro-Atlantic integration ambitions, we will continue to contribute actively to efforts to break down the remaining divisions in South-East Europe and to speed up the integration of the whole region into the European mainstream.

The violent conflicts over the last decade awoke the world to the need for action against the horror of war crimes. The entry into force on 1 July of the International Criminal Court Statute represents a very significant step forward. Romania ratified the International Criminal Court Statute this year and remains deeply committed to ensuring that the Court function effectively as a viable and necessary instrument of international law. In this spirit, we encourage ongoing discussions, which should clarify some of the outstanding issues.

The danger that the violence in the Middle East will escalate beyond control cannot be ignored. My recent discussions with political leaders from the region have reinforced my conviction that it is crucial to find a way to renounce the logic of war in favour of a logic of peace. We call on the parties to engage in serious negotiations for a peaceful, comprehensive and lasting solution. Their success or failure will have consequences far beyond their own immediate region, impacting upon what might be termed the wider Middle East, encompassing the entire region from Central Asia to North Africa.

The two serious challenges for the twenty-first century are fighting terrorism and new security threats, on the one hand, and making globalization work for everyone everywhere, on the other. In both, the United Nations has a decisively important role to play. We have reached the point where we must address the global agenda in a way that finally meets people's expectations and achieves early results. We must

deliver in a coherent and pragmatic way on the commitments taken at Doha, Monterrey and Johannesburg, as well as other major United Nations conferences, such as the special session on children. We must design an urgent, clear and encouraging response to the humanitarian needs of Africa and promote conditions for the sustainable development of the African continent.

Tangible progress depends upon a new paradigm of cooperation between stakeholders of globalization, States, corporations, international organizations and, of course, civil society. Efficient implementation depends upon a new architecture of global governance that is fitted to today's realities and a renewed sense of responsibility among all States. Finally, success in achieving the millennium development goals depends upon a strict and verifiable system for monitoring implementation. A new sense of participation and partnership must energize our common contribution. In this respect, We welcome President Bush's announcement that the United States will rejoin the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

The graduation of the Central European countries from transition economies to membership of the European Union in the few years to come is proof that democracy with a functioning market economy and an open society does work. But there is a price, and that is the difficult decisions, politically and socially, of successful transition.

We have been fortunate to have European Union financial support and know-how, which have been vital in maintaining the momentum and the public acceptance of sometimes painful reform programmes. In return, we will do the same by sharing the burden of international responsibility and assistance. We have not only a moral and historic, but also a strategic, responsibility to address the needs of the poor and disadvantaged in our region and beyond. Discontent and disillusionment breed instability, which in turn gives terrorism fertile conditions in which to flourish.

Governments, business and civil society have a unique opportunity to accelerate economic development through the use of the powerful new information and communication technologies. In preparation for the forthcoming World Summit on the Information Society, to be held at Geneva in 2003 and at Tunis in 2005, Romania will host, from 7 to 9

November this year, a regional conference at the ministerial level organized jointly with the International Telecommunication Union and the Economic Commission for Europe. Our aim is to draw up a preliminary plan of action with specific mechanisms for bridging the digital divide.

The Security Council is the linchpin of the United Nations. Romania believes that we must redouble our efforts to promote reform of that body. The composition of the Council should be more representative of our global membership and should reflect more accurately the realities of the global balance of power today. Romania's candidature for a Council seat in 2004-2005 is motivated by our deep commitment to the United Nations as a credible and efficient contributor to peace and stability around the world.

What will we take home from this session? We need to reflect on how to eliminate the habit of ad hoc cooperation. We need to think creatively and to craft continuous patterns of teamwork, and we should be more receptive to what people want from the United Nations. That is how we can best live up to our commitments and overcome what is seen as the handicap of international organizations: the discrepancy between words and deeds. Let us leave this session determined to work on mapping out pledges and achievements in a way that will add vigour to our words and reinforce our credibility. That, after all, is the source of our unique strength.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Joschka Fischer, Deputy Chancellor and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany.

Mr. Fischer (Germany) (*spoke in German; English text provided by the delegation*): First of all, I should like to wish you every success, Mr. President, in your responsible office. We are delighted that you, a representative of our Czech neighbours, will preside over the General Assembly this year. I also express my sincere thanks to the outgoing President.

I endorse the statement of the Danish presidency of the European Union.

One year ago, the world was shaken by the terror of 11 September, which was disdainful of human life. Civilian aircraft were transformed into guided missiles whose deployment had been planned without any regard for human life. The devastating consequences

destroyed families, shattered hopes and tore people apart, regardless of their age, gender or religious affiliation. Three days ago, we remembered the victims in a moving ceremony here in New York. We have not forgotten the images of 11 September; we have not recovered from the shock. Our solidarity with the United States is unbroken. We understand our American friends. Just like them, we are not prepared to live under the sword of Damocles that terrorism represents.

The murderous attack on the people and the Administration of the United States was also an attack on all open societies. Countless States mourn their countrymen among the thousands of World Trade Center victims. The attack could have struck any open society, but the terrorists consciously chose the United States as a symbol of freedom and democracy.

We know that the new totalitarian challenge is also directed at us all. Since 11 September 2001, the community of nations has had to look at the question of peace and security at the dawn of the twenty-first century from a whole new angle. We will not be able to negotiate with terrorists like Osama bin Laden. His aim is to kill as many innocent people as possible, thus creating the maximum degree of terror and fear. If the terrorists succeed in acquiring weapons that are yet more horrific, they will deploy them against us all without hesitation. Therefore, we must work together in the international coalition against terrorism to overcome and destroy that international terrorist network. The highly dangerous combination of religious hatred, smouldering regional conflicts, terrorist attacks and the danger of the deployment of weapons of mass destruction must be prevented at any price.

But, above all else, we must not forget: on the one hand, terrorism must be fought resolutely by the military and police; on the other, we need to resolve the political and social conflicts quite rightly emphasized in the Millennium Declaration, as they form the breeding ground for the emergence of terrorism. Opting for one approach and neglecting the other risks failure.

Our common goal is for the people in our countries to be able to live in safety and freedom, and without want. To achieve that, we need a system of global cooperative security that, unlike the former bipolarity of the cold war, includes all levels of global policy relevant to security: the relations among great

Powers and their alliances as well as the potential danger of regional crises and the threat posed by asymmetrical conflicts. For one thing is clearer than ever after 11 September: terrorism threatens world peace just as much as civil war and regional conflicts. Such a system, therefore, must not be toothless, but rather must function in all three fields through reliable verification systems and enforceable sanctions mechanisms. I am convinced that developing such a comprehensive system of global cooperative security will be our central political task for the twenty-first century.

This problem can be solved only through multilateralism — that is, if nations work together. Terrorism does not stop at national borders, and shaping globalization is a task that Governments can no longer tackle alone. Thus, the United Nations has a major role to play in developing this security system; it is the most important forum for establishing global rules. No other organization has comparable legitimacy and credibility. Decisively strengthening its ability to act by continuing the reform path of the Secretary-General is, therefore, a central focus of German foreign policy.

