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AGENDA ITEM 9

General debate (*continued*)

1. Mr. MAJDALANI (Lebanon) (*interpretation from French*): Mr. President, it is a particular pleasure for me to associate myself with previous speakers in expressing my own satisfaction, as well as that of the Lebanese delegation, at your election to the presidency of this historic session of our Organization. It is indeed a formidable task that we are entrusting to you on this twenty-fifth anniversary of the Charter of the United Nations, a time when, in varying degrees, we shall all be tempted to take stock of the work of the Organization. Who could assume this heavy responsibility better than you? Your brilliant career only serves to confirm all the hopes which we repose in you. You are also the worthy representative of the Scandinavian democracies which, like my own country, have always displayed their attachment to the ideals of peace, justice and liberty.

2. I should like also to take this opportunity to pay a particular tribute to Secretary-General U Thant, who has brought to his important task his qualities of heart and mind, his wisdom and his sense of equity, and whose indefatigable efforts to promote international peace and security fully merit our profound gratitude.

3. This year we celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of our Organization. We should like at the beginning of our statement to dwell on the Organization's merits. Among its positive achievements which immediately occur to us we must, of course, point to the tremendous work of decolonization which, although it is incomplete, nevertheless has made it possible for many countries to become sovereign free States. Multilateral co-operation in the economic, social and cultural fields has very largely responded to the hope which the international community has placed in our Organization. We should like to hope that the United Nations Second Development Decade will open up a new era of prosperity and co-operation among all nations.

4. Since the advent of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the adoption of the Covenants guaranteeing economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights, the United Nations has forged a framework guaranteeing the flourishing of man and respect for his values.

5. Although some modest progress in the field of disarmament and peaceful coexistence must also be accredited to our Organization, we cannot overlook its weaknesses with regard to the maintenance of international peace and security. Too many problems have remained unsolved because of the interplay of the politics of influence and the fossilization of the world into antagonist blocs where the national interests of certain great Powers have often been contrary to the legitimate interests of the small and middle-sized nations.

6. The United Nations, born after the most murderous conflict the world had ever known, determined not only to eliminate the pernicious consequences of that World War but, above all, to spare future generations from a new scourge.

7. Twenty-five years after its creation our Organization has still not succeeded in attaining those two objectives. Indeed, the international community continues to suffer the pernicious consequences of that war, consequences which have been complicated by further conflicts. A quarter of a century ago the General Assembly and the Security Council symbolized, especially for the small countries, the supreme guarantee of a new international order based on peace and justice. Unfortunately, the Security Council has now become the stage where antagonism between the blocs is played out, thus freezing the positions of the great Powers and preventing the Council from taking the action that we expect from it. The French and Brazilian Foreign Ministers, in their brilliant addresses (*1842nd and 1841st meetings*), quite rightly drew our attention to the failures of the Security Council, whose resolutions have often in practice encountered a veto in terms of interpretation.

8. The essential reason for the failure of the Security Council is principally the desire of certain Powers to settle international problems, not in the light of the legitimate interests of the peoples concerned, but more often in the light of their wish to maintain their zones of influence. Many conflicts have arisen since the creation of the United Nations, and at the head of the list we find the Palestinian tragedy.

9. Israel, which is the source of this tragedy, is responsible for the convulsions running through the

Arab countries today. Because of its disregard of the resolutions of the General Assembly, and particularly its refusal to implement resolution 242 (1967) of the Security Council, Israel continues to hinder peace efforts in the Middle East.

10. The problem in that region has been prolonged distressingly for many long years. In twenty-five years everything that could have been said on this subject has been repeated many times. Unfortunately, the aggressive policy of Israel all through these years has opposed a just settlement of the problem.

11. If the United Nations had in good time taken the necessary measures to compel Israel to accept and implement the resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council with regard to this problem, much tragedy could have been avoided and thousands of human lives saved.

12. The heartrending events which are occurring today in Jordan and which have occurred in other countries in the region are only one of the consequences of Israel's refusal to implement the relevant resolutions of our Organization and to recognize the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

13. Indeed, this continual refusal has tested beyond endurance the patience of this people that has fallen victim to repeated acts of aggression by Israel. For twenty-two years international public opinion has remained indifferent to the sufferings of the Palestinian refugees uprooted from their motherland, and yet people are surprised today to see these exiles becoming, in part or completely, fighters taking up arms in their own cause.

