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Agenda item 24:

Strengthening of the role of the United Nations with regard to the maintenance and consolidation of international peace and security, the development of co-operation among all nations and the promotion of the rules of international law in relations between States . . . . . 1

*President:* Mr. Stanisław TREPCZYŃSKI (Poland).

**AGENDA ITEM 24**

**Strengthening of the role of the United Nations with regard to the maintenance and consolidation of international peace and security, the development of co-operation among all nations and the promotion of the rules of international law in relations between States**

1. The PRESIDENT (*interpretation from French*): The Assembly will begin its consideration of agenda item 24. In this connexion a draft resolution submitted by Romania has been circulated in document A/L.684.

2. Mr. DATCU (Romania) (*interpretation from French*): The General Assembly begins today its consideration of a matter which, no doubt, reflects a widely felt concern of Member States.

3. At a time when the world community is undergoing profound transformations, requiring that interstate relations be based on new foundations, it becomes necessary, in our judgement, to undertake an objective analysis of the place and the role of the United Nations in the present system of international affairs.

4. Proceeding from the new realities of the world, aware of the responsibility devolving upon us as Members of this Organization, the Romanian Government has requested the inclusion in our agenda of the present item. The reasons which prompted the Romanian Government to ask for the inclusion of the item are set forth in detail in its explanatory memorandum distributed to all Member States [A/8792].

5. The basic idea underlying our initiative is the widely recognized need to undertake, with the participation of all Member States, a comprehensive examination of such an important and urgent question as the strengthening of the role of the United Nations. We consider that the final objective to be achieved through the joint efforts of Member States is to make the United Nations a strong body truly effective in achieving the ideals of peace, security, co-operation and progress of all peoples.

6. May I be allowed to refer briefly to some factors which, in the opinion of the Romanian delegation, make it essential to enhance the role of the United Nations in the over-all system of contemporary political life.

7. In a world of ever-growing interdependence, all nations are called upon and have the right to participate in the solution of the major issues which now face mankind and in which they have an equal interest. This highlights the need to establish conditions enabling all States, irrespective of their strength, size, capacity or social system, to take a direct part in the search for ways and means to ensure the general progress of the world in a climate of peace and understanding. The harmonization of efforts with a view to achieving our common goals requires the broadest co-operation among States, the gradual improvement of ways and means of co-operation and, consequently, an increase in effectiveness.

8. In this connexion, the United Nations, its specialized agencies and other international bodies have a particular important part to play as instruments to promote co-operation among States, the peaceful settlement of disputes, and the development of rules to govern relations among States and to ensure compliance with such rules.

9. An objective glance at the pattern of interstate relations reveals an increase in the power and weight of the socialist countries and the growing influence which the peoples of the world and public opinion exert on the course of international events.

10. We are witnessing a vigorous national resurgence of peoples who for centuries have been held in colonial bondage and under alien oppression; this phenomenon is best mirrored in the very membership of the United Nations. From a body of 51 Members at its inception, the United Nations has grown to 132 Members, the majority of which are recently liberated countries, which play an increasing role in international life.

11. The sphere of the old imperialist policy of force and *diktat* is constantly shrinking and a new trend is emerging in relations among States, a trend towards *détente* and collaboration, towards the settlement of issues in the interest of all peoples and towards international co-operation.

12. On the other hand, the scientific and technological revolution, man's advance into outer space and into the depths of the oceans, the tremendous progress of human knowledge, the development of forces of production, have a considerable bearing on every area of man's material and spiritual existence, providing people with an immense

opportunity to increase their national wealth, to develop their natural resources for their economic and social advancement, and to wipe out under-development. This revolution gives rise, at the same time, to new problems of great complexity affecting the very future of mankind; it opens up new fields of co-operation and also demonstrates the need for fresh approaches adjusted to the new conditions of the modern world.

13. All these qualitative changes are such that no problem of interest to one people can be solved without the participation and without taking into account the interests of the States concerned. The democratization of international life has become an objective necessity of our times. Recognition, implementation and unswerving respect for the principles of national independence and sovereignty, full equality of rights and mutual advantage, non-interference in the internal affairs of other States, territorial integrity, and the renunciation of the threat or use of force have become a prerequisite for progress, peace and security in the world as a whole.

14. The task now confronting the United Nations, the largest and most representative forum of the international community, is to take into account present-day realities and to respond fully to the expectations of peoples. We must ask ourselves whether our Organization is truly equal to the very high responsibility entrusted to it by the Charter—that is to say, to ensure the maintenance and strengthening of international peace and security, the peaceful settlement of disputes, the promotion of international co-operation, and strict respect by all States of the principles of international law.