The developments in Iraq fill us with grave concern. Saddam Hussein's regime is a brutal dictatorship. Under his leadership, Iraq has attacked its neighbours Iran and Kuwait, has fired missiles at Israel and has used poison gas against Iran and against its own Kurdish population. The regime is horrendous for the Iraqi people and a risk to the region. For that reason, an effective containment policy and reliable military control of the no-fly zones have been implemented and a strict sanctions regime against Iraq has been introduced since the Gulf War.

The regime in Baghdad must not own or produce the means for mass destruction or the systems to deliver them. Despite binding demands from the Security Council, Saddam Hussein refuses to provide credible and verifiable answers to the pressing questions posed by the community of nations regarding his weapons of mass destruction. Therefore, the United Nations not only must maintain the pressure on the Iraqi Government but also must intensify it.

We welcome the fact that President Bush, in his most recent speech, turned towards the Security Council. Even if it becomes very difficult, we must do everything possible to find a diplomatic solution.

The Security Council and Member States must make it unequivocally clear to Baghdad that the unrestricted and unconditional re-admission of the weapons inspectors is the only way to avert a great tragedy for Iraq and the entire region. The Iraqi Government must implement all relevant Security Council resolutions in their entirety and without delay.

We do not, however, want any automatism leading to the use of military force. The fight against international terrorism remains perilous. We have not yet managed to fully stabilize Afghanistan. Explosive regional conflicts in Kashmir, the Middle East and the Caucasus must be resolved or at least effectively contained.

Certain central questions arise for us. Have all economic and political means of pressure been truly exhausted? What consequences would military intervention have? What would it mean for regional stability? What effect would it have on the Middle East conflict? Are there new, concrete findings and facts? Does the situation as assessed justify the taking of a great risk, namely, taking responsibility for peace and stability in the entire region for years or even decades to come? Would such action gain the consent of the Arab neighbours? What consequences would it have for the continuation of the global coalition against terrorism? In the face of these open questions, we feel deep scepticism with regard to military action and thus hold to our approach.

I would like to pose the further question of whether a peaceful solution to the question of the Middle East could not contribute considerably more to the establishment of regional stability, to the successful fight against terrorism and to the effective control and disarmament of weapons of mass destruction. In that way, would the regime in Baghdad not be isolated much more effectively, thus generating political pressure for change? Would this cooperative approach to finding a new order for the region not be a more promising way to bring democracy to the Middle East — one that would be supported by the regional Powers?

Nowhere is the connection between terrorism and regional conflict more obvious than in the Near and Middle East. The breakthrough to peace is therefore of paramount importance in that region of the world. The consensus among the international community of nations on the Middle East question is now greater than

ever. We must all pull together to achieve the goal envisaged by President Bush for 2005, that of two States, Israel and a democratic Palestine, living as neighbours within secure and recognized borders. The European Union has devised a road map to achieve that goal. An early conference on the Middle East could help to build bridges and accelerate the process. Together with our European Union partners, we are ready to make a considerable contribution in that respect.

A comprehensive peace in the Middle East must also include Lebanon and Syria. Saudi Arabia's significant initiative contains the assurance that the Arab world would then also be ready to fully normalize its relations with Israel.

Without a just and lasting solution to regional conflicts, we will not be able to eliminate the recruitment base for terrorists and thus successfully counter the asymmetrical threat. Afghanistan is an obvious example here. The Taliban system has collapsed there and the Al Qaeda network has largely been destroyed. We are still a long way from being able to call the situation in the country stable and secure, but progress can be noted. The implementation of the provisions of the Bonn Conference agreement began with the formation of a legitimate Interim Administration. The process that was launched on the Petersberg was taken to the next level with the convening in June of the emergency loya jirga. For the first time in years, the Afghan people have the chance to lead a life of dignity based on self-determination.

The people of Afghanistan will only grow in courage, however, when they see and feel that the international community is also standing by its pledges for the reconstruction of their country. The commitments of the donor countries must materialize in the form of concrete projects.

A system of global cooperative security must be based on a comprehensive security concept. This must embrace not only military security but also the economy, human rights, democracy and culture.

"To achieve a safer world, we must create a better world": that is how President Bush summed up the situation in his impressive speech to the German Bundestag last May. Shaping cooperative global security therefore also means shaping a new global economic order. Account must be taken of the needs of all — the developing and the developed world alike.

Resources must be more fairly distributed and poorer countries must be able to participate in international trade and take advantage of the opportunities of globalization. This will necessitate free market access for all, as well as the realization of economic and political freedoms and a just and reliable legal framework.

We must not close our eyes to the problems of Africa, in particular. The food situation in the South of the continent is a particular source of concern. Countless people are going hungry and comprehensive assistance is needed there. In Zimbabwe, however, the former granary of Africa, a wholly irresponsible policy is the reason for the difficult situation. In Zimbabwe, hunger is caused principally not by failed harvests or droughts but by self-destructive governance — a policy of keeping a grip on power through the suffering of the people. Such a policy relies upon the fact that the international community's humanitarian conscience and readiness to assume responsibility will reduce the consequences. We must hold this policy up against the benchmarks defined by Africa itself in the framework of the New Partnership for Africa's Development.

Climate and energy policy is a key component of the new global economic order. The Kyoto Protocol can be seen as a milestone in global climate protection. I am delighted that several countries have recently announced plans to ratify the Protocol, and hope that this will happen as soon as possible so that it can enter into force. In the long term, a sensible energy policy — and that means, above all, the promotion of renewable energy sources and economical energy consumption — is the best solution to the climate problem. Work must therefore start today. Let us not forget that difficult economic and ecological problems, with their social and humanitarian repercussions, will increasingly endanger stability and security too.

The protection of human rights must be one of the pillars of a global security system. All efforts to secure peace will fail if human rights are not protected and made a reality. We need a binding global set of values to prevent and overcome conflicts that emerge through inequality, injustice and the denial of freedom. Here, too, States are called upon to play a decisive and active role. Moreover, we must be careful today to ensure that basic human rights are not annulled under the pretext of combating terrorism. No one has the right to an "anti-terrorism bonus".

Cooperative global security will have to measure up to the binding legal framework in which it is embedded. It is imperative for the globalization process to be flanked by a growing set of international rules, because international law and the rule of law constitute the indispensable foundations for peaceful and ordered coexistence. That is why the establishment of the International Criminal Court is so important to us. Its Statute entered into force on 1 July; Germany, along with all the other members of the European Union, is among the 79 States to have ratified it. The Assembly of States Parties gave the green light this week to the establishment of the Court. Next spring we will celebrate its opening in The Hague. The International Criminal Court will start work as soon as possible and as efficiently as possible. But it must not be weakened in its work from the outset.

My country is applying for a non-permanent seat on the Security Council for the period 2003-2004. Germany wants to play an active role in developing the international security system within the United Nations along the lines that I have outlined. I would like to ask all members for their vote in the election on 27 September.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Felipe Pérez Roque, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba.