14. As my Government has so often pointed out, Israel, by its threats and its acts of aggression, hopes to oblige Lebanon, under pain of undergoing more acts of aggression by Israel, to constrain indefinitely by force of arms the 300,000 Palestinian refugees to which it has given refuge on its territory and force them to resign themselves to the misfortunes of their exodus. Since 1968 the Security Council has been convened four times on the request of Lebanon. Warnings have been issued to Israel, measures have been contemplated, condemnations have been pronounced; but Lebanon today remains still vulnerable to acts of aggression by Israel, which always go unpunished.

15. Accordingly, Israel by its refusal is seeking nothing else but to destroy Lebanon from within and without, and this by forcing Lebanon to choose between undergoing Israeli raids against its own territory and population and carrying out, with regard to its own brothers on its own territory, a continuous policy of violence and civil war. The harmonious synthesis which has been achieved by Lebanon is of a significance which goes beyond its frontiers. It represents, in the final analysis, the solution for many problems in other countries, including Israel. Internationally speaking, it amounts to the ultimate aspiration of all human beings to usher in an era of understanding and fraternal co-operation. If, because of the Palestine

tragedy for which Lebanon is not at all responsible, any more than are the other Arab countries, and which involves justice and the authority of the Security Council, this human experiment which has so far been carried out successfully in Lebanon were to be compromised, it would certainly amount to a condemnation of the principles, the activities and the *raison d'être* of the United Nations, and in the eyes of history it would be an actual step backward for mankind.

16. The whole world is concerned today at the impediments which are now hindering freedom of aerial navigation. Lebanon, which profoundly shares this concern, as a country which is tourism-conscious and itself possesses a large airline, has a particular interest in this subject.

17. Moreover, of all the States in the world Lebanon is the one which has in practice suffered most in the field of air travel, by the shameful and devastating attack perpetrated against the international airport at Beirut by the regular forces of Israel, which, on 28 December 1968, destroyed three quarters of Lebanon's national civil aircraft.

18. The same States which today hold themselves up as defenders of the security of international air travel should at that time have combined their efforts with ours in the International Civil Aviation Organization in order to take the necessary measures to prevent any interference in international air traffic. It is regrettable that our appeal remained a dead letter.

19. During recent incidents which disturbed aerial security, slanderous and gratuitous attacks were directed against Lebanon. For humanitarian reasons my country was obliged to permit two civil airline aircraft in distress to land at the international airport at Beirut. Besides those humanitarian reasons, we did this at the express request of the airlines to which these aircraft belonged as well as that of the ambassadors of the countries where these airlines are based. Other States which possess resources far superior to ours remain even now impotent in the face of the hijackings of aircraft.

20. We consider that all States bear a particular responsibility to safeguard the security of air travel. For its part Lebanon has now initiated the necessary legislative measures to adhere to the Tokyo Convention.¹ Furthermore, my country has undertaken to strengthen measures of internal security to give a better guarantee to the freedom and security of air travel.

21. In this year of the twenty-fifth anniversary of our Organization, we remain convinced that the United Nations will be able to find an equitable and appropriate solution to the Middle East tragedy. Lebanon, a co-founder of the United Nations, considers that our Organization is the primary guarantee for all peace-loving and justice-loving nations, particularly the small nations, including Lebanon. In twenty-five years the principles upon which the Organization rests have lost

¹ Convention on offences and certain other acts committed on board aircraft, signed on 14 September 1963.

nothing of their vitality and their power of attraction. Those principles remain the hope of peoples and nations. May so much reaffirmed hope not disappoint the nations which aspire only to achieve understanding in peace, justice and progress.

22. Mr. KOH (Singapore): Mr. President, instead of offering you my congratulations as preceding speakers have done, I wish to thank you on behalf of my delegation. We thank you for having sought and accepted election to the Presidency of this historic session of the General Assembly. You bring to that high office a rare combination of experience and qualifications. Not only are you a distinguished diplomat of your country, but you have also been a distinguished international civil servant. You are an eminent scholar, but you have also been a practitioner of the craft of government in your country. With that background, Mr. President, my delegation is confident that your management of our affairs will be principled but practical, expeditious but not expedient.