15. True, the Organization, throughout its existence, has played a positive role in international life; it has made its contribution to improving the political climate and to international *détente*, to the solution of some major problems, the liquidation of the colonial system, the promotion of co-operation in the economic, social, cultural and humanitarian fields, and to the codification and progressive development of international law.

16. But, unfortunately, many of its decisions have not been carried out, or have been only partially implemented; certain important resolutions adopted by our Organization have not had a positive impact on the evolution of international life, and very often are ignored in practice. Thus hotbeds of tension and conflict continue to exist in various parts of the world; many human lives and vast material wealth have been destroyed by war; the huge military arsenals—nuclear arsenals among them—are constantly growing, thus seriously threatening mankind as a whole. The arms race, through its breath-taking intensification, is an ever-growing burden for the peoples of the world; millions are still suffering under the colonial yoke; the gap between the developing countries and the economically advanced nations is constantly widening.

17. Despite the profound revolutionary changes in the world, which confirm ever more the correctness and validity of the principles underlying the United Nations Charter, we are witnessing a parallel process of erosion of the prestige and effectiveness of this Organization.

18. This situation fully explains the increased concern of Member States as to the place of the United Nations in international life to use all the means at the disposal of the international community to avoid a repetition of the experience of the League of Nations between the two world wars.

19. The depth of this concern was reflected in the twenty-fifth session of the General Assembly, in which a number of Heads of State and Government took part, in the Declaration adopted on that occasion by the General Assembly [*resolution 2627 (XXV)*] and in the views expressed during the debates at the twenty-sixth session and notably the general debate at this session of the General Assembly.

20. At the current session over 90 delegations have referred in one way or another to the need to strengthen the role of the United Nations and to increase its effectiveness. Among them were delegations from large, medium-sized and small countries in all parts of the world. They express, in accordance with their respective positions, a very broad spectrum of opinions. What seems significant to us is that the common denominator of the concern expressed by Member States was the desire for practical measures to improve the functioning of the United Nations and its bodies so that they should be able better to serve the interests of the entire world community. We find here the natural expression of the need to harmonize the activities of this Organization and the ever-increasing need to base international relations on new foundations.

*Mr. Kelani (Syrian Arab Republic), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

21. By the same token, the non-aligned countries, which constitute an important part of the membership of the United Nations, stressed, in the Declaration adopted on 12 August this year in Georgetown, that “the United Nations must not merely reflect development in the contemporary world, but, by exerting a positive influence on them, contribute to the furtherance of world peace and progress”.<sup>1</sup> They also expressed the desire “to continue joint action . . . to improve the efficacy of the United Nations as an instrument for ensuring world peace and security”.<sup>2</sup>

22. In the same spirit, one of the main ideas embodied in the introduction to the report of the Secretary-General, Mr. Kurt Waldheim, on the work of the Organization [*A/8701/Add.1*] is the need to find answers to questions relating to the place and role of the United Nations at the present juncture.

23. The proposal which the Romanian Government has introduced at this session of the General Assembly is aimed at focusing the attention of Member States on the consideration of ways and means to strengthen the role of the United Nations and to make possible an over-all approach to this question of general interest, thus giving concrete expression to this concern.

<sup>1</sup> Declaration adopted by the Conference of Foreign Ministers of Non-Aligned Countries, held at Georgetown, Guyana, from 8 to 12 August 1972, para. 35.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 40 (VIII).

24. The Charter of the United Nations has provided, and is still providing, an appropriate framework for a wide range of measures which could increase the prestige and effectiveness of the United Nations. In making full use of this framework, it is mandatory, in our view, that we act in strict observance of the principles of the Charter, fully aware of the historical perspectives and duly mindful of present-day realities as well as the needs which our Organization will have to face in future.

25. In our view, efforts to strengthen our Organization must be aimed first of all at increasing its contribution to the maintenance and strengthening of international peace and security.

26. The main task of the United Nations, which is reflected in the first words of its fundamental statute, is "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war". In order fully to implement this duty the United Nations must become the main international instrument for the prevention of crises in international relations and for the restoration of peace where it has been breached; it must increase its contribution to disarmament, decolonization and development; and it must defend the freedom, independence and sovereignty of all States as well as the right of every people freely to determine its destiny without foreign interference regardless of its form or purpose.