Mr. Pérez Roque (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): A year ago, the General Assembly had to be postponed because of the ruthless crime committed on 11 September. There was then a worldwide wave of solidarity towards the people of the United States and, particularly, towards the families of the almost 3,000 innocent victims of that unjustifiable terrorist attack.

The conditions were created for setting up a genuine international alliance under the auspices and leadership of the United Nations, with absolute respect for the purposes and principles enshrined in its Charter. Nearly all countries, above and beyond ideological, political, cultural and religious differences, expressed our willingness to collaborate actively with this endeavour of unmistakable common interest.

However, another vision was imposed. In an unusual fashion, it was stated that whoever did not support the war decided upon by a single country would then be on the side of terrorism. It was even announced to the Security Council that that country reserved the right to launch future attacks on its own

against other nations. A unilateral war was then unleashed, whose death toll is still unknown to us and whose most tangible consequence is probably the blow to the credibility of the United Nations and to multilateralism as a means to cope with the complex challenges currently ahead of us.

What is the outcome today? There are greater feelings of hatred, vengeance and insecurity, which are not helpful in the fight against terrorism. Dangerous xenophobic and discriminatory tendencies threaten the existence of a plural and democratic world. There has been a step backward in the field of public freedoms and civil rights.

In the meantime, there is a lack of political will by certain powers to rigorously apply, without selectivity and without double standards, the 12 existing international legal instruments on terrorism. In addition, no advances have been made in the definition, so indispensable today, of State terrorism.

For its part, Cuba — a victim of terrorist acts for over four decades, which stated its opinions in the Assembly with poise and firmness and unwaveringly condemned the crime of September 11 and terrorism as such, but which also opposed the war out of ethical considerations and the respect for international law — signed and ratified the 12 international conventions to combat terrorism and adopted a national law to fight this scourge. It has cooperated fully with the work of the committee set up for such purposes by the Security Council and, at the bilateral level, it proposed to the United States Government the adoption of a programme to combat terrorism, which was, incomprehensibly, rejected by that Government.

Until today, and despite the fact that it has not developed and has no intention ever to develop nuclear weapons, Cuba has not been a State party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, for it is an insufficient and discriminatory instrument allowing the establishment of a club of nuclear powers without any concrete disarmament commitments. However, as a signal of the clear political will of the Cuban Government and its commitment to an effective disarmament process that ensures world peace, our country has decided to adhere to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. In doing so, we reaffirm our hope that all nuclear weapons will finally be totally eliminated under strict international verification.

In addition, and despite the fact that the only nuclear power in the Americas pursues a policy of hostility towards Cuba that does not rule out the use of force, Cuba will also ratify the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, known as the Treaty of Tlatelolco, that was signed by our country in 1995.

On a day like today, I would like to repeat Cuba's remarks at the last session of the General Assembly:

“Only under the leadership of the United Nations will we be able to defeat terrorism. Cooperation, and not war, is the way. The coordination of actions, and not imposition ... is the method. ...

“Cuba reiterates its condemnation of terrorism in all of its forms and manifestations. Cuba reiterates that it will not allow its territory ever to be used for terrorist acts against the people of the United States or of any other country.” (*A/56/PV.50, pp. 21 and 22*)

Why have we not seen the same zeal with which the war in Afghanistan was unleashed in the search for a just and lasting solution for peace in the Middle East? Why have we not refrained from uttering even a single word to condemn the aggressions against the territory of Palestine and the crimes against its people? Why has there not been any condemnation of the selective assassinations and the use of the armed forces against the civilian population? Why are there assurances of impunity for the actions of the Israeli army, thus tying the hands of the Security Council? Why have there not been any firm actions to implement the Security Council resolutions that ensure the proclamation of an independent and sovereign Palestinian State, with East Jerusalem as its capital? Why is the only superpower on the planet acting differently from one case to the other? Why is there no end to the suffering of the Palestinian mothers whose children are also murdered, like the innocent people on 11 September? These questions should be answered by those who in this Hall carry upon their shoulders the responsibility for what is currently happening in the occupied Palestinian and Arab territories.

A new war against Iraq already seems inevitable; an aggravation of the situation of constant aggression that that people has lived in over the last ten years. The buzzword now is “pre-emptive war”, in open violation

of the spirit and the letter of the United Nations Charter.

Cuba defends principles, not expedience. Therefore, although its supporters may feel upset, it emphatically opposes this war. Cuba is not driven by an anti-American spirit, even when its Government maintains and strengthens a 40-year-old blockade against our people. But refraining from telling the truth out of cowardice or political calculation is not characteristic of Cuban revolutionaries. Therefore, Cuba hereby states that it opposes a new military action against Iraq. It does so while recalling that at one point it supported the Security Council resolution asking the Iraqi Government to end the occupation of Kuwait.

We believe that the development of weapons of mass destruction today would be insane, because the only possible way that we envision for world peace is through general and complete disarmament, including nuclear disarmament, and the rechanneling of the money currently spent on weapons to address the dire socio-economic problems of humankind.

The Arab countries have been emphatic in their rejection of this war, and most European countries do not approve of it. The international community is increasingly concerned about the announcement of a new war on the basis of unconfirmed allegations and disregarding the obvious reality that Iraq cannot pose a danger to the United States.

If the United States Government unleashes a new war against Iraq, either by imposing it on the Security Council or by deciding upon it unilaterally in opposition to international public opinion, we will bear witness to the emergence of a century of unilateralism and the forced retirement of the United Nations. It will then seem that the cold war years — with its distant memory of bipolarism, mistakes and contradictions — were not as futile and perilous as the era that is now inexorably looming over the world.

The United Nations has to be saved. Cuba defends the need both for its preservation and for its most profound reform and democratization, but all this must be accomplished through respect for its Charter and not by rewriting it or distorting its purposes and principles. The General Assembly must ultimately be allowed to play the role laid down for it in the Charter. The Security Council has to be rescued from the disrepute and doubts that are so rightly weighing it

down, so that it may become a truly representative body. I am talking about the presence of the third world and not about military power as a justification for membership of a democratic body; I am talking about eliminating the veto and other antidemocratic practices from a transparent body; and I am talking about putting an end to the secret conspiracies and to the substantive decisions made in private by a mere few and then imposed on the rest.

Today, when it is more threatened than ever, Cuba strongly defends the need to preserve multilateralism in international relations. That is why we have witnessed in frustration the disappointing completion of the negotiations for the establishment of the International Criminal Court, which Cuba supported on the understanding that it would be a truly impartial, non-selective, efficient and independent body to complement national justice systems. To use the Security Council as a tool to amend de facto the international treaty that gave birth to the Court, or to impose upon others humiliating bilateral agreements, compelling them to violate their international obligations deriving from that instrument, is not only arrogant, but also irresponsible.