23. This year we celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations. But, even as we celebrate the occasion we owe it to the future also to make a realistic appraisal of the strengths and weaknesses of the Organization. There prevails a substantial body of opinion which maintains that the performance of the United Nations has fallen far short of the expectations. Some have described the Organization as facing a crisis of confidence. Others have said that the United Nations is afflicted with a creeping irrelevance. One thoughtful critic has recently written that "the United Nations today probably enjoys less confidence on the part of its Members and the public at large than at any previous time in its history".

24. What are the causes of this extensive discontent with the United Nations?

25. The first cause lies in the fact that the United Nations has largely failed to fulfil its primary purpose: to maintain international peace and security. In the period since the Second World War the world has fortunately been spared another global conflict. But the world has not been a peaceful place. In the two and a half decades that have passed, there have been more than fifty-six conflicts in or between nations which have involved the use or threat of violence. Nineteen of those conflicts were of an inter-State character; fifteen were internal conflicts with significant external involvement; ten were primarily internal; and twelve others were conflicts of a colonial nature. In only six of those conflicts can it be said that the United Nations played a crucial role in snuffing out the flames of war and restoring a semblance of peace.

26. Second, although the Charter charges the United Nations to promote and encourage respect for human rights and freedoms for all without distinction as to race, language, sex or religion, the truth is that the United Nations is powerless to intercede on behalf of individuals whose rights have been cruelly infringed by the arbitrary actions of their government or who are the victims of racial, sexual, linguistic or religious

discrimination. During the past twenty-five years the United Nations has enacted an impressive body of United Nations law on human rights. Little of this vast body of law is, however, implemented in the Member States.

27. Third, the discourse in the United Nations has impressed observers, both within and outside the Organization, as consisting mainly of propaganda and inflated rhetoric.

28. Fourth, the decisions of the United Nations' main deliberative organs have not always conformed to principle or been controlled by proven facts. This state of affairs is the result of the fact that most delegations approach the question of what position they will adopt on a proposal or dispute by considering not where the truth of the matter lies but where their own short-term self-interests lie or, equally reprehensible, by a process of vote trading and bloc voting. Things have reached such a low point that no nation can look safely to the United Nations to assure its security from external aggression. If such a country were the victim of naked and incontrovertible aggression by a stronger and bigger nation and the victim took its complaint to the Security Council, the odds are that the Council would not intercede to repel the aggressor. The operative norm which seems to be observed in the conduct of nations in the United Nations is the following. In a dispute between two States with which one is friendly, try not to get involved. If that is unavoidable, support the stronger against the weaker, for while it may be true that the meek shall inherit the earth, that is only a contingent interest, and the strong, who possess the earth, show no sign of immediate mortality.

29. Fifth, the reality mirrored in the United Nations is often at odds with objective reality or with the reality in the world. This derives from the fact that many nations play a game of masquerade in the United Nations. Thus, régimes which are feudal and/or repressive at home have been known to send to the United Nations representatives who pose as champions of human rights and liberalism. The discrepancy between the reality at home and the policies pursued and postures assumed in the United Nations cannot but reduce the credibility of this Organization as well as diminish its utility to the Member States as a centre to monitor political trends and events around the world.

30. Sixth, although the Charter speaks of the United Nations as a "centre for harmonizing the actions of nations", Member States have not been conspicuous in seeking to use the Organization for that end. On the contrary, there has been a tendency in the United Nations to exaggerate differences, for competing interest groups to confront each other with a show of passion and drama, sometimes over inconsequential matters or over a mere linguistic difference. In the period of the 1950s and 1960s the ideological East and West were ever ready to take up cudgels against each other. As the cold war, as we knew it, has abated and continues to abate, there is another spectre looming on the horizon: the spectre of an increasingly frequent and bitter confrontation between North, or the rich

countries, and South, symbolizing the poor countries. The East-West confrontation has been productive of nothing except misunderstanding, rancour and acrimony. A North-South confrontation would very likely prove equally sterile. It is therefore to be hoped that the representatives of the rich and the poor nations will turn away from such an unproductive course. The un-diplomatic diplomats in the United Nations must be reminded that their primary purpose is to seek accord, not discord. And accord is not beyond attainment if each side shows a willingness to compromise. The rich should give more—and meaningful—help and the poor, for their part, must demand less of others and more of themselves. External help must be underwritten by the maximum possible self-help.