27. It is imperative, in our view, that we reaffirm, strengthen and elucidate the basic principles of the Charter, in conformity with the Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Co-operation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations [resolution 2625 (XXV)]. At a time when these principles continue to be flouted or violated, the more precise we make them and the better we define the fundamental rights and obligations of States, the fewer will be the possibilities for their disregard and international legality will stand to gain thereby.

28. It is also necessary, in our view, to take a firm stand and state that any violation of the sovereignty and independence of a State by other States will be considered incompatible with membership in the United Nations and will lead to public condemnation as well as to the taking of appropriate measures in accordance with the spirit and the provisions of the Charter. Our Organization should not under any circumstances permit the sovereignty of any Member State to be violated.

29. Inasmuch as the policy of force and *diktat* is still seen in the practice of international relations, our Organization should strengthen and consolidate, in the spirit of Article 51 of the Charter, the right of States to defend themselves by all means available to them, including military means, against any infringement of their territorial integrity or their right to independence and sovereignty. It is the duty of the United Nations to grant immediate support, if so requested, with a view to putting an end to such acts, thus demonstrating its effectiveness in preventing conflicts and in consolidating peace.

30. With this in mind we consider that the United Nations should act with more determination in order to eliminate promptly and definitively colonialism in all its forms and

manifestations. The greatest attention should be focused on the moral, political and material support to be given to the liberation struggle of the oppressed peoples.

31. One of the fundamental purposes of the Organization is to be a forum for close political, economic and social co-operation among nations.

32. We should remember in this regard that the perpetuation of under-development and the widening gap between the advanced and the developing countries is a source of animosity, distrust and conflict in international life.

33. On the basis of the realization that the elimination of this situation is closely linked to efforts to strengthen international peace and security, we believe that the United Nations, the specialized agencies and Member States should adopt practical programmes and measures of multilateral support for the efforts of the developing countries to strengthen their political and economic independence. These programmes and measures should contribute to the development, in the interest of the respective peoples, of all national resources, the establishment of international trade free of all hindrance and discrimination and the elimination of the gap between the economically advanced and the developing countries, and should enable the latter to have free access to the benefits of science and technology.

34. At the same time we should reaffirm the sovereign, inalienable and inviolable right of all States and peoples to full and permanent ownership of all their national resources and wealth, which should be restored to their national heritage so that they may use them for their economic and social progress.

35. Improving the operation of the Organization means utilizing to the full the framework and the resources provided by the Charter to prevent conflicts, to settle disputes peacefully and to develop co-operation among nations.

36. The principal reason for the creation of the Organization was the need for an instrument capable of acting promptly and firmly to prevent and dispel crises and threats to the peace and to put an end to all acts of aggression or any other actions which jeopardize the peace and security of peoples.

37. In present circumstances particular importance must be attached to preventive action not only to avoid the emergence of new hotbeds of tension and conflict and the aggravation of persisting ones but also to succeed in bringing about viable settlements, by the means provided in the Charter, of the disputes which exist in international life, as well as to the need to define and develop juridical norms in regard to these means.

38. Under the Charter, the United Nations has a central place among the instruments of international co-operation during the post-war period. The *raison d'être* of the United Nations and its position in international relations as an instrument enabling all States to take part in the solution of problems of general interests require that decisions concerning the world community be prepared and adopted within its framework and that it be used for the discussion and settlement of major problems confronting mankind.

39. The President of the State Council of the Socialist Republic of Romania, Nicolae Ceausescu, stated recently:

"It is necessary to intensify the efforts to develop international co-operation, to strengthen the role of each country, great or small, in the life of the world, to increase the contribution of small and medium-sized countries in international organizations, where they must be able to have their say in the solution of any problem related to the establishment of future relations among States. It is necessary also that more be done to perfect the United Nations, which can and must play a more important role in the establishment of the new trends and in the bringing about of co-operation and peace in the world."

40. Of major importance also is the improvement of the activities and functioning of the machinery of the United Nations and of its related organs. In this regard, it would be useful to take measures to ensure the equitable representation of Member States in the various United Nations organs and to improve their operation. Thus an almost threefold increase in the number of Members of the Organization is not adequately reflected in the structure of the United Nations.

41. We believe, at the same time, that in order to strengthen the Organization resolute action must be taken to create conditions to enable all States of the world to be represented in the United Nations as soon as possible, thus making it a truly universal Organization.