The International Criminal Court now vaunted is not the body that we need and have fought for, subject as it is to hegemonic political interests and already a potential victim of manipulation, and bound from its inception to the decisions of a permanent member of the Security Council. What real international justice can be expected of a body that lacks a definition of the crime of aggression or that will receive instructions from the Security Council either to call off or to postpone a trial indefinitely at the request of one of its permanent members? Who can guarantee that the Court will not end up becoming an instrument at the service of interventionism and domination by the most powerful countries?

Cuba reiterates here today what it expressed at the recent Johannesburg Summit: a reworking of international financial institutions is called for. A legitimate replacement for the International Monetary Fund is called for. It is essential that the work of the World Bank be aimed at supporting the genuine exercise by over 130 third world countries of their right to development. It is essential that the United Nations system be provided with new financial resources to fight poverty, underdevelopment, disease and famine. It is essential that the World Trade Organization be

rescued from the interests of a handful of rich and powerful countries and transformed into an instrument at the service of a fair and equitable international trading system.

The meagre results derived from the Monterrey and Johannesburg conferences and the justified wave of annoyance and uncertainty in their wake once again raise the issue of the lack of political will by the major industrialized Powers to relinquish a portion of their privileges in order to produce a real change in the unfair and unsustainable world order that is currently visiting impoverishment and hopelessness upon two thirds of the planet's population.

I recognize that Cuba's remarks may not be accepted by some in this Hall. I even understand that they could be interpreted as a tirade against a country in particular. However, that is not the reason. Words must be used to uphold the truth and that is what Cuba has done and will always do. We are a small, noble people that long ago proclaimed that, for all Cubans, "motherland is humankind".

The President: I now give the floor to the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of Oman, His Excellency Mr. Yousef Bin Alawi Bin Abdulla.

Mr. Abdulla (Oman) (spoke in Arabic): It gives me great pleasure to offer, on behalf of the Government of the Sultanate of Oman, our warmest congratulations to you, Sir, on your election as President of the General Assembly at its current session. We assure you of our fullest cooperation towards achieving the noble goals and objectives to which we collectively aspire for the benefit of mankind and the maintenance of international peace and security.

In this connection, we wish to express our appreciation for the ongoing tireless efforts of Secretary-General Kofi Annan on behalf of international peace and security, the rule of international law and the work of the Organization in this regard. We also thank him for his annual report, which details the achievements of the United Nations, the obstacles ahead and its vision of the future, embodying the conscience and aspirations of the international community.

I also take this opportunity to welcome the accession of the Swiss Federation and the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste to membership of the United Nations. We are confident that their membership will

be an important asset in the promotion of the work of this Organization in achieving its noble goals of international peace and security.

Here in the renowned city of New York, we are commemorating the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001. Once again, we would like to express our deepest sympathies and condolences to the families of the victims of that senseless attack. We wish also to reaffirm our solidarity with the United States of America in fighting all forms of terror against innocent people everywhere.

The Middle East is experiencing increased tension due to a serious regression in the peace process on all tracks, particularly the Israeli-Palestinian track. The primary causes of this are the Israeli Government's deviation from the fair principles and foundations established at the 1991 Madrid Conference, and the desire of successive Israeli Governments since 1996 to impose peace through excessive force. This runs counter to Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), and to the formula of land for peace. Israel is pursuing a policy of procrastination and intimidation and is circumventing international instruments and agreements signed by the parties concerned. This has resulted in a further escalation of Palestinian resistance, by all factions and in all forms, to Israeli occupation.

My Government condemns all terrorist acts, regardless of their motivation and deplors all acts of violence against innocent civilians, whether perpetrated by the Palestinian or the Israeli side. Events have proven that the use of force against the Palestinian people will not lead to a fair solution, to an end to violence or to security, as the Israeli Government claims; nor will it end the legitimate Palestinian resistance against Israeli occupation. The end of such resistance is contingent upon the end of Israeli occupation.

All Arab States have affirmed that the achievement of a peace based on the principles of international law and justice is our strategic choice, and we have exerted great efforts to that end, the latest being the Arab peace initiative adopted unanimously at the Beirut Summit held last March. This historic initiative was widely welcomed by the international community because it is in conformity with international legitimacy and principles, and in compliance with Security Council resolutions 242

(1967) and 338 (1973), which demand the withdrawal of Israel from the Arab territories occupied since June 1967, including Al-Quds Al-Sharif, and the granting to Palestinian refugees of the right to return, in return for the recognition of Israel by Arab States and the normalization of relations with it.

Security Council resolution 1397 (2002) sets out the concept of establishing a recognized Palestinian State peacefully coexisting alongside the State of Israel. In that connection, my Government calls on the international community, especially Security Council members, to shoulder their responsibility to ensure that the Israeli Government will respect and implement relevant international resolutions and respond seriously to Arab and international efforts.

My Government supports the just position taken by the Syrian Arab Republic with respect to regaining the occupied Golan Heights and its request for Israeli withdrawal to the line of 4 June 1967. In the same vein, we support the position of the Republic of Lebanon with regard to recovering the occupied Shab'a farms area and its demand that Israel fully implement Security Council resolution 425 (1978), which calls for the immediate withdrawal of Israeli forces from all Lebanese territory, including the Shab'a farms area.

The overall humanitarian situation in Iraq remains tragic due to the ongoing economic sanctions imposed on Iraq since August 1990. Consequently, my Government emphasizes the importance of a Security Council review of the international sanctions policy imposed on countries, a review that would lead to easing the humanitarian harm that befalls peoples, and that would take into consideration the status of a targeted Government's implementation of international resolutions.

My Government reiterates its call upon the Security Council to put an end to the human suffering in Iraq, and in that regard we call for the continuation of dialogue and discussions between Iraq and the United Nations with a view to Iraq fulfilling its remaining international commitments. The Security Council needs to put in place a clear-cut and specific mechanism telling Iraq what it needs to do to end the tragic suffering and to arrive at a final and complete lifting of the economic sanctions.

We feel optimistic and pleased at the accomplishments of the Arab Summit in Beirut, especially in terms of its positive climate in creating a

spirit of understanding and rapprochement between Iraq and Kuwait. In that connection, my Government welcomes the Iraqi initiative to return the Kuwaiti national archives and urges the Iraqi Government to persist with the option of continuous and constructive dialogue and serious consultations to fulfil its unfulfilled commitments under Security Council resolutions, specifically relating to prisoners of war and missing Kuwaiti and third-country citizens. In that regard, we urge the Iraqi Government to cooperate with the Tripartite Commission and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to deal with this humanitarian issue.

My Government is confident that the Iraqi file cannot be closed without continuous diplomatic efforts by all, through United Nations channels and in any other political way available. We thus find no justification for any military operation against Iraq. We therefore welcome the statement made by President George W. Bush of the United States at the outset of the general debate, in which he spoke of addressing the Iraqi crisis through the Security Council.