31. Seventh, the output or achievement of the United Nations has not been commensurate with the input. The input consists of the numberless hours spent by representatives at meetings and conferences and by experts and other officials of the Secretariat in preparing reports for those meetings, and the resources of the 100 bodies and more—commissions, sub-commissions, committees, and agencies—which make up the United Nations family system.

32. Why has so much apparent effort produced so little result? Perhaps one reason is the overlapping memberships of those bodies. Human ingenuity being limited, the same speeches are made over and over again by the same speakers in those different bodies. One would also be justified in suspecting that the great proliferation of United Nations bodies has not tended towards greater efficiency; on the contrary, it may have detracted therefrom. It is clear that the United Nations itself is in need of a family planning programme.

33. I am conscious of the fact that I have spoken critically of the United Nations. In doing so, it has not been my intention to cause the Organization harm but, on the contrary, it has been my intention to diagnose the ills of the Organization so that we can, together, find remedies for its maladies. One noted scholar has said that institutions languish when their lovers are uncritical and their critics unloving. I identify myself as one of the critical lovers and loving critics of the United Nations. In that spirit, let me turn to ask how we can resuscitate the United Nations.

34. Two aspects of the United Nations need resuscitation: the first constitutional, the second cerebral. The first is concerned with improving the organization, procedures, rules, customs and practices of the United Nations. In pursuance of that objective, my delegation has joined that of Canada and several other delegations in proposing a new agenda item entitled "Rationalization of the procedures and organization of the General Assembly". We propose that a committee be created to examine the system of committees, the allocation of agenda items, the organization of the work of the Assembly, documentation and rules of procedure and to submit recommendations thereon to the next session of the Assembly.

35. It is not my intention here to pre-empt the work of the proposed committee, but I should like to touch briefly on a few salient points. It is clear that if the General Assembly is to carry out its work efficiently it must be guided by a steering committee. The intention of the Charter is for the General Committee to be the steering committee of the Assembly. The General Committees of past Assembly sessions have, however, not made effective use of their powers. They have been too intimidated by the dead hand of precedent. It must be clearly understood that there is nothing sacrosanct about the existing structure of committees or about previous decisions concerning the allocation of agenda items to the different committees. Whether an agenda item should be made a sub-item of another item or stand as a single item and whether several agenda items pertaining to the same subject-matter should be discussed together or separately are questions which should be discussed dispassionately and rationally by the General Committee and not be subject to obfuscating procedural politics. That Committee should also ensure an equitable distribution of work-load among the committees as well as prevent the duplication of work between committees.

36. While it may be impractical, and perhaps even undesirable, to impose time-limits on speeches in the General Assembly, it may be beneficial to consider whether the imposition of time-limits on statements in the committees would be helpful. This is particularly desirable, in my delegation's view, in the case of second and subsequent statements by the same speakers on the same item as well as for rights of reply.

37. To facilitate the work of the committees, it would be helpful if the Chairmen of the committees were to establish at the commencement of each session, in each committee, one or more working groups for the purpose of reconciling conflicting draft resolutions.

38. With respect to the Security Council, my delegation welcomes the recent decision of the Council to meet periodically in closed session at the minimum level of Foreign Ministers. We feel that the Security Council should make greater use of individuals and small committees to meet with parties to disputes in order to explore the possibilities of settlement. We would also support a proposal that the Security Council create a United Nations panel for fact-finding and mediation. We support such a proposal because Member States that are unwilling to accept the judgments of third parties might be willing to accept the process of fact-finding and mediation while reserving the right to challenge the conclusions of those third parties. Such a panel should consist of men chosen by the Secretary-General on the basis of their skill and expertise in the settlement of international or domestic disputes.

39. The foregoing suggestions are designed to improve the machinery of the United Nations. Improving the machinery of the United Nations is, however, only one half of the cure. The other half, which is

both more crucial and less easy to accomplish, is to persuade Member States to change the policies that they pursue towards the United Nations and towards one another in the United Nations. Unless Member States are prepared to do so all the procedural and institutional reforms will be of little or no avail.