42. We should place within the same context the duty of the United Nations constantly to see to it that its decisions and recommendations are actually put into effect. The discharge, in good faith, of the fundamental obligations of all States, under the Charter, and hence the application of decisions and recommendations of the United Nations, should become a rule of conduct for each Member State.

43. We stress this because the failure to put into effect the decisions and recommendations adopted is one of the major causes of the diminution of the role of the United Nations in the world. If we want to strengthen our Organization and to restore its authority and prestige, it is imperative to do away with the inconsistency between words and deeds so that our resolutions do not remain mere declarations of intent, devoid of concrete results.

44. The Romanian delegation is convinced that the debate on ways and means of strengthening the role of the United Nations in international life, a debate during which it would be useful to hear the views, proposals and suggestions of as many States as possible, will lead to conclusions which can be followed up with concrete measures and actions.

45. Assuredly, such a complex question cannot be solved overnight. In our view, what is essential is to get down to patient, tenacious and responsible work, in order to achieve, through the common efforts of Member States, unanimously acceptable solutions.

46. We believe maximum use should be made of the many ideas which have already been expressed to this end in our Organization. Furthermore, many of them have never been

examined in detail because the proper framework for discussion was lacking.

47. The General Assembly itself has in recent years felt the need for a framework of this kind. I would remind representatives, as an example, that in 1969, when it was decided to create the Preparatory Committee for the Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of the United Nations, the General Assembly entrusted to that Committee under resolution 2499 (XXIV) the task, *inter alia*, of examining proposals and suggestions for increasing the effectiveness of the United Nations. As we can see in the final report of that Committee, a number of Governments made suggestions aimed at increasing the effectiveness of the Organization. But, as we know, the Committee did not discharge this part of its mandate. Indeed the Committee itself recognized this in its report to the General Assembly when it stated that it "...regrets, however, that in view of the number and variety of suggestions received time did not permit detailed consideration of all of them".<sup>3</sup>

48. Many other proposals to improve the functioning of the United Nations have been made at the previous session, and, in particular, at this session of the General Assembly, and we hope that valuable ideas and suggestions will also be forthcoming in the course of this debate.

49. We also consider that it would be useful to request Governments to communicate to the Secretary-General their opinions and suggestions as to ways and means of strengthening the role of the United Nations.

50. All these ideas, suggestions and proposals could be the subject of a detailed analysis in a report of the Secretary-General. Such a document would enable us to continue the debate at the next session of the General Assembly in order to prepare proposals for concrete measures aimed at substantially enhancing the capacity for action and effectiveness of the United Nations and its organs. The Secretary-General's report on this subject should in our view be based upon the opinions and suggestions sent to him by Member States and also on the views expressed in this debate.

51. We are aware that the effectiveness of any measure taken depends in the final analysis on the political will of Member States and their desire to co-operate within the framework of the United Nations to resolve problems of general interest, to discharge their fundamental obligations under the Charter and to respect the decisions and recommendations adopted in common.

52. It is the duty of the Organization—a duty which it can discharge—to create a framework favourable to the affirmation of this political will. We are firmly convinced that it is in the interests of all nations, be they great or small, to promote this process.

53. The Romanian delegation is convinced that an examination in a constructive and realistic spirit of the question of strengthening the role of the United Nations will result in concrete actions and measures which will make our

<sup>3</sup> See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 25*, para. 37.

Organization equal to the lofty mission given to it by its Charter, so that it may make a contribution to the realization of the aspirations of all nations to peace and progress.

54. We believe that a process of such great scope as that of strengthening the role of the United Nations in contemporary international life should be undertaken and continued with the co-operation and participation of all Member States and by their joint efforts.

55. The Romanian delegation has consulted many delegations from all geographical regions with a view to preparing a draft resolution on this subject which may win the widest possible support.

56. I take pleasure in announcing that the draft resolution just circulated in document A/L.684 is sponsored by the delegation of the following countries: Afghanistan, Bel-

gium, Chad, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Greece, Iran, Madagascar, Mexico, Morocco, Pakistan, Peru, Romania, Singapore, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago and Yugoslavia.

57. I should like to stress that we have always striven to harmonize the interests and concerns of as many Member States as possible, coming from all geographical regions, and have taken account, in the preparation and finalizing of the draft resolution, of the various ideas, opinions and suggestions which we have received from many delegations, whether sponsors of the draft or not.

58. We should like to express our profound gratitude to delegations which have worked with us in a spirit of co-operation and friendship to prepare this draft resolution, which—in the hope of the sponsors—will win the unanimous approval of the Member States.

*The meeting rose at 3.55 p.m.*