My Government follows with great interest and optimism the official contacts maintained between the United Arab Emirates and the Islamic Republic of Iran regarding the dispute on the three islands belonging to the Emirates, Abu Musa, Greater Tunb and Lesser Tunb. We hope that these contacts and negotiations will lead to an agreement on an effective mechanism for the settlement of this issue.

My country, along with other countries in the region, is interested in the establishment of security and stability in the Indian subcontinent. In that regard, we place high value on international efforts to contain the conflict between India and Pakistan, and we urge those countries to benefit from international diplomacy to agree on an effective mechanism leading to a peaceful and final settlement of the Kashmir dispute.

Regarding Afghanistan, we welcome the return of that country to the international family, and we look forward to the establishment of security and stability in its territory under the supervision of a Government reflecting the aspirations of all parties in Afghanistan. My Government values international efforts to assist the Afghan Government and the international community's ongoing financial and technical assistance for rebuilding the country and providing for the basic

needs of the Afghan people after so many years of suffering and war.

My country condemns all forms of terrorism. In line with the purposes of the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security, we reaffirm our support for international efforts to fight terrorism and our commitment to the relevant international resolutions, including Security Council resolution 1373 (2001), and all relevant Islamic, Arab and international treaties and agreements to which my country has acceded. My delegation expresses its readiness to cooperate with the United Nations in fighting international terrorism, in accordance with the principles of international law and the principle of national sovereignty, and taking into account the need to distinguish between terrorism and legitimate resistance against occupation. The Sultanate of Oman supports the call for the convening under United Nations auspices of an international conference on terrorism in order to agree on a clear international definition of terrorism and to set up a mechanism to address and eradicate terrorism.

My country deeply believes that the accession and commitment of States to treaties and conventions on disarmament will strengthen and preserve peace and security on the regional and international levels. Consequently, the signature of the Sultanate of Oman remains on the record as a State party to such treaties.

Based on that principle, we emphasize the need to take practical measures to make the Middle East a region free from all weapons of mass destruction. In that connection, we request Israel to join all relevant treaties, beginning with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), and to subject its nuclear facilities to the safeguards inspection regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency. That would create a positive climate and put an end to arms proliferation in the region.

My country calls on the United Nations to continue its broad-based efforts to rid the world completely of all types of weapons of mass destruction. We urge nuclear-weapon States in particular to formulate time-bound programmes to achieve that goal as soon as possible. In that regard, my Government commends the United States and the Russian Federation for having reached an agreement on the reduction of their nuclear arsenals.

My country is currently presiding over the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), and hosted the twenty-second session of the Supreme Council of the GCC, held in December 2001 in Muscat. That summit resulted in the adoption of many decisions and resolutions and other achievements, including the signing of an economic agreement among member States and an agreement on a standardized customs duty of 5 per cent on all imported goods. That agreement will take effect when a customs union among member States comes into force at the beginning of next year. The Council also took a decision on a unified Gulf currency. That will enhance economic structures, facilitate differential trade and increase the Gulf's competitiveness with other regional economic groups, in addition to promoting the labour market and the private sector in our countries. It will also attract more investors and commercial partnerships within the great Arab region, with other friendly States, and in world markets.

Among the prominent results of the Muscat summit was our leaders' decision to invite the Republic of Yemen to join a number of Gulf joint establishments. That decision was taken based on the mutual desire and deep belief of both parties that the incorporation of Yemen into the GCC in a gradual and calculated manner will conform to the economic and social needs and development circumstances of Yemen and will serve the common interests of the region.

We are working to preserve the environment. We have a strong record of achievements and measures taken by our Government to plan national environmental protection strategies. However, it is no secret that many obstacles threaten our environment internally, regionally and internationally. Among the challenges is the lack of sufficient water to cope with population growth, which will endanger our population and will increase the risk of desertification, making it necessary that we intensify scientific research and allocate the resources necessary for that purpose.

We are happy to have participated in the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development, and we wish to emphasize our interest in the outcome documents adopted at the conference. We also take this opportunity to emphasize the need to respect United Nations resolutions and decisions as well as the Charter.

The President: I remind members of the 15-minute time limit on statements, and urge them to adjust their statement to conform to that agreed limit. I now call on His Excellency Mr. Erkki Tuomioja, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland.

Mr. Tuomioja (Finland): One year after the terrible attacks of 11 September, we commemorate the innocent victims of those crimes. The best way we can honour their memory is by taking up and acting upon all the many-faceted challenges that terrorism and other threats pose to human security. The world has changed irrevocably, although we cannot as yet say exactly how. We do not even know if our immediate reaction a year ago has been successfully put to use to make the world a better and safer place in which to live.

Afghanistan is no longer a base for global terrorism, and joint efforts to uproot terrorist networks are making progress, but the threat of new attacks has not been eliminated. At some stage we will also reach the limit of what can be done through military force and police action alone to stop terrorism. Even where the use of military force is clearly necessary and justified, as it was against Al Qaeda and the Taliban, it is never an adequate answer. In Afghanistan we are now faced with the need to use a full range of civilian crisis management capabilities, as well as with the need for a long-term commitment to reconstruction and the development of a stable and drug-free economy, and to enable democracy and respect for human rights to take root in a country that has suffered from war and strife for decades. And Afghanistan is only one of many places in today's world where such a commitment from the international community is needed.

We must also come to grips with conditions in which some people can regard even terrorism as justified. To say that does not imply any understanding for indiscriminate terrorism. Terrorism is a crime whose perpetrators must be brought to justice irrespective of their motives.

It is vitally important to underline the need to strengthen the rule of law. When terrorists attack democracy, humanity and justice, we should not and cannot fight it with means that are in conflict with those basic values that the terrorists are attacking. It is time to review frankly the measures taken after 11

September and to rectify any excesses that are not acceptable in societies based on freedom and justice.

The International Criminal Court (ICC) has been in gestation for many years, and its creation can be regarded as one of the major achievements of the United Nations. It was not created primarily to deal with terrorism, but the importance of the ICC has obviously grown, not diminished, since 11 September. The ICC is a long-standing goal of Finland and the European Union, and we must not allow it to be undermined. The ICC must not become an issue of international dispute. We must safeguard it as an effective and independent judicial institution so that we can convince those States that remain outside it to join us in making it truly universal.

Terrorism is only one of many new threats to our security that are no longer linked to the threat of traditional war between nation-States.

In a world where our entire national defence policies and our efforts to build collective security have been based on the need to wage or deter traditional war, we now need new and fresh thinking. It is not only that military power has become partly impotent in delivering security. It is also evident that we cannot contain these threats through isolation or by acting unilaterally.

The United Nations and its Security Council have global responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. Human lives are equally valuable all over the world. People in crisis situations need the protection and the action of the international community. Individual and minor crises can turn into major threats to international peace and security. Member States must give the United Nations the wherewithal that is necessary for meaningful action in preventing crises, managing conflicts and building peace after conflicts. Action needs true commitment to multilateralism, which must exceed national interests and unilateralism. Multilateralism cannot be exercised à la carte whenever convenient. Global interests require global action.