40. First, Member States should attempt to understand better the nature of the General Assembly's decision-making process. It is essential to do so because otherwise we shall not know when we may properly refer questions to the General Assembly and when we should refrain from doing so. Scholars have postulated that decision-making processes are analytically of three types: those which are legislative, those which are adjudicative and those which are managerial. A legislative-type decision-making process is one which enunciates a rule, principle or norm of general application. An adjudicative-type decision is one which settles a dispute between two or more parties in accordance with a pre-existing rule, principle or norm. A decision concerning how certain given resources ought to be allocated is characterized as managerial. The decision-making process of the General Assembly appears to us to approximate most to the legislative model. If we are correct in giving it that characterization, then it follows that delegations should refrain from referring questions to the General Assembly which are not amenable to a legislative-type decision. A border dispute between two States, for example, raises issues which are not amenable to a legislative decision and should, therefore, not be referred to the General Assembly. Failure to heed this is likely to bring about the same result as using a machine for a purpose for which it is not designed. Not only would the job be left undone but we also run the risk of wrecking the machine.

41. Second, the demands which Member States make in the United Nations ought to be governed by a more realistic estimation of what is attainable. Too often delegations forget this and succeed only in disillusioning themselves when a hard-won victory is later found to be impossible to implement.

42. Third and finally, Member States must be made to recognize that the one factor which has most undermined the strength and efficacy of the United Nations is the fact that most delegations have pursued, in the United Nations, policies which are predominantly governed by their short-term national interests. Unless nations can be persuaded to conceive of their self-interests as having a long-term perspective in addition to the short-term one, and unless self-interests are married to principle, then the prospect is that the next twenty-five years will be much like the past twenty-five years.

43. Mr. FERNANDEZ G. (Dominican Republic) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Mr. President, it was a source of great pleasure for me to see you elected to preside over the twenty-fifth session of the General Assembly at a time when our Organization has recorded in the pages of history the twenty-fifth anniversary of its founding in San Francisco when it

was set up to guide the destiny of the peoples Members of the Organization and serve as a repository for the principles for the maintenance and preservation of the peace and progress that our civilization demands.

44. The election which has led to your being chosen to preside over this Assembly—a very wise choice indeed—is a tribute to your great country, which has contributed to the development of the history of free nations a tradition of peace that serves as an example for the legal community that we constitute a country which has always commanded respect and admiration from all corners of the earth. Your election is also a tribute of recognition and respect rendered to your wisdom, your qualities as a statesman and your devotion to the cause defended by the nations assembled in this world Organization. Under your enlightened and experienced guidance we are sure that the Assembly will embark upon a session which in and of itself is of great importance because of the tremendous tasks confronting all delegations, the significance of the anniversary that is coming up shortly and because here, as never before, a spirit of understanding and coexistence should prevail above all momentary considerations so that we may inaugurate a new phase in international law under the most auspicious circumstances. We are duty bound to display this spirit because of the wisdom, the experience and the maturity which we have gained during twenty-four regular sessions of the General Assembly, sessions which have led us to the point where we will be commemorating this exceptional event very shortly in solemn ceremony and celebration.

45. It is, therefore, an honour for my delegation to convey to you our good wishes on your election and we are sure that your wisdom will enlighten and guide our thinking and our decisions during the discharge of the mandate that we have received from our respective Governments.

46. During the holding of the twenty-fourth regular session of the General Assembly the Dominican Republic, in a desire to contribute in some way to the historic importance of the session upon which we are just embarking, conveyed to the Secretary-General an expression of our desire that as part of the methodology of the specific question of a new reform of the United Nations Charter we should include consideration of the right of veto in the Security Council and the Powers enjoying that right, the apolitical status of outer space and the right of new small States to be admitted to the world Organization.

47. Twenty-five years after the founding of the United Nations we cannot fail to recognize the changes that have occurred in the world of today in all essential aspects and, most particularly, with respect to international life upon the emergence of new States, all of which makes it incumbent upon us to find new formulae to bring the constituent principles of the Organization up to date taking into account the experience gained over a quarter of a century and the ideals that justify its existence.

48. We all recall very clearly the debates that developed in connexion with Article 27 of the Charter

of the United Nations. I refer to the right of veto which was accepted finally in the form in which it now appears in the Charter.

49. We must recognize the fact that after the last World War—and mankind is still suffering its residual effects—statesmen wanted to lay unshakable foundations for the maintenance and preservation of peace in the world but none the less, the spirit of war had an impact on the solutions involving the interests of the victorious States. That situation was most typical among the great Powers. I venture to believe that that cause and no other, taken together with a need to find a substitute for the classical system of alliances to maintain international equilibrium, predominated in the deliberations that finally led to the provision of the veto in the Security Council.

50. There seems no doubt that to a considerable degree the veto has fulfilled the objective for which it was created, despite the frequent exercise of this right by the States that possess the veto. But the facts tend to show that if on some occasions this tool has proved useful to avoid greater evils, it is equally certain that in other instances the frequency with which this exceptional right has been exercised, a right which is discriminatory in the light of the principles of democracy, has come to constitute an obstacle to the progress that the United Nations should have attained in achieving the purposes for which it was set up.

51. This modern age, with the present stage of development of space science and the achievements of man through his journeys to the moon, has created a new individual and collective mentality, and we should admit this now. The States that make up our Organization are not immune to the impact of this new mentality.

52. However, we cannot deny that man is just as imperfect as he was on the first day of his creation, but it is obvious that, like civilizations, generations move and are transformed in accordance with the immutable laws of human progress.

53. For this reason the fundamental instrument which governs us cannot have failed to feel the impact of these uncontrollable pressures. Hence we find the reason justifying the need for reforms of the principles which, until the past decade, and particularly if we look back twenty-five years, were appropriate to mitigate the imperfections of international life and the conflicts that it has been possible to confine to certain areas of the world without allowing these conflicts to involve the Members of the Organization in a new total warlike adventure where the last word would be had by those who had predominance in nuclear weapons that are capable of wiping out every vestige of human life and civilization from the face of the earth.

54. Accordingly, on the occasion of this important Assembly, concern about the veto has cropped up once again. It might be said that recently an awareness of the veto has been developed that has come to be expressed by certain radical manifestations, as in the case

of Brazil which has set forth the criterion that the veto should be prohibited if we wish to preserve the United Nations from the decadence likely to lead to its final dissolution.

55. Our country's initiative would constitute a step forward in this direction. It pays tribute to the law of nature that does not proceed by leaps and bounds, and at the same time it is in accordance with the proven experience that the life of nations and of men develops in accordance with a process of evolution that cannot nor should not be violated, subject to the penalty of retreating—in a move backward to previous positions or a position marking a step even further back.

56. For that reason we are advocating a solution which moves between the enshrinement of the division of the veto with the feature of one veto for two votes or for the adoption of a quota of vetoes. If circumstances would permit, this would be the position we would take if we agreed to revise the Charter.

57. The legal rules that constitute the body of law governing outer space would be incomplete if they did not rest upon a fundamental rule drawn from the notion of the apolitical status of space, the area in which those rules should be applied and respected. We are dealing here with such a new and sensitive international contribution as the idea of jurisprudence to apply to outer space. In this exceedingly new field we shall certainly have to grapple with great difficulties, periods of stagnation and experiences, and we will have to exercise the utmost wisdom in coping with this task. In the light of the strictest provisions of the Charter it will also be essential to think above all of the survival of the human race in the face of the dangers inherent in the conquest of the vast reaches of the stars.

58. With these concerns in mind, and convinced as we are that the progress of technology in respect of the conquest of outer space is proceeding at a dizzy pace, we have sketched out our concern which might seem a bit sudden if it were not for the fact that we are already confronted with inescapable facts and realities in referring as we have to the fact that outer space should be considered as apolitical in this twenty-fifth session of the General Assembly. We have made these comments because we are desirous of contributing by this expression of our goodwill to the celebration of a quarter of a century of the United Nations.

59. The advent of new, smaller States to independent international life has been the subject of speculation and informal public statements which may perhaps have created a degree of confusion in certain international quarters, and even prejudices that can mislead the public conscience. The reaction that has been produced, as was logical to assume, has sometimes led to the possibility of people thinking somewhat lightly of how far we can go in weakening the legal equality of States by a system of restrictions.

60. If this idea were to gain a little more currency, it would foster various prejudices harmful to our Organization and could eventually perhaps in some

way undermine people's confidence in the *raison d'être* of this Organization, an organization that we should defend firmly against all obstacles that may to a greater or lesser degree affect its necessary development in the interest of maintaining the legal order free from discrimination of any kind.