An undeniable success story in the history of the United Nations is the Organization's peacekeeping activities. Countless lives have been saved by United Nations peacekeeping operations. But we know, too, that possibly even more lives have been lost if and when the United Nations has not been able or allowed to operate. The reason has been the lack of political

will or the prevalence of national interests in the Security Council. I would like to reiterate that the Security Council is mandated to act on behalf of all Member States.

The concept of peacekeeping has evolved considerably during the existence of the United Nations from purely military operations into versatile, complex and continuous efforts that extend in some cases to nation-building. A growing element in them is civilian crisis management. This should be further strengthened. Crisis management in its whole continuum should also be based on broad cooperation and compatibility. Present complex crises are often too demanding for any one organization to deal with. All regional organizations should work closely together with the United Nations and other organizations sharing the burden of maintaining international peace and security.

The Middle East remains the region where our concerns are most concentrated. The conflict between Israel and Palestine has, if anything, worsened. We support all efforts of the "quartet" to get the peace process working again on the basis of the relevant United Nations resolutions. We support the Palestinian administration's effort at reform, which we have rightly demanded must be undertaken, and we expect a one-hundred-per-cent effort from it to stop all terrorist activities. At the same time, the Palestinians must be given the prospect of a clear commitment and a timetable for the creation of an independent and viable Palestinian State. The Palestinian administration has to be given the resources and conditions with which it can fulfil the requirements of what the international community demands of it and of what the Palestinian people have the right to expect.

Without progress in the Middle East peace process, any military action in the region can have extremely dangerous and unforeseen consequences. It is imperative that efforts to get Iraq to abide unconditionally with all the resolutions of the Security Council remain the responsibility of the United Nations.

When the United Nations was founded, the world's population was 2.4 billion. Now we are more than 6 billion, and population growth, while slowly levelling off, will bring that number to at least 10 billion before stabilizing. This is a huge challenge for mankind. We have only a few decades, at most, to

bring our economic, production and societal models to conform to the exigencies of sustainable development. But this is not only an environmental challenge. Nations and peoples must learn to live and to act together in an ever-shrinking world where no one can manage on his own.

In a rapidly globalizing world, the need for keen international cooperation becomes all the more evident. Decisions taken in one part of the world have many effects elsewhere. This can quickly lead to an ever-widening gap and fragmentation between countries and within countries. Comprehensive implementation of the Millennium Declaration will make an important impact on narrowing that gap. A positive example of the means we can employ to meet the goals of the Declaration is the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), which demonstrates the genuine desire of the African nations to take responsibility for their future. Finland attaches great importance to the implementation of NEPAD.

Globalization has wealth-creating potential through the international division of labour and a more efficient use of resources. It can increase individual freedom and make societies more open. But, on the other hand, it is incontestable that globalization has not benefited everybody or every country in an equal manner. Globalization can bring risks and threats to the environment, core labour standards and trade unions, and it can challenge national and minority cultures. It can also be socially damaging. On the whole, however, globalization is not only inevitable but also potentially positive. The United Nations has an important role in managing and harnessing globalization for the benefit of all. We the Member States must fully participate in that work.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency The Honourable Sir Rabbie Namaliu, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Immigration of Papua New Guinea.

Sir Rabbie Namaliu (Papua New Guinea): On behalf of the people and the Government of Papua New Guinea, I join previous speakers in congratulating you, Sir, on your election as President of the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly. Your election to the helm of the Assembly shows the high esteem in which the international community holds you and your country, the Czech Republic.

I take this opportunity to express my delegation's sincere appreciation to your predecessor, Mr. Han Seung-soo of South Korea, for his outstanding stewardship of the work of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly. I also wish to place on record my Government's deep appreciation to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan, for his continuing strong leadership and immense diplomatic skill in dealing with many pressing international issues which confront us today.

Papua New Guinea welcomes and congratulates the newest State Member of the United Nations, Switzerland, and looks forward to the accession to membership of the Democratic Republic of East Timor.

Papua New Guinea acknowledges the political will and wisdom shown by all parties — the Republic of Indonesia, Australia, Portugal and the United Nations — in respect of East Timor. We also praise the people of Switzerland for their collective decision to formally join the United Nations.

With the election of a new Government in my country, our Prime Minister, The Right Honourable Sir Michael Somare, recently made a nationwide address detailing some of the challenges facing our economy and what is required to put it back on the path to recovery. He identified specific areas and sectors where remedial measures are needed.

Domestically, our capacity to meet these challenges and worthy goals is lacking. The problem is further exacerbated and our capacity further undermined by poor governance, incompetent economic management, a rise in corruption, and diminished public confidence in political leadership and in the fundamentals of representative government.

The new Government of Papua New Guinea is determined to chart a new course by addressing these problems.

There have been specific initiatives taken to enhance trade, investment and economic prospects. The Pacific countries members of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Island Group of States (ACP), together with the African and Caribbean member States, are now in the process of pursuing negotiations with the European Union for possible economic partnership agreements.

Recently, I announced the direction of our Government's foreign policy focus. I stated that the

policy must be underpinned by the development and strengthening of core relations in the Asia-Pacific region.

We intend to consolidate relations with our close neighbours and give more emphasis to the promotion of trade and economic cooperation, investment, and education and training.

As a small island developing country, and as an affected member of the global village, my country fully endorses the declarations and plans of action adopted at recent world conferences. We believe that international conferences such as the Doha, Monterrey and Johannesburg summits and their plans of action are blueprints to resolve many of the pressing global challenges and needs, including poverty eradication; sustainable development; environmental degradation and climatic changes; and social ills, including HIV/AIDS and other preventable diseases. They also echo the voices of the majority of the world's population living in poverty and struggling to overcome the biggest challenge of all — how to survive.

These declarations and plans of action are a further amplification of the historic Millennium Declaration and its Development Goals, signed by all our heads of State and Government in September 2000.

The challenge is to forge new global partnerships for change — partnerships in which both developed and developing countries join together to address the issues that the global community will face in this new millennium. These partnerships also include international financial institutions, intergovernmental organizations, the private sector, non-governmental organizations, and civil society.

These partnerships will be necessary if the shared hopes of humanity for peace and security, sustainable development and a better way of life for all are to be realized.

Papua New Guinea has been faced with an internal conflict in our province of Bougainville for the last decade. Like all previous Governments, the current Government will continue to address the continuing peaceful resolution of this conflict as a matter of priority.

Papua New Guinea would like to take this opportunity to express its appreciation to the United Nations for its role in resolving this crisis. The conflict has, in fact, involved substantial commitments of

personnel and funds by the United Nations, neighbouring countries and Governments, including our own.

I would like also to place on record our appreciation to the Governments of Australia, New Zealand, Fiji and Vanuatu for contributing financial and manpower resources to the Regional Peace Monitoring Group to restore peace and security to the island.