61. Obviously, we should foresee events and prevent the abnormalities that may affect our Organization. In that manner we will preserve the legacy of experience that we, the peoples that make up this Organization, have garnered here—after two and a half decades of what has often been stormy activity—which an organization which has met the tests to which it has been subjected up until this great moment in history.

62. Accordingly, it would be appropriate for us to look forward to the situation that may arise in connexion with the admission of new smaller States. We believe that, with this approach, we can find workable solutions, so that when we come to deal with a problematical or contentious case, we can find the way out which will meet the facts of the case, without destroying the principle of the legal equality of States.

63. My delegation has always supported the principles of political decolonization and the right to self-determination of peoples, which have been given concrete expression under the aegis of the United Nations. We have kept this position and we shall continue to do so, convinced as we are that this provision contained in the constitution of this Organization is in accordance with the most appropriate procedure for forming the national conscience of the people so favoured, and to ensure that the transitional period towards the highest degree of self-government can achieve at least a minimum level of efficiency, in order that it may enjoy lasting status within the international legal community.

64. But, together with political decolonization, we would also like to see, concomitantly, the idea of economic decolonization, which is possible only if the States Members of our Organization share the idea of economic interdependence, which is becoming more and more pressing for the same reasons for which we pay homage in this world of today to the principle of the interdependence of States. We should strengthen this edifice without it being necessary to distinguish between dissimilarities of population, territory, or social, economic, cultural or political development, which reflect the characteristic features and peculiarities of these States, and we should increasingly make progress in this idea of international economic interdependence.

65. We have maintained this line of approach and we will continue to maintain it in the Economic and Social Council and in all the subsidiary bodies which are entrusted with the heavy responsibility of fostering the progress of peoples through modern methods. Many barriers of prejudices and archaic conventional attitudes will still have to be overthrown. In this task which confronts the States Members of the Organization, the Dominican Republic has steadily

opted in favour of the adoption of new formulae and rules which can lead us to solutions that will eradicate the pressures and international tensions that allow us no respite.

66. In recent years the Dominican Republic has advocated a formula to put an end to the conflict in the Middle East in accordance with methods for the solution of situations of this kind. We are concerned about the state of stagnation in which this effort for peace has been bogged down; yet the effectiveness of this effort is the responsibility not only of all free peoples of the world but also of the Organization itself.

67. The renewal of the mandate entrusted by the Secretary-General to his Special Representative, Ambassador Jarring, has not only helped to reaffirm our faith in the instruments available to us to restore peace where it has been breached, but it has also served to lessen considerable international tensions considerably and it has strengthened the hope that, finally, it will be possible to come to terms acceptable to the parties involved.

68. We understand that the road ahead will be subject to certain alternate choices which are characteristic of international life, but we see looming up the end of the task that we have undertaken to reach the peace agreement that we all long for.

69. The situation that has affected Viet-Nam for a number of years has always been a source of concern to my country, which has co-operated as fully as possible and which in every instance has offered proper support in the difficult task of preserving the peace.

70. This is the policy that a small country such as ours would never wish to depart from at any time. We are proud of being a founding Member of this community of nations, which is the greatest that has ever existed since the origin of mankind.

71. We must feel gratified when we see that the United States of America has been withdrawing sizable contingents of troops from the centre of military operations in that area and that the central Government has shown that it will continue to withdraw these troops in accordance with the statements made by President Nixon. It is highly significant that this fact should have occurred precisely when we were entering upon the twenty-fifth regular session of the General Assembly of the world Organization, with new prospects opening up for the future of the States Members of this Organization.

72. We sincerely believe that we are on the verge of witnessing the departure from Viet-Nameese territory of the last United States troops in accordance with the time-table worked out. It is very comforting to see that after the stagnation in the efforts to reduce nuclear weapons that were being accumulated at a terrifying dramatic pace, we can now say that progress has been made, which my delegation cannot overlook.

73. In all sincerity I believe that this is perhaps the most important item for those of us who are participat-

ing in this General Assembly, and we would hope that the Assembly will emerge from this session fortified with all its constructive potential. This would serve as a kind of lever of Archimedes, which is the will of all peoples on this commemorative anniversary to mark the dawn of a new era in the world in which good understanding will prevail designed to achieve the goal we have set ourselves in the face of the dilemma with which the unbridled arms race confronts us—a race into which we have been impelled by lack of confidence and by our blind attitude towards the danger that hangs over us.

74. In behalf of the Government I represent, may I be permitted to pay a tribute of gratitude for this important development which has allayed the unrest and tensions to which we have been subjected for so many years?

75. We should also take into account the efforts made to come to an agreement on a treaty to prohibit the emplacement of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction on the sea-bed, the ocean floor and in the sub-soil thereof, which in truth would constitute an effective step towards the conclusion of the treaty on general and complete disarmament which is so anxiously awaited.

76. In addition, for the same reasons, we would praise the action that has been undertaken to halt the development of chemical and bacteriological means of warfare and also arduous efforts under way to ensure that such weapons are prohibited from the arsenals of nations.

77. It is disturbing to note that the production of such means of destruction should have marked a considerable step backwards in international thinking on war despite the Geneva Protocol of 1925 which prohibits the use of this type of weapon. And that reversion to a position we had left behind long ago under the influence of the lofty principles of humanity and should have created a situation in which the General Assembly finds it necessary to call upon States to fulfil the principles of that important Protocol.

78. Accordingly, it would be well for us to come to an agreement which not only guarantees observance of the prohibition in Platonic terms but also provides for the verification of compliance with this Protocol. Without the latter measure, which has already received the support of some Members of the Organization, we shall not be able to achieve chemical and bacteriological disarmament and thus safeguard mankind from weapons that are as inhuman as nuclear weapons themselves.

79. Every effort that is made to arrive at reasonable disarmament and to avoid the overflow of these vast arsenals, which are a source of concern to us, will command the vigorous support of the Dominican Republic. We therefore viewed certain relaxations of tension which have been brought about in Geneva in the field of disarmament as a promising omen that will increase the confidence of peace-loving peoples.

80. Since the United Nations has been able to survive all the tests to which it has been subjected so far, this argument alone would suffice to justify the efforts we should exert to ensure that it continues to achieve the objectives for which it was created, at a decisive moment when the scourge of war had imperilled all of modern civilization.

81. True, there has been much criticism of the United Nations. We must confess that much of this criticism is justified, but we cannot deny that most of it is exaggerated or not really justified if we examine the criticism objectively.

82. No matter how strict we may be, we cannot deny its positive achievements which have proved to be milestones in history. This criterion allows us to take into consideration the fact that we have tried to create a perfect Organization in a world in which mankind's handiwork always suffers from imperfections.

83. However that may be, under the sheltering umbrella of the principles of the Charter we have been able to demonstrate how useful dialogue is at the high level of this Organization. We thus arrive at the affirmation that it is difficult to negotiate when we hear the cannons roar.

84. It is understandable that despite the complexities of international life some would like to see the United Nations take more dynamic action, and more willingness to comply with its resolutions. I venture to surmise that this is due largely to the sensibilities involved and the magnitude of the interests often in conflict. But that does not mean that we should not foster the idea of a fresh endeavour and for this it will probably be necessary to bring the Charter up to date so that it will reflect the changes that have occurred and will continue to occur in our time.

85. While it is obvious that the principles of the United Nations are influential even as they are now structured, we would hope that its legal and moral authority will be exercised with greater efficiency when they have been revised and have had time to acquire their full strength and vigour.

86. I should now like to make a comment concerning the record of the tremendous accomplishments of the United Nations during the years of its existence and say that my delegation would venture to suggest that if the Organization has not been very effective, as its critics allege, that is in large measure the fault of ourselves, the Member States, because in fact we have not given the Organization all the support and effective collaboration needed to uphold those principles and resolutions which have not been applied or have been applied imperfectly or very tardily.

87. During the twenty-fourth session of the General Assembly my Government had the opportunity to state its interest in the idea that the Assembly should provide favourable conditions for a firm step towards agreement on a system for international security.

88. At that time my delegation said, and I reaffirm it now, that the mobilization of wills towards an achievement of this kind for the world would be the best contribution we could make to the celebrations marking the twenty-fifth anniversary of the United Nations.

89. It would also be the greatest tribute we could pay on this happy occasion to all who have been the victims of war.

The meeting rose at 12.05 p.m.