In addition, on the recommendations of the Secretary-General, and in close cooperation between the Papua New Guinea Government and the Bougainville parties, the Security Council approved the expansion of the role of the United Nations Political Office in Bougainville in monitoring and assisting in the arms collection, storage and disposal, under the new Bougainville Agreement.

I am happy to report that the first and second stages of the arms disposal programme are progressing well; however, more remains to be done.

Our partners from Australia, New Zealand, the European Union, Japan, and the United Nations Development Programme continue to provide resources for restoration and development work. A number of non-governmental organizations, including churches and the Red Cross, have also been active.

Changing the world from a system of relations between imperial Powers to a partnership between sovereign States through decolonization is among the greatest achievements of the United Nations in the last century. The process will not be completed, as it must be, until the remaining 16 Non-Self-Governing Territories have exercised their inalienable right to self-determination.

Our Organization should continue to monitor developments in New Caledonia, Tokelau and the other 14 Non Self-Governing Territories on the United Nations decolonization list, on a case-by-case basis. Neither small size nor remoteness nor population density should be allowed to qualify or limit the exercise of this inalienable right. The Pacific Islands Forum Leaders' Meeting, held last month in Fiji, once again reaffirmed its support for this principle.

The Pacific Islands Forum Group, with the exception of Australia and New Zealand, comprises of small island countries that are custodians of the largest ocean space. This ocean is rich in natural marine

resources. The countries of the region, however, have limited human, financial and technological capacities to control, manage, and secure those resources for the benefit of our current and future generations.

The recent Pacific Islands Forum adopted the Pacific Islands Regional Oceans Policy, which aims to ensure the future sustainable use of our oceans and their resources by our island communities and external partners.

The Pacific Islands peoples have not received their equitable share of the benefits resulting from the tapping of natural resources within their vast ocean space. For example, statistics showed that, in the year 2000, the value of fishery in the Central and Western Pacific was in excess of \$2.5 billion per annum, but the Pacific countries earned a meagre \$66 million in licensing fees. This situation needs to be reviewed and changed.

More than 80 per cent of Papua New Guineans live in rural villages, where they depend directly on the land, rivers, lakes and sea for their livelihood.

Our National Constitution commits the nation to conserve, use, and develop the rich variety of the country's natural resources for the common good and benefit of future generations. Papua New Guinea has therefore spoken out strongly and worked actively on a wide range of environmental issues.

Like other members of the Pacific Islands Forum, Papua New Guinea is firmly committed to the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. We strongly urge its full implementation.

Papua New Guinea, together with other small island developing States, continues to reiterate deep concerns about the adverse impacts of climate change, climate variability and sea-level rise, particularly with regard to the small, low-lying islands that are already experiencing extreme hardships. We will therefore continue to stress the urgent need for the developed countries to take a strong lead in the reductions of greenhouse gas emissions.

Consistent with this, Papua New Guinea has signed and ratified both the United Nations Climate Change Convention and the Kyoto Protocol. We believe that the Kyoto Protocol paves the way forward for Annex I countries to fulfil their commitments under the Climate Change Convention. We urge those parties

to translate their legally binding targets into concrete actions for the reduction of their gas emissions.

We welcome the support for the Kyoto Protocol by Japan, the European Union and, more recently, China and Russia. We urge the United States and Australia to join the global efforts towards addressing this issue, including ratification of the Kyoto Protocol.

Pacific Forum island leaders also reiterated continuing serious concerns over the shipment of radioactive materials through the region. They called on those States engaging in these activities to accept full responsibility and liability for compensation for any damage that may result, directly or indirectly, from the transport of radioactive material through the region.

Global warming has brought an increase in the number of cases of diseases like malaria in the higher-altitude regions of our country. This is still a major threat to Papua New Guinea, particularly in the most populous region — the highlands.

Papua New Guinea is not immune to the HIV/AIDS epidemic, and tuberculosis is again on the rise, so there is an urgent need to find preventative measures for these diseases.

In this regard, we welcome announcements by the Governments of Japan and the United States, among other, that they would set aside substantial financial resources for eradication programmes in developing countries. Papua New Guinea concurs with the recent calls by the international community to reform and restructure the charters and mandates of the two Bretton Woods institutions: the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. These two institutions must realign their policies and focus more on development and poverty eradication, rather than on the reconstruction of economies.

Their lending policies should be made more lenient and flexible in assisting the developing countries, including small islands, landlocked and the least developed countries. The ultimate goal must be to transfer resources into the hands of the needy, the marginalized and the ostracized of society, so that they can take pride in the ownership of the outcomes of new initiatives taken in their own countries.

The way forward was agreed to under the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island States and Agenda 21 and in the recent conferences on landlocked developing

countries and the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries in Brussels.

I must however underline that to date, we have observed a lack of effective implementation of both the Barbados Programme of Action and Agenda 21. There has also been little or no increase in the international aid and development assistance given to the developing countries to build necessary infrastructure, human resource capacities, and other basic needs. This, in our humble view, has to change if the developing countries, especially the small island developing States, landlocked and the least developed countries are to attain sustainable growth and development.

There is an urgent need to reform and restructure the United Nations General Assembly and its subsidiary bodies and agencies, as well as the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, so as to reflect the recent dynamics and changes.

The Security Council should be reformed and expanded in both categories, permanent and non-permanent. It must take into account the interests of both the developed and developing countries.

Although we are encouraged by the general positive signs of progress towards resolving conflicts and securing peace in several regions of the world, Papua New Guinea remains concerned at the continuing conflict in the Middle East. We believe violence will not resolve the conflict. We call on both Israel and the Palestinian leadership to come to the negotiating table to discuss outstanding issues with the view to resolving the conflict peacefully.

It would be remiss of me if I did not make mention of the fact that 11 September 2002 marked the first anniversary of the terrorist attacks in the United States of America. The Government and people of Papua New Guinea express to the Government and people of the United States, and the families of the victims drawn from many countries, our sympathy for the tragedy and suffering of just a year ago, when terrorism struck this great city of New York and Washington, D.C., and Pennsylvania.

Though distant from this tragic event, we share in the deep sorrow felt around the world, and in the admiration of the extraordinary bravery and sacrifice of so many who engaged themselves in the rescue efforts. Our thoughts are with those who continue to mourn.

Papua New Guinea joins with all the freedom loving nations and peoples of the world in condemning terrorism in all its evil forms. Terrorist attacks can never be justified. Terrorism, in which the lives of the most innocent and vulnerable are so senselessly taken, must be especially condemned.

Papua New Guinea fully endorses and supports all efforts towards the effective implementation of the United Nations Security Council resolution 1373 (2001).

You concluded your opening address to this Assembly, Mr. President, by appealing to Member States to focus on what we have in common — and especially our desire to live in a peaceful and secure world where the values and principles expressed in the United Nations Charter are honoured. Papua New Guinea shares your vision and the confidence that underpin your address.

If the nations of the world — with our great diversity — focus on what we have in common, we will build and secure a better world, one in which the benefits of economic development are shared, and one in which the marvels of modern science and technology, including modern medicine, are harnessed for the common good of humanity. But none of these things can be achieved without a genuine and lasting peace.

In conclusion, I want to reaffirm Papua New Guinea's firm commitments to what I have outlined and reiterate that global, regional and local partnerships in promoting sustainable development is the key to addressing the challenges that confront the world today.

The President: I thank the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Immigration of Papua New Guinea for the statement he has just made. I call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Yemen, His Excellency Mr. Abubakr Al-Qirbi.

Mr. Al-Qirbi (Yemen) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to express to you, Sir, our warmest congratulations on your election to the presidency of this session and to wish you every success conducting the affairs of this session. Your ample diplomatic skills are well known. I wish also to thank your predecessor for his good conduct of the preceding session. I also wish to extend my thanks to His Excellency the Secretary-General Mr. Kofi Annan for the quality of

the report that he presented to us on the work of our Organization and to wish him further success in the discharge of his tasks.

I am pleased in this connection to convey to you and all the participants in this session the greetings of His Excellency President Abdullah Saleh of Yemen, and his sincere wish that the work of this session be highly successful, particularly when it is convening under grave and internationally important circumstances.

This fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly of the United Nations is being held while the world still vividly remembers the terrorist acts and the tragic and terrifying disaster, which befell the United States on 11 September 2001 and which represented a grave development in terrorist acts. This awakened the international community, requiring it to mobilize all its potential to face that threat to international peace and stability. The proliferation of international terrorism and the exorbitant price it has imposed on many peoples and States, including my country, has made fighting terrorism an obligation and a responsibility for safeguarding peace, stability and development.

My country was among the first States to suffer from terrorism and its harmful repercussions still affect us. We have not hesitated to face that danger. Prior to the September 2001 events, we drew the attention of the international community to the need to unify efforts to combat terrorism and eradicate it before it took root.

While doing its best to combat terrorism, my country has emphasized the need to convene an international conference on terrorism under the auspices of the United Nations so that we can reach a unified definition thereof. We emphasize the need to distinguish between terrorism and the right of peoples to resist occupation. We need to end the causes that create a fertile climate for fostering terrorism.

Israeli violence and terrorism levelled against the defenceless Palestinian people constitute a genuine obstacle to the achievement of a just and comprehensive peace and create hotbeds of extremism and terrorism. Such violence impedes international efforts and initiatives to solve the Middle East question, while threatening stability, security and prosperity in the region. It also increases the incidence of violence and extremism and presages unpredictable consequences. Consequently, the international community must exert the utmost pressure on Israel to

implement Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 1397 (2002), and General Assembly resolution 194 (III) of 1948 and to withdraw from all occupied Arab territories — Palestinian, Syrian and Lebanese — and return to the 4 June 1967 borders. The international community must work towards establishing a Palestinian State, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital.

We reiterate our position that the Arab peace initiative constitutes an integrated framework for the achievement of peace. Peace for Israel will not be achieved unless it withdraws from the occupied Palestinian territories, helps to re-establish the Palestinian security institutions and grants the Palestinian Authority control over its own territory.

We stress that the Palestinian people are solely responsible for choosing their leadership and representatives for negotiating a final settlement. In this connection, we look forward to the outcome of the efforts led by the United States and the other members of the “quartet” to solve the Middle East question. We hope that the United States vision will be transformed into a time-bound programme that will lay down guidelines to prevent Israel from circumventing any new agreement, as it did those of Oslo, Camp David and Sharm el-Sheikh, through recent statements by Sharon.

Since the Republic of Yemen is interested in the security and stability of the Middle East, we emphasize the need for Israel to get rid of its nuclear arsenal and to subject its nuclear facilities to international supervision. Israel should strive to free the Middle East region of weapons of mass destruction.

The policy of imposing sanctions on some Arab and Islamic countries, Iraq in particular, should be tackled to ease the considerable harm done to the Iraqi people. Here, I emphasize my country’s position that the sanctions imposed on Iraq should be lifted. We reject the use of force against Iraq as long as it abides by international resolutions.

Yemen warns of the gravity of using force against Iraq. We also warn of the disastrous consequences for the region if force is used and if waging war takes precedence over solving the problem peacefully. A peaceful approach, such as bringing back the inspectors and clearing up the doubts about Iraq’s possession of weapons of mass destruction, should be taken. We call for the lifting of sanctions against Libya, Sudan and

Cuba and for continuing dialogue as a means to achieve fair settlements, to safeguard the rights of the concerned parties and to respect their sovereignty and systems of government.

Based on our interest in the situation in Somalia and our endeavours to achieve peace and stability there, we call on the international community to intensify its efforts to bring peace to that country and to support the peace process led by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, so as to preserve the security, territorial integrity and sovereignty of Somalia. We are ready to contribute to this international political endeavour.

My country is of the view that current efforts to reform and restructure the United Nations, including Security Council reform, should enhance the Organization's role and achieve broader participation and more equitable representation in the Council, in keeping with the principles of the sovereign equality of States and equitable geographical distribution.

Yemen attaches great importance to the Millennium Declaration adopted during the Millennium Summit. It paves the way to new relations in the twenty-first century; it calls for encouraging dialogue among civilizations and for the spread of the culture of peace; and it calls on richer States to shoulder their responsibility towards least developed countries in facing the challenges of poverty and deadly disease. In fact, we have not seen the implementation of any of those principles. We therefore call upon States to abide by the Millennium Declaration and implement it in order to engender better relations between the rich and the poor; to remove the spectre of the clash of civilizations and races; to enhance the high principles and values of religions; and to remove the distorted view of the tolerant Islamic religion that has been propagated by others.

The developing countries are suffering from difficult economic conditions due to poverty,

unemployment, declining living standards, overpopulation, mismanagement, debt servicing, and so forth, in addition to the burdens imposed by new economic policies. For these States to be fully integrated into the international economy, they need new opportunities and support so that they can build their economies and carry out administrative and economic structural reforms. They need further financial assistance and opportunities to compete, as well as technology transfers on concessional terms. They should also benefit from investments and cooperation, and free trade zones need to be established. We should try to implement the recommendations of the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries and cancel the accumulated debts of those countries.

My Government is making strenuous efforts to achieve full development, to complete the building of an infrastructure, and to eliminate poverty. Thus, we have implemented a programme of administrative, financial and economic reform, and have updated the investment law to attract foreign capital, with a view to bolstering the service and economic sectors. We have begun a carefully prepared and well balanced privatization programme and are making efforts to join the World Trade Organization and integrate ourselves into world economy.

At this session, we look forward to the adoption of important resolutions that will enhance our joint campaign to achieve security and stability, welfare and prosperity for our peoples. I am confident that our concerted efforts will lead to the success of this session and will help us achieve the results we desire.

In conclusion, I would like to extend my congratulations to Switzerland on its admission as a Member of the Organization and to Timor-Leste on its coming admission. They will make a fresh contribution to the United Nations.

The meeting rose at 1.20 p.m.